

SOCIETY HILL

Reporter

www.societyhillcivic.org

From Penn to Parks: Philly's Past and Present



The William Penn Statue in Welcome Park is just one of the topics to be covered at the September General Membership Meeting.

The Society Hill Civic Association (SHCA) invites all neighbors to its General Membership Meeting on Wednesday, September 16, to hear two interesting presentations about Philadelphia's past and present.

Jim Murphy, who runs his own marketing consulting business, first became interested in William Penn when passing Welcome Park, located at 240 South 2nd Street, thinking it was a tribute to Benjamin Franklin. As he researched the park for his "Exploring the City" column in the *Reporter*, Jim learned how overlooked and underappreciated Penn is in the town that he founded — and how he carved out what became the second largest English-speaking city in the world from farmland and woodlands. This fast-moving, 30-minute presentation will cover topics as diverse as why Philadelphia almost became one of the prettiest towns in Maryland to why the SEPTA bus shelter at Front and Market Streets looks the way it does.

Developer Michael Garden, who sits on the board of the Friends of the Rail Park, will speak about the rail project converting the former Reading Viaduct into Philadelphia's own version

of New York City's popular High Line. This continuous three-mile linear park and recreation path will eventually connect many neighborhoods and cultural institutions to Fairmount Park along the historic elevated Reading Viaduct and City Branch rail cut of the former Philadelphia and Reading Railroad. Phase one of the Rail Park, a segment spanning North Broad at Noble Street, rising up to the elevated Viaduct and extending south towards Callowhill Street, is slated to break ground in 2016.

Remember that everyone is welcome to attend our General Membership Meeting. Simply arrive at Pennsylvania Hospital's Zubrow Auditorium, located on the first floor inside the main entrance at 8th Street near Spruce, before 7 p.m. All members interested in Society Hill issues are welcome at our monthly Board Meeting, 5:45 p.m. at the Great Court Conference Room.

WEDNESDAY

September

16

5:45 p.m.

7:00 p.m.

Speakers:

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Society Hill Civic Association Meetings
Wednesday, September 16, 2015

Pennsylvania Hospital
8th and Spruce Streets

Board of Directors Meeting

Pennsylvania Great Court Conference Room
All SHCA members are welcome.

General Membership Meeting

Pennsylvania Hospital Zubrow Auditorium
All neighborhood residents are invited to attend.

Jim Murphy on William Penn, Washington Square, and 300 years of the development of Philadelphia.
Michael Garden on the proposed rail park on the former Reading Terminal right of way.

TRICK OR TREAT?



Society Hill is the place to be this Halloween for spooky family fun!



SOCIETY HILL

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Society Hill

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Submissions

If you have news that would be of interest to Society Hillers, email Sandra Rothman at sandra.rothman@aol.com. Materials must be submitted in writing and include the name of a contact person. Edited submissions will be considered for publication if space permits. Letters to the Editor must be signed, with contact information.

SHCA Mission Statement

The aims and purposes of SHCA are to promote the improvement of the Society Hill area of Philadelphia, including its cultural, educational and civic activities, and the preservation and restoration of its historic buildings; to represent the residents of Society Hill in matters affecting the City of Philadelphia generally and Society Hill in particular; and to interpret the value and significance of Society Hill to the public.

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

BY BOB CURLEY, SHCA PRESIDENT

I hope all Society Hill neighbors had an enjoyable and restful summer. Here's what we can report to you before the Society Hill Civic Association gears up for fall.

First, I'd like to thank Bob Kramer, an attorney and new SHCA board member, who stepped up at his first meeting in June and agreed to serve on the 5th Street Development Committee. He's done a great job and is now chairman. I suggest everyone stays informed of the facts about this important neighborhood issue. Read Bob's committee summary on page 5. Also read the email blast Matt DeJulio sends each Friday for updates.

I'm happy to report that the plan for a community parking lot on Front Street is moving forward. If everything falls into place, folks from the neighborhood will be able to lease spaces and park there in the next month or so. I also encourage anyone with parking concerns to let me know, since the Crosstown Coalition

is examining residential parking issues in Center City.

Hopefully, everyone is enjoying the Farmers' Market on Sundays and the many summer pop-up activities sponsored by the South Street Headhouse District. Enjoy also the activities on the Delaware River, including Spruce Street Harbor Park and roller-skating at the Blue Cross RiverRink Summerfest, which will remain open until Columbus Day.

Please mark your calendars for September 16, when SHCA's General Membership Meeting will feature a noteworthy program with two very interesting speakers. Jim Murphy will talk on William Penn, and Michael Garden will give an update on the proposed rail park on the former Reading Terminal right of way.

Bob Curley has been a board member for seven years, during which he co-coordinated Clean-Up Day and participated with Tree Tenders. He is a partner in the law firm of O'Donoghue & O'Donoghue LLP.



**Bob Curley,
SHCA President**

P A P A L V I S I T P R E P A R A T I O N S

Pope Francis will be making his first trip to the United States in late September as part of the World Meeting of Families, to be held at the Pennsylvania Convention Center from September 22 to 27. Mayor Michael Nutter anticipates up to a million and a half visitors, which will double the city's population.

The papal visit, on Saturday, September 26 through Sunday, September 27, will bring a security shutdown of a 4.7-square-mile swath of the city to incoming vehicles. About 97,000 people live in that area, known as "the traffic box."

The traffic box perimeter — to be patrolled by Philadelphia police and blocked by barricades — runs north to Spring Garden Street and Ridge and Girard Avenues; south to South Street; east to the Delaware River; and west to 38th Street.

Beginning at 6 p.m. Friday in Center City and 10 p.m. in West Philadelphia, no cars will be allowed to enter the box. Any resident driving out of it will not be permitted to drive back in.

Closest to the Benjamin Franklin Parkway and to Independence Hall, a second secure perimeter will involve more intense restrictions like fencing and magnetometers, affecting about 16,400 people who live within those boundaries.

It appears that parking will be restricted in Society Hill on all blocks between 3rd and 6th from Walnut to Locust Streets during the Pope's visit.

Trash and recycling will not be collected September 25 or 28 citywide, but will be picked up on September 24. The city's 311 hotline will switch from 12 hours a day to a 24/7 operation from September 24 to 28.

For more information, visit www.septa.org and www.worldmeeting2015.org/papalplaybook.

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COMMITTEE UPDATES

5th Street Development

As neighbors are aware, earlier this year Alterra Property Group signed a contract to purchase the site at 309 S. 5th Street, which currently houses a Super Fresh Market. The contract also includes the retail center across the street at 314-26 S. 5th Street, which Alterra says it has no interest to redevelop in the near future. Both properties are zoned CMX-2, which allows residential as well as many commercial, institutional and service uses.

In the July/August issue of this newsletter, we reported that Alterra presented three plans for the Super Fresh site to our zoning committee in May, all with retail space at ground level. Two of the plans, which required no variances, were for a three-floor cast stone and stucco building. Each would be 36 feet high and contain either 28 or 36 rental units. Only one of the “of right” plans had off-street parking, housing only eight vehicles. The third plan was for a brick-faced structure that would be 59 feet high and have a small elevator penthouse rising to 71 feet. It would contain 72 rental units and 36 below-grade parking spaces. This plan would require zoning variances.

SHCA formed a fact-finding committee representing the interests of our community. The committee first met with the Society Hill Shopping Center, LLC, which owns both sites, and discovered that consummation of the sale with Alterra is expected to occur in the late fall or early winter of 2015. In addition, they found out that the owner leases the Super Fresh site to Rubin and Company, which subleases it to the supermarket. This sublease expires in April 2018.

SHCA President Bob Curley and committee members next contacted The Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company, Inc. (A&P), which is the parent company of Super Fresh. They learned that the 5th Street site is their highest-earning Philadelphia store on a square foot basis. Super Fresh expressed a desire to renew its lease. However, more recently, A&P has filed a Chapter 11 Bankruptcy Plan that complicates matters; this store would be one of the many sold to ACME Markets.

Bob Curley and some members of the committee then met with Leo Addimando, Managing Partner of Alterra, at the company’s request. Addimando proposed that SHCA and Alterra should negotiate a development plan for the site. If SHCA supported a height variance allowing as many as five floors, Alterra would guarantee a general supermarket for 10 years. In addition, they would be willing to incorporate design elements at SHCA’s

recommendation. The consensus at a community meeting in July was that SHCA should not negotiate with Alterra at this time, since the company hadn’t yet filed actual development plans with the City of Philadelphia.

Bob Curley sent Alterra an email informing them of this decision. The company responded, stating that it currently does not intend to prepare and file development plans with Philadelphia because of the remaining length of Super Fresh’s lease and other unknowns.

SHCA has retained attorney Richard DeMarco, who is a specialist in zoning and land-use matters, to represent it relating to any redevelopment of both the Super Fresh and retail center parcels. SHCA’s attorney will be able to appear at the numerous hearings to present the view of SHCA. He has given SHCA a letter of advice concerning what actions could be taken. The strategy developed with SHCA’s attorney is in progress and is not being discussed in this update, as the Committee does not want any potentially adverse parties to know the details.

It’s important that our community understands that for Alterra to obtain permits to build, they must first file a complete set of required plans with Philadelphia Licenses and Inspections for review and approval. Then they must obtain design approval of the Philadelphia Historic Commission. If plans filed require zoning variances, they have to be reviewed and receive recommendations from the Philadelphia City Planning Commission and the Civic Design Review Board. Also, SHCA’s Zoning and Historical Preservation Committee must be notified and a public meeting must be held with Alterra. Once started, the process normally takes more than a year.

In response to letters from our community regarding Bill 140519, which contains proposed zoning code changes that would affect development of the Super Fresh site along with all other CMX-2 properties, sponsor Councilman Mark Squilla has recently stated that he would support further amendments before bringing the bill to Council for a vote in September. Particular concerns have to do with “of right” increases in density and leaving an existing loophole in the code that allows residential use at the ground floor in “unattached” buildings. The latter concern has already been revised in the latest draft; and the former is still under consideration. Read more about this bill on page 13.

Sign up to receive updates on this issue in SHCA’s weekly email blasts.

Contact Matt DeJulio at 215-629-1288 or mattdejulio@aol.com.

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'FIX THE BRIX'

BY MARTHA LEVINE

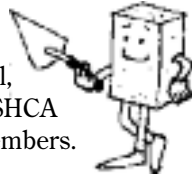
An Easy Solution to a Serious Problem

As they say, a picture's worth a thousand words. These photos illustrate how dangerous our sidewalks can be for pedestrians. And guess what? You, the homeowner, are liable for any injuries suffered on your sidewalk.

SHCA's "Fix the Brix" program is an easy solution for this serious problem. We offer a subsidy to any participating homeowner — a 40 percent reimbursement, capped at \$400 per household for SHCA members and \$300 for non-members. Please note that SHCA has recently increased the amount of this subsidy for members.

It's easier than you might imagine, just follow these steps to fix your brix:

- Send us a photo of work to be done.
- Get several estimates from qualified masons and/or arborists if appropriate; we can email you a suggested list. Sometimes an arborist is needed to trim tree roots.
- Choose a mason that fits your budget.
- Have the work done to your satisfaction.
- Make copies of the invoice. Keep the original for yourself, and mail a copy, along with a photo of finished project, to: SHCA, P.O. Box 63503, Philadelphia, PA 19147.
- Receive a check within a few weeks for 40 percent of the bill, up to \$400 per household for SHCA members and \$300 for non-members.



Rick the Brick



Dangerous sidewalks like these need repair.



Mason Tony Micela helping to fix the brix on 500 Delancey Street.

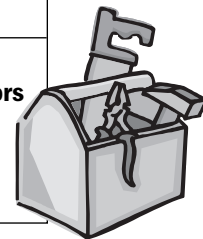
The City recommends that homeowners do not use Belgian block or elevated brick surrounds on tree pits, as they cause a tripping hazard. It is best to have a flat sidewalk leading up to the tree pit, which also allows better drainage of rainwater to nourish the tree.

For more information or to obtain a list of masons and arborists, contact me at marthalev6@gmail.com or 215-629-0727.

Society Hill List of Contractors

Current SHCA members may request a copy of the updated **Society Hill List of Contractors** — all highly recommended by neighbors.

Please contact Martha Levine 215-629-0727 or email: marthalev6@gmail.com.



WHAT'S MISSING IN SOCIETY HILL?

Have you noticed we have none of the unsightly graffiti that mars street furniture and public surfaces throughout the rest of Philadelphia?

Where did it go? Ask Graffiti Removal Experts' owner Todd Kelley, whose services were retained by SHCA several years ago when we realized that keeping Society Hill free of stickers and graffiti was a job for the experts.

Todd's experience grew out of volunteer work. He then polished his skills by studying the materials and techniques that other cities were using.

Power washing is generally used for the restoration of defaced brick and masonry surfaces. Graffiti Removal Experts has pioneered the removal of acid etch from plate glass windows — a growing problem — thus avoiding the need for costly replacement.

SHCA recognizes that graffiti not only symbolizes the presence of crime and urban decay, but also lowers property values. Zero tolerance for graffiti is paying off, though new waves of vandalism must be promptly dealt with as they arise.

For more information, visit www.graffitiremovalexperts.com.



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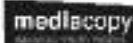
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THIS OLD HOUSE

BY CHUCK GROSHONG AND DANIELLE GROSHONG-KEPERLING

Contractors

Know When to Hold 'Em, Know When to Fold 'Em



Did you know that approximately 40 percent of home improvement projects today are the direct result of the poor workmanship or improper materials installed by a previous contractor? In our *Preservation Primer: Volume 2*, we discuss how to research, interview and weed out the well-intentioned but inexperienced firms or the simply rogue contractors.

What Mediocre Contractors Don't Want You to Know

Historical homes should be honored and preserved; finding the right preservation contractor will do just that for you. For more on rogue contractors, how to identify them, and what to ask them, check out *Preservation Primer Volume 2: Planning Your Historic Building Project, Choosing a Contractor and What Mediocre Contractors Don't Want You To Know*. For a complimentary copy, please contact 717-291-4688 or suvino@historic-restorations.com.

A few warning signs are:

- Credentials that can't be verified
- Use of high-pressure sales tactics
- No references
- No written contract
- No guarantee on work

Make sure you are asking the right questions, like: *Have you ever operated under any other name? Are you properly licensed in this state?* These are simple enough for a qualified contractor to answer, while a rogue contractor will struggle, indicating that they are not the right person for you or your home. Please refer to our primer for more questions to make 'em sweat! See sidebar for how you can obtain a copy.

A preservation-based contractor is the difference between a generalist and a specialist who knows what it means to craft a home from traditional materials. General contractors may be very good at what they do, but if they aren't well steeped in the art of preservation, they aren't for you or your home.

Investigate to determine whether a prospective firm is suitable. Verify that they have completed a project of the same size and scope as yours. The best contractor for you will have also worked on jobs with similar styles and time periods.

Take time to visit job sites that potential contractors are working on or have done in the past. Ask to see a portfolio of their work. Request a list of references to verify quality of work and warranty/customer-service practices.

You can also take a look at their website, blog and social media sites. What do they post? Is it self-promotion or is it preservation promotion? Spending the time researching and choosing the right preservation-driven contractor helps avoid the potential headaches and damage that hiring the wrong contractor can cause.

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EXPLORING THE CITY

BY JIM MURPHY

The African American Museum of Philadelphia

Growing up in Delaware County, I heard family horror stories about the discrimination Irish Catholics faced when they landed here. And about ads that said: “No Irish need apply.”

But not until I visited the African American Museum in Philadelphia did I really understand the extraordinary discrimination black people faced in our city. It was pervasive and relentless.

What I learned:

- Free blacks were kidnapped off the street in Philadelphia and sent south to become slaves (something no Irish immigrant I know of had to face). One was even snatched from the very street I live on in a story reminiscent of the movie *12 Years a Slave*.
- Blacks were not permitted to ride streetcars in Philadelphia. Even African Americans soldiers fighting for the North in the Civil War were denied entry.
- Black soldiers in that war were paid less than white ones.
- As late as 1858, the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroads said blacks could only travel “with a responsible white person.”
- Fire companies were entirely white and would rarely protect African American properties from fires set by their own members.

After learning all this at the African American Museum — and that Frederick Douglass, an invited guest to the Centennial Exposition, was turned away and only seated because of the intervention of others — I did more research.

The comments below by Douglass, a renowned orator, abolitionist and writer, reveal a great deal about the way African Americans were treated in our city:

“There is not perhaps anywhere to be found a city in which prejudice against color is more rampant than in Philadelphia... .Colored persons, no matter how well-dressed or how well-behaved, ladies or gentlemen, rich or poor, are not even permitted to ride on any of the many railways through the Christian city. Halls are rented with the express understanding that no person of color shall be allowed to enter, either to attend a concert or listen to a lecture. The whole aspect of city usage at this point is mean, contemptible and barbarous...”

Pretty strong stuff from the book *Philadelphia: A 300-Year History*. And pretty nasty ways to hamper people going about their daily lives.

Audacious Freedom: African Americans in Philadelphia 1776–1876, the main exhibit on the first floor, covers these and many other key events in the lives of black Philadelphians.

Funded by PECO, this interactive audio/visual display, using photos, timelines, documents and more, looks at people, white and black, who made a difference in the city.

You’ll learn how George Washington rotated his slaves out of Pennsylvania before they were here six months to avoid their becoming free under the Gradual Abolition Law, how his slave Oney Judge escaped from the President’s House in Philadelphia to New Hampshire, and how a desperate Washington tried to get her back.

At *Philadelphia Conversations* on floor two, you’ll interact with African American trailblazers on 10 video screens. They include clergymen and abolitionists Richard Allen and Absalom Jones; educator, athlete and civil rights leader Octavius Catto; and others. You can click on four pre-selected questions at each display to get a video reply. Children’s Corner is also on this floor.

Jim Murphy, a freelance direct-response copywriter, has run his own marketing consulting business since 2004. He’s also a certified member of the Association of Philadelphia Tour Guides.

Where you’ll meet a “Who’s Who” of remarkable Americans many of us know little about



Nesaika is a work by sculpture John Rhoden at the African American Museum in Philadelphia.

FAST FACTS

Name The African American Museum in Philadelphia (AAMP)	Admission Adults, \$14; Senior Citizens, \$10. Students w/ID and Youths (4-12 years) \$10; AAMP Members, free.
Address 701 Arch Street Phila, PA 19106	Phone 215-574-0380
Year Opened 1976	Website www.aampmuseum.org
Claim to Fame Is the first institution funded and built by a major municipality to preserve, interpret and exhibit the heritage of African Americans.	Exhibits Permanent displays are on floors 1 and 2, temporary ones on 3 and 4.
Affiliation Smithsonian Institution Affiliations Program	Public Art 13 Whispering Bells by Reginald Beauchamp represent the original 13 colonies. The bells, without clappers or hammers, are rung by the wind. Nesaika, by John Rhoden, merges aspects of African and American culture into one sculpture.
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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

3rd Street and Willings Alley

The developer, near neighbors and SHCA are completing an agreement that would smooth the process at the Zoning Board of Adjustment for renovating the Salvation Army Building into 14 one- and two-bedroom apartments and constructing four new townhouses on the open part of the site. SHCA's primary interest has been to protect the historic Willings Alley, to assure that the building is restored in conjunction with the new townhouses, and to safeguard the near neighbors and community against undo danger and inconvenience while the project is being built.

Bill #140519

Society Hill joined the Crosstown Coalition in working with the Building Industry Association (BIA), the Development Workshop and the Philadelphia City Planning Commission (PCPC) on Bill #140519, introduced last year by our Councilman, Mark Squilla, at the request of BIA.

This bill would create two Center City overlay districts. One would be for commercially zoned properties extending from Spring Garden Street to the south side of South Street and from the Schuylkill River to the Delaware River. The second would be for residentially zoned properties, extending from Spring Garden Street to the south side of Washington Avenue and river-to-river.

The intent of the bill would be to allow more density "by right" in Center City. BIA contends that this would save the City and developers the expense of variance appeals, which they claim are consistently being granted anyway. The Crosstown Coalition had requested data from the City to support BIA's claim. Initially PCPC said they could supply the data, but after repeated Coalition requests, they claim no analytic data exists and it would be too costly to generate it.

Nonetheless, the Crosstown Coalition has earnestly evaluated all aspects of the bill and removed or altered anything that might cause undo harm. They have asked their member civic associations to sign-off on the amended bill as soon as possible. SHCA has managed to affect some changes, such as controlling the lowering of lot sizes in historic districts or individually registered properties and requiring commercial ground floor use for CMX-2 zoned properties, whether attached or unattached to other buildings. However, there are still outstanding concerns. ZHP committee recommends further amendments to:

- Exclude Society Hill neighborhood from the bill regarding additional floor area or building height bonuses in CMX-3 districts for certified green design and mixed-income housing. Most CMX-3 properties in Society Hill are located along Walnut Street. Added height abutting Independence National Historical Park could create a barrier between the low-rise residential community south of Walnut and the Park, rather than providing a more natural transition that linked the two.
- Delete 55 foot height "by right" in CMX-2 and CMX-2.5 where a property is bound by three streets, two of which are or exceed 50 feet. This bill would affect only one property in Society Hill, but the additional height there would significantly block light to a cluster of single-family houses north of the property. ZHP believes any negotiation should more properly occur by variance rather than "of right."
- Delete the 360-square-foot divisor as basis for calculating the number of dwelling units in CMX-2 and CMX-2.5. In addition, retain the existing 480-square-foot divisor, which yields fewer apartments overall, but maintains a density level more consistent with the general neighborhood.

Parking Issues

SHCA and ZHP have been actively engaged in trying to take some of the stress out of resident parking in the neighborhood. SHCA President Bob Curley has been busy negotiating with the Interstate Land Management Corporation to acquire a lease for a community parking lot on Front Street, hopefully generating some income for SHCA.

We have also been working with the Crosstown Coalition. To help determine how and where improvements can be made, we have been gathering hard data like the ratio of permits issued against the number of spaces available and the utilization rate in local garages against capacity.

Although the new zoning code has made it more difficult to have parking for single-family and some multi-family zoning classifications, the need for cars has not gone down. Also, so many more spaces are being used for loading, handicapped parking and short-term parking that there are even fewer regular spaces overall than there were historically. This, coupled with increased demand, means the current system is no longer working reasonably.

**Bill #140519:
Should more
"by right" density
be allowed in
Society Hill?**

Lorna Katz-Lawson is a practicing architect with John Lawson Architects. She has been a Society Hill resident since 1973 and currently chairs SHCA's Zoning and Historic Preservation Committee.



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ON OUR SHELF

BY RICHARD DE WYNGAERT

Embracing Life's Abrupt Changes

We Are Not Ourselves by Matthew Thomas
Simon & Schuster Publishers, 640 pages

I want to share with readers the most compelling novel I've read this summer, Matthew Thomas's *We Are Not Ourselves*. I was especially drawn to the notion of embracing the abrupt changes that redirect one's life course with conviction and courage.

From the opening pages, manifest forces shape protagonist Eileen Tumulty. The roots of her complicated relationship to the world unfold before us page by page, day by day and event by event. She is painfully aware of the shackling nature of social stratification, has big dreams for a better life, and craves an opportunity to dramatically recalibrate the person she is.

Eileen endures a fraught childhood spent largely in a Queen's tenement taking care of her family's home and her alcoholic parents — a larger-than-life father and a timorous, shrinking mother. It is full of unending drama, unpredictability and chaos. As an adult, she needs order and seeks harmony and forward movement. Eileen sets out to build a life over which she exerts absolute control.

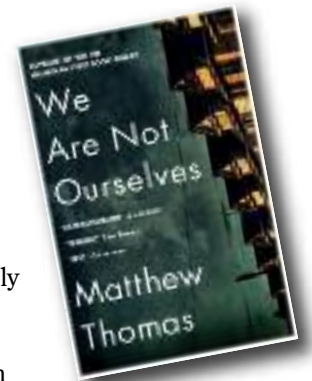
To that end, Eileen works hard to become a nurse, often detached and clinical in her approach. She marries Ed Leary, a brilliant and handsome young scientist. She positions Connell, their only child, within a promising network. The course is set: a sure-to-advance husband and a capable son, one who will attend the right schools and have the right friends.

As a child, Eileen wanted; she will not want as an adult. As a child, Eileen was neglected; as an adult, she will attend assiduously to all things family. As a child, Eileen experienced scarcity; as an adult, she will save and they will have more. As a child, Eileen's social station was muddled and unclear; as an adult, she will make sure they proceed correctly. She will be the architect of the perfect milieu for the perfect family, living the perfect life, preparing to cross the great divide.

And then Eileen's life does what lives invariably do — it fails to cooperate. Eileen's carefully drawn template is brushed aside. The Leary family's lives twist, morph and steer toward an unknown future. The unanticipated takes hold.

But Eileen is a fighter. Her struggle is magnificently rendered, underscoring growth, fortitude and exceptional compassion. Eileen's core beliefs about how one lives one's life transform and deepen.

Matthew Thomas has written a riveting, sweeping masterpiece. *We Are Not Ourselves* elegantly captures a time and chronicles beautifully the Learys' journey. Life came at Eileen with all its fury, unpredictably changing direction. Eileen pushed back, moving bravely and honestly forward.



"We must be willing to let go of the life we planned so as to have the life that is waiting for us."

—Joseph Campbell

Bring this article to Head House Books and get 50 percent off the net proceeds from any purchase in stock or ordered online.

Richard De Wyngaert is the proprietor of Society Hill's only local, independently-owned bookstore, Head House Books, located at 619 S. 2nd Street.



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OUT AND ABOUT

FRED MANFRED, WASHINGTON SQUARE AFFAIR COMMITTEE CHAIR

The Washington Square Affair

The reviews are in!! With almost 400 guests and raising over \$100,000 for the park, this year's Washington Square Affair was a winner.

We begin by thanking our Patron Cocktail Affair hosts, Pamela and Ajay Raju, for graciously opening their beautiful Pine Street home and entertaining our Patrons in grand style. It was a glorious evening, drawing everyone outside into their formal garden overlooking historic Pennsylvania Hospital. The view included a symphony of flowering azaleas and cherry tree blossoms.

Mother Nature served up a second sensational evening for the tented Affair. We extend our thanks and appreciation to the 15 neighborhood restaurants that each generously served one of their house specialties. Guests remarked on the diversity of the offerings and how wonderful it all tasted.

We thank the community and local businesses for their support, which will extend our program of funding additional maintenance and beautification projects in the Square for everyone to enjoy.



Herb and Sissie Lipton



Norman and Suzanne Cohn, Arthur and Terry Bartolozzi



Aleni, Dean and Zoe Pappas



Blake Rutherford and Jessica Dean



Roberta Marcus at the entrance to the Big White Tent



Fred Manfred, Mary Genovese, Margaux Pelegrin

OUT AND ABOUT

The Washington Square Affair



Vocalists from the University of the Arts



Violinist from CAPA High School

David Roberts Photo



Guests inspect silent auction items



Andy Ehrlich, Pat Coyle



Shawn and Stanton Myerson



Jan Stephano, Hermine Seidenberg, Diane Rossheim, Susie Auten



Alexandra Murphy, Claudia Miller



Don & Karen Kaufman with friends



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Totally Custom Three Bedroom Plus Den

Three bedroom plus den, three bathroom custom built residence with a balcony and private roof deck, as well as an open chef's kitchen, exposed brick walls and designer bathrooms. 2,306 sf \$2,250,000

SOUTH STREET HEADHOUSE DISTRICT

BY KERI WHITE

Headhouse Plaza Development Plans

Much excitement has been building around the new development plans for Headhouse Plaza. We met recently with Mike Harris, Executive Director of the South Street Headhouse District (SSHD), who eagerly shared details with the community.

The area to be upgraded lies on 2nd Street between Lombard and South. The newly designed space will feature a median-free parking area, plentiful greenery, a pavilion structure that can be used for outdoor events and an information center/cafe.

Mike comments, "With these improvements, we are keenly focused on two top priorities: community safety and aesthetic considerations. The new design will address safety concerns, while maintaining the historic and residential character of the neighborhood."

Specifically, Mike points to the following issues:

Fountain: This feature is highly popular with young families. Unfortunately, the existing curb line is rounded off and dangerously close to street traffic. The perimeter of the fountain area is not sufficient for the number of children, strollers and visitors that can sometimes be three rows deep. The new plan will expand the space around the fountain, square off the Lombard street end and provide a wider, safer buffer between the fountain and traffic.

Lighting: Currently, the area is severely under-lit for its size and the amount of activity that occurs there at night. The new plan will add multiple pedestrian-scale sidewalk lighting fixtures and will dramatically increase the amount of light by replacing overhead cobra lights with modern, white LED fixtures. In addition, cables of overhead light bulbs will be suspended down the median to create a festive, attractive feature, while enhancing the brightness and safety of the area.

Pedestrians and Traffic: The intersections of 2nd and Lombard Streets and 2nd and South Streets are dangerous due to the combination of angled crosswalks, non-parallel stop signs, rounded corners that allow cars to turn at high speeds and poor marking of crosswalks and turn lanes. The new plan calls for squared-off corners to reduce vehicular speeds, realigned crosswalks and increased clarity of traffic patterns for drivers and pedestrians.

Center Median: The existing center median between the two parking lanes along 2nd Street is fragmented, narrow, unsightly and hazardous. The new plan calls for the removal of the raised median to make the entire area ground level and to create an actual pedestrian walkway down the center of the street between the parking lanes.

History: There had been a structure similar to the Shambles that ran from Lombard to South on the plaza. It was torn down sometime in the 1950s and the area has become little more than an inefficient parking lot. There have been very few improvements made over time, and it shows in the way the plaza functions. The new pavilion will re-activate the plaza, paying homage to the history of the area as an inviting public gathering place.

Mike sums up: "This plan allows us to balance parking demands with a flexible public space. It increases the utility by integrating more greenery and a safer and more spacious area for people using the fountain. We will also be able to expand the Sunday Farmers' Market, craft and vintage markets, and Dining-Under-the-Stars events. In short, the goal is to take this unique public space and convert it from an ugly surface parking lot to a point of pride for the neighborhood. The new South Street Headhouse Plaza will become a valuable amenity for residents, visitors and businesses." SSHD plans to continue to revise the design plans based on further community input and welcomes any feedback sent to info@southstreet.com.



Architect's rendering of a pavilion that can be used for outdoor events proposed for Headhouse Square.

Claire Batten and **Keri White** are the dynamic duo behind Philly Food Lovers. They are business partners in KCC, a marketing and copy-writing agency.

GARDEN OF EDEN UPDATE

The Garden of Eden Supermarket, previously reported as scheduled to open at 2nd and South Streets later this year, will not be coming to the neighborhood. The financing for the second and third phases of the project fell through. That's the bad news. The good news is that Mike and the property owners are actively working to bring an equivalent tenant to the location. Mike elaborates, "The grocery store offerings in the neighborhood are changing and may become insufficient to serve the needs of the community. This space, which has already undergone much of the initial roundwork in preparation for a large grocery store, offers an excellent opportunity to house a full-service supermarket."

THE ESTATE HOME AT 4TH AND LOCUST



5th Floor



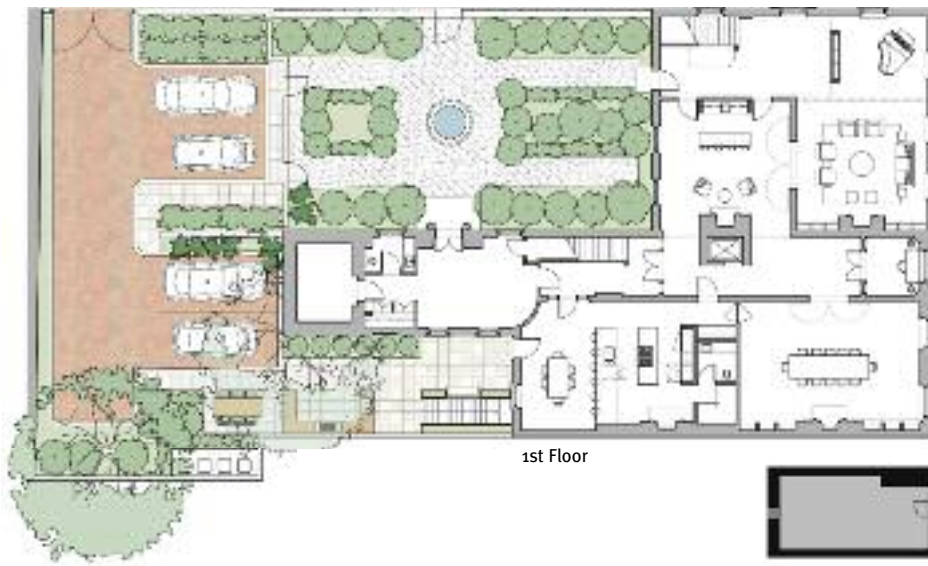
4th Floor



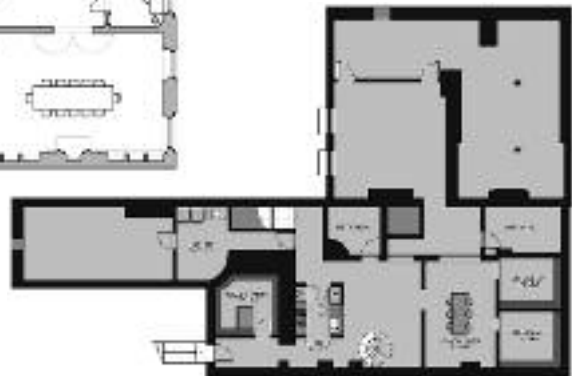
3rd Floor



2nd Floor



1st Floor



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HEADHOUSE FARMERS' MARKET

BY KATY WICH AND LISA KELLY OF THE FOOD TRUST

Drink Your Greens

A Brief Guide to Juicing

Juicing is big business. Whole Foods, Trader Joe's and even Starbucks are all in on the act, proudly exhibiting a rainbow-colored selection of "cold-pressed" juices in their chilled display cabinets. The cold-pressed juice market is on a roll, worth an estimated \$100 million a year according to the *LA Times* ("Juicing Trend Still Going Strong in 2015," January 29, 2015). So what's the excitement all about?

Juicing involves extracting the juices from the tissue of plant material, particularly fruits and vegetables and sometime herbs and roots, to create healthy concoctions packed with vitamins and minerals. Curious about the reference to cold-pressed? This moniker refers to the method used to extract the juices. Unlike pasteurization, for example, which uses heat to prep the produce for consumption, cold pressing involves simply pressing or squeezing the juices out of the plant. This is why the juice needs to be kept refrigerated.

While juices are not a replacement for eating the whole fruit or vegetable raw, because some fiber is lost during the extraction process, juicing is an excellent way of encouraging people to eat well and hit their "five a day." Late summer is the perfect time to give juicing a whirl; the Farmers' Market is still bursting with local fruit and vegetables. If you are searching for a particular fresh food item, please stop by The Food Trust table at the Farmers' Market and let us know. We may be able to help you track produce down through our network of farm contacts.

We tapped into an online resource, www.seriousseats.com, for a slew of juice recipes and sound advice about creating well-balanced and flavorsome juice drinks. This first recipe uses kale, cucumber, cilantro, apples, ginger and celery, all of which will be at market in September. The organic ginger from **Blooming Glen Farm** is fantastic.

The Food Trust, in partnership with Get Healthy Philly, operates more than 25 Farmers' Markets in Philadelphia, including the Headhouse Farmers' Market, Philadelphia's largest outdoor market. For more than twenty years, The Food Trust has been working to ensure that everyone has access to affordable, nutritious food and information to make healthy decisions. For further information, visit www.thefoodtrust.org.

JUICE RECIPE	
<p>Ingredients</p> <p>½ cup fresh cucumber juice from about one medium cucumber</p> <p>3 tablespoons fresh kale juice from about 4 medium leaves</p> <p>1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon fresh cilantro juice from 1 cup tightly-packed cilantro parts</p> <p>½ cup fresh apple juice from one medium apple, cored and quartered</p> <p>1 tablespoon fresh ginger juice from about a 1½-inch piece of ginger</p> <p>1 tablespoon plus 2 teaspoons fresh lime juice from 1 to 2 peeled limes</p> <p>½ cup fresh celery juice from 3 medium celery stalks</p>	<p>Directions</p> <p>With the exception of the lime, you don't have to peel any of the ingredients. Juice ingredients in the order listed to maximize yield. Finishing with something very juicy like celery helps to flush more stubborn ingredients, like ginger, through the juicer. When juicing greens such as the kale and cilantro, you'll get a better yield if you tightly pack the greens (roll them up before adding to the feed tube of your juicer) and place them between two harder, juicier ingredients (such as the cucumber and apple here). Nudge the greens through the juicer one small push at a time. If your juicer has multiple speeds, use a slower speed for softer ingredients like the lime, kale, and cilantro.</p> <p>Stir juices together thoroughly, divide between two glasses and serve immediately.</p>

Where to Find Other Recipes We Like

A spicy juice using carrots, red bell peppers, cherry tomatoes and garlic. Try some of the colorful cherry tomatoes from **Savoie Organic Farm**. Find at: seriousseats.com/recipes/2014/01/spicy-red-juice-bell-pepper-carrot-tomato-horseradish-juice.html.

A great post-market juice "mocktail," the "Kale Mary," using cherry tomatoes, kale and celery. Get the kale and celery from **Root Mass Farm**. Find at: seriousseats.com/recipes/2012/03/the-kale-mary-kale-juice-tomato-celery-recipe.html.



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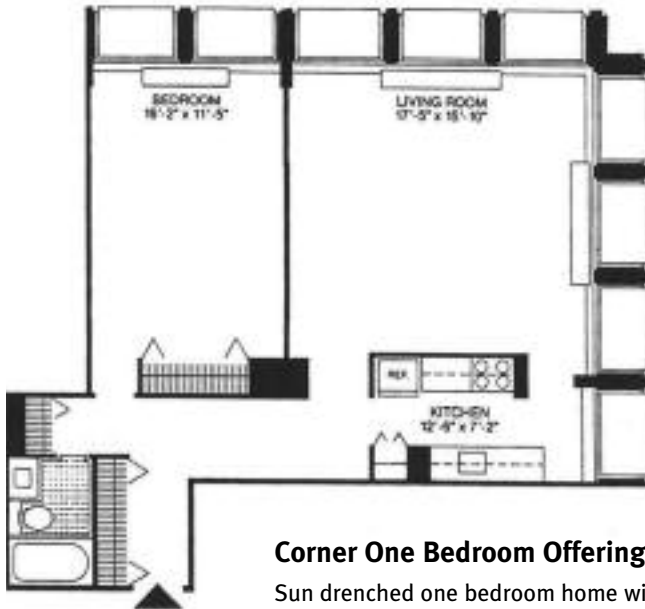
SOCIETY HILL TOWERS

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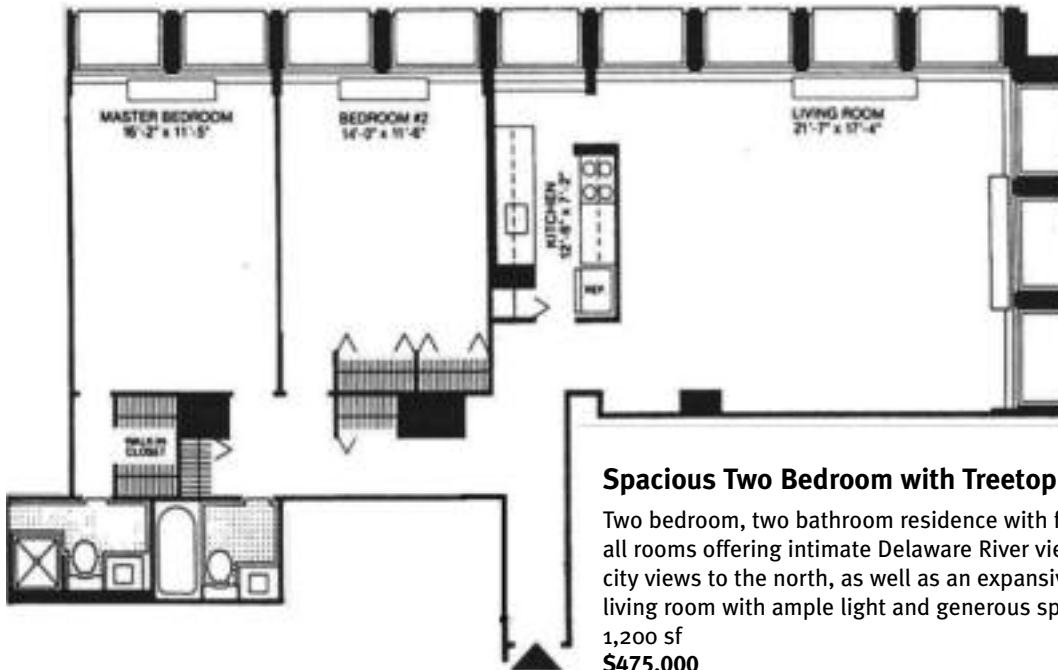
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| 5F NORTH | 12G WEST | 24EF SOUTH |
| 5G WEST | 14C SOUTH | 24G NORTH |
| 6BC SOUTH | 15A WEST | 25BC SOUTH |
| 6D NORTH | 17G WEST | 26B WEST |
| 7B NORTH | 17H SOUTH | 28E NORTH |
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Corner One Bedroom Offering Treetop West and South City Views

Sun drenched one bedroom home with a generously sized living room, a galley kitchen and excellent closet space throughout. 775 sf
\$295,000



Spacious Two Bedroom with Treetop River and City Views

Two bedroom, two bathroom residence with floor-to-ceiling windows in all rooms offering intimate Delaware River views to the east and treetop city views to the north, as well as an expansive open dining room and living room with ample light and generous space for entertaining.
 1,200 sf
\$475,000



WELCOME BASKET PROGRAM

BY MARTHA LEVINE

What's in the Welcome Basket?

Society Hill is well known for the impressive way that SHCA welcomes new homeowners to our community. Each of our big, beautiful Welcome Baskets, worth over \$750, is filled to the brim with an assortment of gifts from the contributors listed below.

Fresh foods include locally baked bagels, gourmet coffee, apples, a loaf of artisan bread and other tasty treats.

Included also are three to four vouchers for two tickets each from Philadelphia theaters. Added to the basket are gift cards from four

local restaurants, as well as three retail shop gift cards. Tucked in is a massage gift card, a gift card for a women's fashion trunk show and passes to three to four museums, two per museum.

If you are a first-time Society Hill homeowner within the past year, call Martha Levine at 215-629-0727 or email marthalev6@gmail.com to make an appointment for a Welcome Basket presentation in your own home.

And please thank our generous contributors by frequenting their businesses.



2015 SOCIETY HILL WELCOME BASKET CONTRIBUTORS

Coffee Shops

Old City Coffee, 221 Church Street/Reading Terminal Market
Starbucks Coffee Inc., 8th & Walnut Streets

Food Stores

SuperFresh, 5th & Pine Streets

Restaurants

Bistro Romano, 120 Lombard Street
Bridget Foy's, 200 South Street
City Tavern, 138 S. 2nd Street
Creperie Beau Monde, 624 S. 6th Street
Fork, 306 Market Street
Garces Group: Amada – 217 Chestnut Street,
Rosa Blanca – 707 Chestnut Street, and others
High Street on Market, 308 Market Street
La Buca Ristorante, 711 Locust Street
La Forno, 636 South Street
Le Pain Quotidien, 801 Walnut Street
Mustard Greens (Chinese), 622 S. 2nd Street
Positano Coast Restaurant, 2nd & Walnut Streets
Ristorante Panorama, 14 N. Front Street
Serpico, 604 South Street
Talula's Daily, café & take out, 208 W. Washington Square
The Farm & Fisherman, 1120 Pine Street



Specialty Foods

Homemade Goodies by Roz, 510 S. 5th Street
Knead Bagels, 725 Walnut Street
Melange Tea & Spice, 1042 Pine Street
Metropolitan Bakery, 262 S. 19th Street
(Rittenhouse Square)
South Street Bagels, 613 S. 3rd Street
The Bagel Factory, 510 Walnut Street
(Penn Mutual Building)



Specialty Shops

Adornamenti (jewelry), 1106 Pine Street
Happily Ever After (toys), 1010 Pine Street
Head House Books, 619 S. 2nd Street
Industry (fashion accessories), 1020 Pine Street
Lolli Lolli (children's clothing/toys), 713 Walnut Street
Paper On Pine (invitations/stationery), 115 S. 13th Street



Scarlett's Antiques (collectibles, vintage), 1018 Pine Street
Show of Hands Gallery (crafts), 1006 Pine Street
Yarnphoria (yarn and supplies), 1016 Pine Street

Theaters/Entertainment

Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, 3680 Walnut Street
Arden Theater, 40 N. 2nd Street
Ballet X at Wilma Theater, 265 S. Broad Street
1812 Productions (all comedy theater), 215-592-9560
Ghost Tours of Philadelphia, 610-587-8308
Historic Philadelphia Inc., SW corner 6th & Chestnut Street
Independence Seaport Museum, 211 South Columbus Blvd.
InterAct Theater Company, 2030 Sansom Street
Lantern Theater Company,
10th & Ludlow Streets (south of Market)
Lights of Liberty, featuring Liberty 360,
6th & Chestnut Streets
Museum of American Jewish History,
5th & Market Streets
National Liberty Museum, 321 Chestnut Street
Pennsylvania Ballet, Academy of Music, Broad & Locust Streets
Penn's Landing Playhouse at the Seaport Museum, 211 S. Columbus Blvd.
Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, 215-569-8080
Philadelphia History Museum, 15 S. 7th Street
Philadelphia Shakespeare Theatre, 2111 Sansom Street
Philadelphia Society for the Preservation of Landmarks, 321 S. 4th Street
Philadelphia Theatre Company, S. Roberts Theater, Broad & Pine Streets
Piffaro, The Renaissance Band, 215-235-8469
Society Hill Playhouse, 507 S. 8th Street
The Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, Kimmel Center, 215-545-1739
The Philadelphia Chamber Ensemble, Old Pine Church
Wilma Theater, 265 S. Broad Street



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Judy Moon Massage Therapy, Hopkinson House,
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Liberty Tree & Landscape Management, 215-725-3637
Petmoir, A Memoir of Your Pet, 215-803-0723
Riff Cleaners, 314 S. 5th Street
SCULPT – Personal Trainer, 215-803-0723
The Worth Collection (women's fashions), 215-925-8813



INDEPENDENCE PLACE

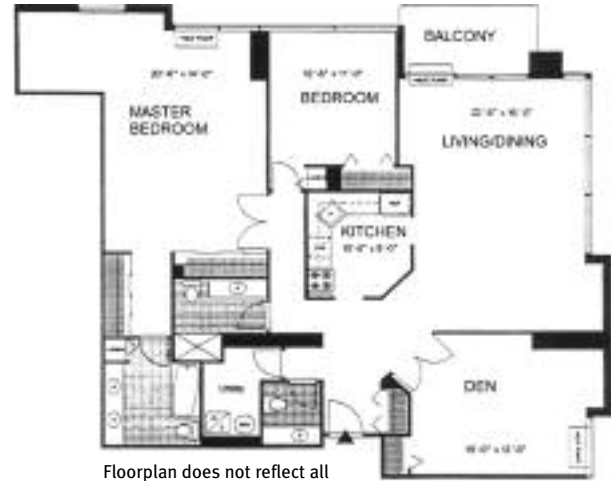
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Magnificently Renovated One Bedroom Home

One bedroom, one and half bathroom with gourmet kitchen, spacious dining and living room with access to a balcony. The master bedroom has hardwood floors throughout, huge walk-in closet and a marble appointed ensuite bathroom. 1,118 sf
\$459,900



Floorplan does not reflect all changes made by seller.

Renovated Two Bedroom Plus Den on a High Floor with Panoramic River and City Views

Corner two bedroom plus den, two bathroom with a private balcony, a corner living room and dining room with window walls with breathtaking river views, a recently renovated kitchen and updated master and hallway bathrooms. 1,734 sf
\$895,000



Penthouse One Bedroom Bi-level with Panoramic Views

Sun-soaked, one-of-a-kind bi-level penthouse with 1 bedroom and 2.5 baths featuring see-forever river and city views to the south and east from floor-to-ceiling windows and a private balcony, a recently renovated high-end chef's kitchen, an entire floor bedroom suite with sitting room, and magnificently appointed bathrooms. 1825 sf
\$799,900



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Beginning Wednesday, September 9, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Powel House Botanical Art Classes

This fall's eight sessions of botanical art instruction, held at the historic Powel House, 244 S. 3rd Street, will run Wednesday mornings, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., from September 9 through November 4, with no class September 30. Instructor Sarah Maxwell welcomes all ranges of drawing ability. For further information and a supplies list, e-mail smaxwell@fordham.edu.

Keiko Nibu Tarver, whose painting was recently selected for the 18th annual American Society of Botanical Artists' International Show (ASBA), confides that she had not painted since middle school, but that this course gave her inspiration. She says, "Painting flowers in a cozy 18th-century living room with classmates is, for me, a very precious and enjoyable time. There, I feel like I am at home with a kind tutor."

"ASBA's recognition of Keiko's talent is a huge honor," says Sarah, "and her painting will be shown from November 4 through December 30, 2015, at the New York Design Center, 200 Lexington Avenue, New York City." The event is free, but please call 215-925-2688 to reserve.

Thursday, October 8, 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Fundraising the Roof

The 3rd Annual Wine and Beer Party will take place at the Physick House, 321 S. 4th Street. This neighborhood bash for the Fundraising the Roof campaign will include beer, wine, an abundance of food and great conviviality.

Wednesday, October 14, 6 to 6:30 p.m.

Happy Birthday Billy!

"Give William Penn The Respect He Deserves Party" — A Gratitude with Attitude Celebration hosted by the Association of Philadelphia Tour Guides at Welcome Park, 2nd and Sansom Streets.

Tuesday, October 20, 2:30 p.m.

How to Prevent Heart Attacks

An upcoming program for Society Hill — Hot and Healthy! will be held at The Athenaeum of Philadelphia, 219 S. 6th Street, with a presentation by Dr. Robert Norris on "How to Prevent Heart Attacks." Dr. Norris is Chief of the Department of Cardiology at Pennsylvania Hospital. His clinical interests include coronary artery disease, heart failure and the treatment of high cholesterol.



You're invited to the Fundraising the Roof Wine and Beer Party at the Physick House.



Keiko Nibu Tarver's painting of a horse chestnut.



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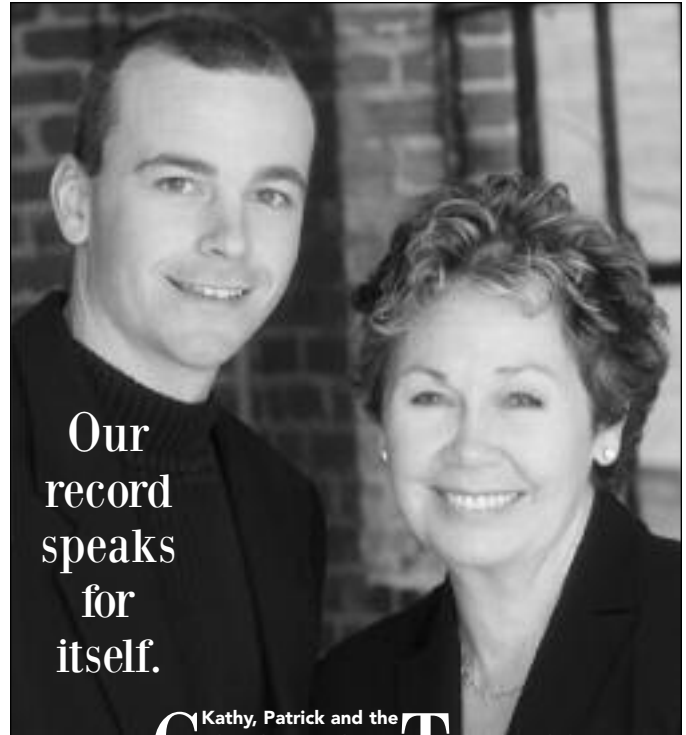
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B E W E L L N O W

BY JULIE FEATHERMAN

Philadelphia Trails

A Guide to Walking Meditation

Movement and meditation go hand in hand. Walking Meditation is a practice known for fostering serenity and stillness of mind. Thich Nhat Hanh has said, “The purpose of walking meditation is walking meditation itself.”

Local meditation teacher George Hoffman believes that “Meditation is about awareness and focus as much as it is about quiet, so the city presents some unique opportunities and challenges for the meditator. My favorite walking meditation is to fully immerse myself in ‘urbaness.’”

Here are five Philadelphia paths with varying degrees of urbaness to consider if you’d like to experiment with this unique practice.

Penn Treaty Park

Historic Penn Treaty Park, located at Delaware Avenue and Beach Street in Fishtown, offers seven walkable acres edging the Delaware River shoreline. Observe neighbors picnicking and playing in the park where William Penn and the Lenape Tribe signed a peace treaty under an elm tree in 1683.

Old City to Society Hill

Hoffman’s recommendation is a perfect place to begin. “I start up 3rd Street under the bridge and walk south through Old City, taking in the people, the bustle, the construction and the facades of the buildings. Independence National Park presents me with trees and relative quiet, and once I cross Walnut Street, things get downright peaceful. By the time I reach St. Peter’s, the experience is as full and contemplative as any walk through the woods.”

Ben Franklin Bridge

The BFB walkway’s south entrance is located at 5th and Race Street, across the street from the

U.S. Mint. The height and expansiveness of the bridge, coupled with speeding cars, slow-moving boats and deep water, mirror the experience of physical movement and inner quiet.

Lavender Loop in the Wissahickon Park

This seven-mile trail is an often-overlooked path that begins at the intersection of West Mermaid Lane and Crefeld Street in Chestnut Hill. Lavender Loop gets its name from the lavender trail markers that begin and end your walk. You’ll walk silently under magnolia trees, while you pass by the awesome waterfall gorge and a sculpture of Native American Chief Tedyuscung overlooking the Wissahickon Creek.



Chief Tedyuscung

Fairmont Park Horticultural Center

Home to Centennial Arboretum and Shofusu, the Japanese House and Garden, this heavenly slice of Fairmont Park provides ample acreage to practice Mindfulness. Walk around the tranquil reflection pool or look to the koi fish in Shofusu’s pond to help focus your thoughts.

Since true mindful awareness can be found anywhere, try forgoing your zabutan (meditation pillow), lace up your sneakers and head outside.



EXERCISE AND SOCIALIZE

The end of the summer brings cooler days and colorful foliage. Enjoy both with your neighbors in these walking groups.

The **Walkie/Talkies** meet at Three Bears Park, Delancey Street between 2nd and 3rd Streets, on Tuesday and Thursday mornings at 8:15 a.m. for a one-hour stroll through our historic community. Anyone is welcome to participate in this non-stressful, one-hour exercise and socialize program.

“**Philly Is Walking In The Park!**” meets at the fountain in the center of Washington Square, 6th and Locust Streets, at 8 a.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays for a half-hour, self-paced walk through our historic, beautiful park, led by neighbor Dr. Lisa Unger. All are invited to join.

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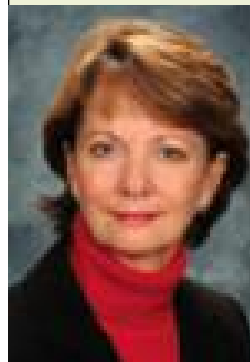
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MEMBERSHIP REPORT

BY MATT DE JULIO

2015 Membership Reaches All-Time High

By early August, Society Hill Civic Association membership grew to 1,090, which is a historic high, surpassing the previous 2013 high of 1,068. Added to the rolls are 126 new members. Seventy-nine members from 2014 have still not renewed, and many more have fallen by the wayside from previous years.

If you have delayed in sending in your renewal or wish to join, please do so today.

Don't forget the extra perks of membership:


- Discounts at participating businesses
- An extra \$100 subsidy for fixing your bricks
- A free contractor's list
- A free historic window decal for your house, along with a copy of the historic register
- Preferred pricing at social events, such as the Washington Square Affair
- A free copy of the updated Historic Guide to Society Hill, to be published this fall

We welcome each of the over 3,600 Society Hill households to join SHCA. Your civic association helps protect your real estate investment by funding many of our improvement projects, as well as providing subsidies to neighbors who plant trees and fix their sidewalks. We help enhance your quality of life when we advocate on your behalf regarding zoning changes, real estate taxes, crime problems and traffic issues. All of this is accomplished through the hard work of our dedicated board of directors, committee members, block coordinators and, most importantly, your membership dues.

Without member dues, SHCA would cease to function. Protect your neighborhood and your real estate investment. **Sign up today!**

Email Mattdejulio@aol.com with questions or comments, which will be shared with our board members representing every quadrant in our most unique historic neighborhood.

Matt De Julio is a retired publishing executive. He has served SHCA as its administrator since 2001.



Membership Application

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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.

<p>Residential Memberships</p> <p><input type="radio"/> \$ 50 Basic Household Membership</p> <p><input type="radio"/> \$ 40 Senior/Student/Single</p> <p><input type="radio"/> \$ 100 Federal Friend</p> <p><input type="radio"/> \$ 150 Georgian Grantor</p> <p><input type="radio"/> \$ 300 Jefferson Benefactor</p> <p><input type="radio"/> \$ 500 Washington Benefactor</p> <p><input type="radio"/> \$ 1,000 Benjamin Franklin Benefactor</p>	<p>Business Memberships</p> <p><input type="radio"/> \$ 100 Institutions – 5+ employees</p> <p><input type="radio"/> \$ 60 Institutions – fewer than 5 employees</p>
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Additional Contributions

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

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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

The Consummate Collector Of Washington Square

To say that Byron Fink has the largest and finest collection of biscuit tins on the planet may be an exaggeration. "I only have about 400," the passionate collector estimates. "I know of two people in the world who have larger collections. But according to the experts, mine is amazing," he says, displaying a container shaped like old leather-bound books.

Byron not only collects tins, but art glass, china, paintings, vintage posters, unusual lamps and furniture and books. "I've been living at Hopkinson House since 1962, when it wasn't even *finished*," he recalls. "They didn't make us wear hard hats, but it was under construction." He had been residing a few blocks from Rittenhouse Square in a privately owned townhouse when it was sold, and he was forced to move. "All the way down there!" his friends exclaimed. At the time, he was production manager of the *Jewish Exponent* newspaper, where he began working as an office boy upon graduation from West Philly High. "I made \$20 a week and then became a salesman and, eventually, production director. I retired in 1996, after 48 years," he notes incredulously.

"Fifty years ago, this neighborhood was derelict and Independence Place was just an empty lot," Byron reminisces. "But there was Washington Square. What could be better than having a park for your front yard!"

At the time, he frequented two Jewish restaurants on Fifth Street. "Today, a group of friends and I regularly eat lunch at La Buca," he says. Since moving to Hop House, Byron has also moved up, literally, as the condo was being built. He started in a studio and now lives in a one-bedroom, crammed with his various collections. "My former partner and I first started buying paintings in the 80s — not with the idea of investing, but just because we liked them," says Byron. "The same is true of the ceramics that came next, to be followed by contemporary art glass."



Byron and one of his favorite biscuit tins. David Roberts Photo

"And then one day in 1990 in Atlantic City, I came across a biscuit tin shaped like a Martin bird," Byron relates. "I knew nothing about biscuit tins, so I began researching them. I'm a prodigious reader."

Essentially, he learned that the British made them to package and display what Americans call cookies, beginning in the mid-19th century and continuing up until World War II, when the metal was in demand

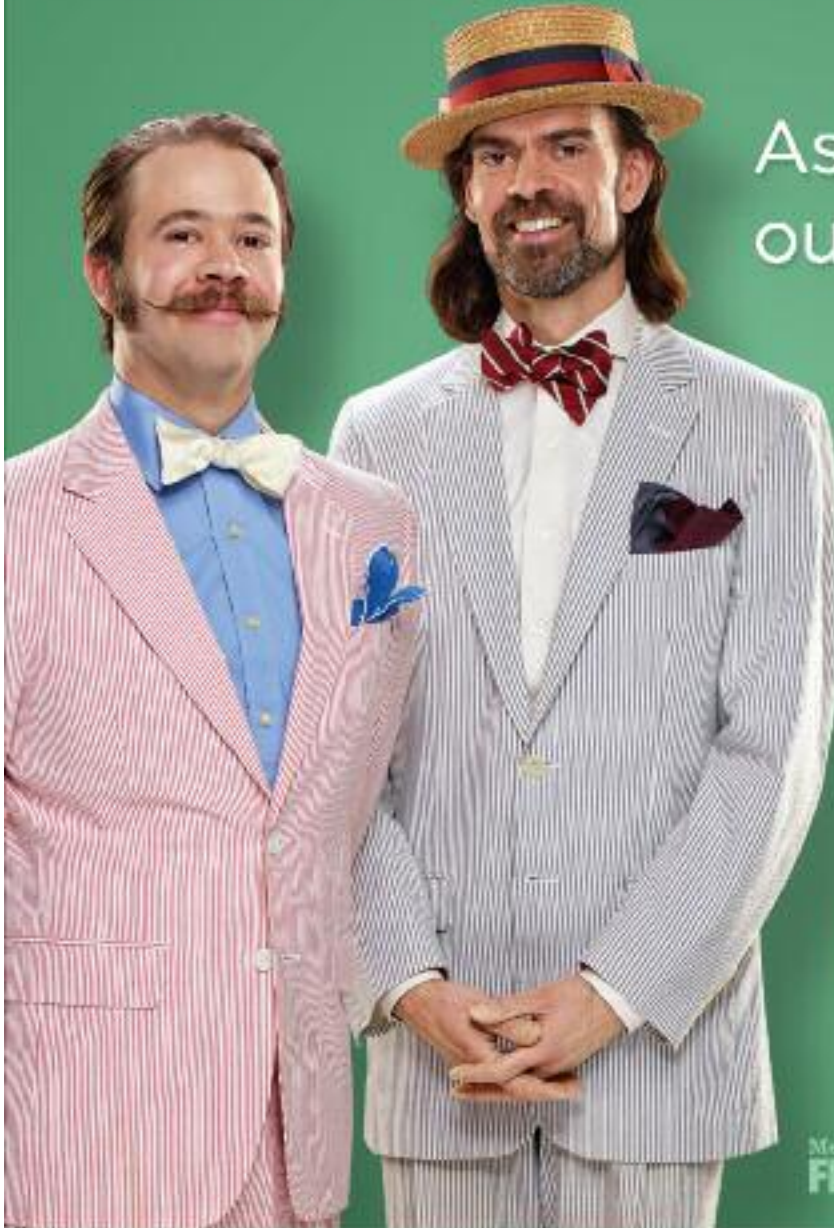
for armaments. Their heyday was in the 20s and 30s, which is one of Byron's favorite periods. "They were lovingly and cleverly made in the shape of animals, automobiles, or whatever, in order to attract customers," he explains. "After their contents were consumed, the tins were kept as decorative objects. Today, of course, they are cherished by collectors."

In addition to collecting, Byron is an intrepid theatergoer who sees just about everything staged in Philadelphia. "We're so close to the Arden and the Walnut and the Lantern," he exclaims. He's also actively involved at Hopkinson House. "Since I retired, I was editor of, and sole contributor to, the Hopkinson House newsletter for 10 years. And I was on its council — not for the same 10 years. I also volunteered as a reader at the Associated Services for the Blind on Walnut Street, which presented me with a Lifetime Volunteer Award in November, 2008, 'for ten years of promoting self-esteem, independence and self-determination in people who are blind or visually impaired.'" Today, he leads an exercise class in the building's solarium.

Because there is barely a square inch of his apartment unadorned with one of his favorite things, Byron is no longer actively seeking out tins, or anything else. "I love living amid my collections," he says happily. "Wherever I look, my eye rests on something charming."

Jane Biberman, former editor of *Inside Magazine*, is a freelance writer who has contributed to a variety of publications.

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