

SOCIETY HILL

Reporter

March/April 2017

The Newsletter
of The Society Hill
Civic Association

www.societyhillcivic.org

Community Updated on Acme Project



Existing street-level view, facing south.



Proposed street-level view.

The Society Hill Civic Association (SHCA) held an emergency meeting updating the community on the status of the Acme project on January 26, two days after our president, Rosanne Loesch, received the project plans from Councilman Mark Squilla.

A notice posted on the building on January 13 was the first indication our civic association had that the owner of the location, an affiliate of Alterra Property Group, was issued a conditional permit. This conditional permit is for the demolition of the existing building and construction of a 53-foot, 5-story project with 65 units and 43 underground parking spaces.

At the meeting, neighbors were brought up to date with a timeline that went back to 2015, when the

site was put under contract for sale to Alterra. In May of that year, the developer presented three plans to SHCA without attempting to first engage the neighbors.

By that August, Alterra had received a zoning permit for a 5,719-square-foot addition to the existing building and the construction of two additional stories above the existing building with no mention of a demolition. SHCA appealed this based on the argument that it did not conform to all requirements of the zoning code.

An affiliate of Alterra purchased the site in February 2016 and was issued a second zoning permit for a 38-foot project. SHCA appealed this second permit, again based on the failure to comply to zoning code requirements.

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GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

SHCA will host its next General Membership Meeting on March 15 at Pennsylvania Hospital's Zubrow Auditorium, located on the first floor inside the main entrance at 8th Street near Spruce. Please arrive by 6:45 for refreshments and the opportunity to socialize with neighbors.

Representatives from OLIN Studio, the preeminent Philadelphia landscape design firm, will present

two very creative plans for the redesign of Foglietta Plaza, which is in Society Hill bordered by Spruce and Dock Streets and Front Street and the 38th Parallel Place.

The continuing dialogue on a Society Hill master plan with urban planning firm KSK will continue at Zubrow Auditorium on Thursday, April 13 at 7:15 p.m. Arrive at 6:45 p.m. for light refreshments.

WEDNESDAY

March

15

5:45 p.m.

7:30-9 p.m.

Speakers:

Topic:

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Society Hill Civic Association Meetings
Wednesday, March 15, 2017

Pennsylvania Hospital
8th & Spruce Streets

Board Meeting

Pennsylvania Hospital's Grand Court Room

General Membership Meeting

Pennsylvania Hospital's Zubrow Auditorium

Representatives of OLIN Studio,

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Redesign of Foglietta Plaza

YOU LIGHT UP MY LIFE



Thanks to the Penn's Landing Square Landscape Committee for lighting up trees at the corner of 2nd and Spruce Streets, as well as the neighborhood. A welcome bit of winter cheer! Bonnie Halda Photo



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May/June Issue
April 1

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The views set forth in the opinion articles are the views of the authors and are not necessarily those of SHCA.

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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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY ROSANNE LOESCH

Protecting the Character and Scale Of Our World Heritage City

I recently read a *New York Times* article about how Shanghai has lost its cultural past and architectural history by destroying old buildings (and the old way of life) and erecting skyscrapers everywhere. You can read this piece at www.nytimes.com/2017/01/23/travel/shanghai-shikumen-architecture-homes-china.

This reminded me of the worrying direction in which Philadelphia is heading.

One of the goals of Philadelphia's new zoning code was to create more density. Why we need more density in a city that encompasses such a vast area of land, I don't know. Of course density is a code word for greater height and mass, as well as potentially smaller units — like micro apartments.

But what people love about Philadelphia is its eclectic neighborhoods; low-rise pedestrian-friendly streets and historic architecture. Preserving, enhancing and expanding upon these didn't seem to be the priority of the zoning code overhaul, however. It felt, instead, like a developer-driven process the city embraced for its potential new tax revenues or maybe the way it would "modernize" Philadelphia.

The Crosstown Coalition is the alliance of neighborhood groups that SHCA is part of. It had input in the zoning overhaul but rarely seemed to alter what came out of the process. Even fewer of the citizen recommendations survived City Council. But nearer and dearer to our residents was the total lack of consideration given to historic districts, particularly Society Hill. This is arguably the premiere historic district in the U.S. — birthplace of the nation, the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

We were told that our protections lie with the Historic Commission and that the Historic Commission was not being overhauled.

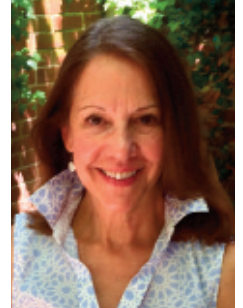
But zoning is where height and mass start to be determined, and the zoning classifications and overlays we were assigned didn't differ from other neighborhoods. Nothing special was done to protect the scale of this most historic district. CMX-2 zoning, which is small-scale neighborhood commercial and residential mixed use, with potential additional height and density bonuses, was assigned to a number of important properties in Society Hill — like the Acme site, for example.

The Acme site is surrounded and abutted by the historic fabric of 18th- and 19th-century buildings, including Society Hill Synagogue, built as a Baptist church in 1829. In addition, the Acme was part of a shopping district created during the redevelopment of the community in the 1950s. It was considered to be a vital element to the success of restoring the historic district to a residential neighborhood.

I would argue that the nation's first World Heritage City should be protecting its unique character. This includes the scale and history of not only Society Hill, but also dozens of other neighborhoods that are equally historic. We have a vibrant constellation of skyscrapers in our business district, which seems useful and appropriate. But must we disfigure our lovely city by dotting tall buildings everywhere? Must we lose the human scale and the eclectic mix of cornices all of a similar scale, with none overpowering each other? And must we lose the open space that contributes so much to that sense of "ahhh" when returning from dense metropolises like New York?

We're capable of destroying what we love about our city, but we also can act to save it.

Rosanne Loesch is an attorney. She, her husband and two children have lived in a historic house on Spruce Street since 2002 and, before that, lived for 14 years in the Washington Square West neighborhood.



Rosanne Loesch,
SHCA President

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SHCA BOARD ELECTIONS

Seeking Nominations for Directors and Officers

If you have good ideas about how to improve our community and are willing to roll up your sleeves to help get the job done, consider volunteering for a position on the SHCA Board of Directors and Officers.

Join a team of dedicated and hard-working neighbors who embrace SHCA's mission (see page 2) and labor on behalf of more than 5,000 residents and 3,000 households. This year's elections will take place at our May 17 General Membership Meeting. Members will elect a president, two vice presidents, secretary, treasurer and up to eight directors at large — all for one-year terms. Also, four of the 12 quadrant directors will finish their three-year terms and need to be replaced.

SHCA's Nominating and Election Committee proposes individuals for these positions. Additionally, others may be nominated by petition. To nominate yourself or a neighbor, submit a petition signed by 10 SHCA members. Nomination for quadrant director requires the signatures of 10 residents of that quadrant. Although not

required, the committee appreciates information about the nominee.

Those being recommended for a position must live within the boundaries of Society Hill, be at least 21 years of age and be a member of SHCA. Visit www.societyhillcivic.org for more information about our civic association, its board and nominating process. Submissions must be received by March 30 in order to be considered. Nominations will be listed in the next issue of the *Reporter*. Send nominations to SHCA Administrator Matt DeJulio, at mattdejulio@aol.com.

SHCA divides Society Hill into quadrants for the purpose of electing its Board of Directors. They are labeled North-east, Southeast, North-west, and Southwest. Fourth Street serves as the dividing line between the east and west quadrants. Spruce Street is the dividing line between the north and south quadrants.

Quadrant Confusion?



SHCA VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

2017 Open House and Garden Tour

Mark your calendars for Sunday, May 21, from 1 to 5 p.m., when the 2017 Open House and Garden Tour will open some of Society Hill's loveliest places to the public — eight homes, two private gardens, a museum house and a historic house of worship.

It's a memorable day for a good cause since 100 percent of the funds raised will come back to SHCA for neighborhood improvement projects.

We are still looking for interesting houses or condominiums. Please let us know if you're aware of historic or modern homes that might be good candidates for our tour.

Also, we always need volunteers to be hosts in the houses. If you volunteer for two hours in a house, you will get one free tour ticket.

For house and volunteer recommendations, contact Martha Levine at 215-629-0727 or marthalev6@gmail.com. For tickets and information, contact Matt DeJulio at 215-629-1288 or mattdejulio@aol.com.



Washington Square Affair Chair

SHCA is looking for volunteers to chair the 2018 Washington Square Affair and work on its committee. This event has been a huge success in the past, with proceeds directed towards the beautification of Washington Square. Our civic organization is the only entity that has been granted the privilege by Independence National Historical Society to host an event here. Contact SHCA Administrator Matt DeJulio at mattdejulio@aol.com if you can give us your valuable gift of time. Remember, together we can make it happen!

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All Gloria Dei's venerable trees remained standing in Hurricane Sandy, preserving the historic graves below.

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THE MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Welcome to a Revolutionary New Neighbor

It's been a long time coming — in fact almost 250 years — but Society Hill is thrilled to finally welcome the Museum of the American Revolution to this historic neighborhood!

To realize that the original story of the War of Independence started right here in our own back yard is both exciting and humbling. It's truly fitting then that the official record of this story should be here, also.

And what a complicated tale it tells. While our forefathers had the foresight to suggest that all human beings are created equal, they were only thinking about white landholders when they wrote our founding documents. The new museum takes a wider view, capturing the perspectives of Native Americans, African Americans and women of all races, among others. In so doing, it helps inspire a deep appreciation for the importance of the struggle for equality, one that continues to this day.

Designed around four provocative questions that move the visitor from the dazzling light-filled entry space through intimate galleries and recreated historic environments to the dynamic theatrical moment when George Washington's original command center tent is revealed, the experience animates the events, people and ideals of the United States' founding.

Housing one of the premier collections of its kind, it began more than a century ago when a minister and amateur history buff in Valley Forge raised funds from around the nation to purchase the original tent that George Washington used as his command center during the American Revolution. It has grown to include several thousand Revolutionary-era artifacts,

including weapons, works of art, manuscripts, personal items and more.

Located at the corner of Third and Chestnut Streets, the redbrick building fits in well with its historic surroundings. Three stories high, it includes permanent and temporary exhibit galleries, theaters, education spaces, collection storage, a café, a retail store, an event space and offices. The third floor includes jaw-dropping views of Carpenters' Hall, the First Bank of the United States and Independence Hall through nearly floor-to-ceiling windows and an open-air balcony.

Open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., the Museum of the American Revolution has extended summer hours from Memorial Day through Labor Day, 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Admission is \$19 for adults with AARP and AAA discounts available on site. Children under five are free. To find more admission choices and visitor information, visit www.amrevmuseum.org.

- *How did people become revolutionaries?*
- *How did the Revolution survive its darkest hours?*
- *How revolutionary was the war?*
- *What kind of nation did the Revolution create?*



General Washington's Headquarters Tent is the most iconic surviving artifact of the Revolution.

AN OPPORTUNITY TO PARTY!

Grand opening festivities will begin on Wednesday, April 19, the 242nd anniversary of the "shot heard 'round the world" that ignited the Revolutionary War.

The day will start out with a reverential tribute at 8:30 a.m. at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Washington Square. The U.S. Army Old Guard will lay a wreath, the Oneida Indian Nation will offer a blessing and prayers will be offered from representatives of regional congregations.

The program will continue at Independence Hall with pageantry and patriotic fanfare, including performances by the U.S. Army Old Guard color guards and fife and drum corps. Performers will then march down Chestnut Street to the new museum.

An official dedication and ribbon-cutting ceremony will open the museum to the public at 10:30 a.m. Tickets are required for the ceremony as space is quite restricted. Visit www.amrevmuseum.org to learn more.

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KEEPING POSTED

BY AL CAVALARI

APS Continues the Work Franklin Started

In my last column, I asked: If Ben Franklin asked for your support, could you provide it? I'm showing my own support by joining four of the esteemed institutions started here in Philadelphia by Ben Franklin.

The American Philosophical Society (APS) is a logical follow-up to our previous column's look at the Library Company. Both grew out of initiatives Ben Franklin created as a young "leather apron" tradesman, with the idea of collecting and sharing knowledge.

APS rose out of the study group organized by Franklin called the "Junto." Inspired by the belief that intellectual inquiry and self-examination would lead to better citizens and a better society, this "club of mutual improvement" had a system in which members would lead discussions and present papers on any subject "to be conducted in the sincere spirit of inquiry after truth, without fondness for dispute or desire of victory," as Franklin tells us in his autobiography. Almost three centuries later, our nation's oldest learned society is still "promoting useful knowledge" just as its founder intended.

Our postcard shows one of the ways ASP carries out its mission. The first building on the left, just south of Old City Hall, is now known as Philosophical Hall. It was a construction site in 1787 during the very weeks that our Constitution was in development in the Pennsylvania State House just across the yard. In this image, there is a third floor that was added in 1890 but removed in 1948. This building is now the APS museum, where it presents special exhibits. In December, it concluded a three-year series devoted to Thomas Jefferson. My favorite artifact was his APS membership certificate signed by Franklin.

Since 1743, ASP has had only 5,500 members, and there are about 1,000 living today. Around 100 of them hold a Nobel Prize. Past members include Washington, Adams, Hamilton, Paine, Madison and Lafayette. One cannot apply to join, as it is an honorary society. If you are eminent in your field of arts or sciences, you'll be noticed and invited. Only existing members can make nominations for membership.

But there is a path to membership open to the rest of us. APS has a friends group open to anyone. Now I, too, am at least a kind of member in this society that Franklin created for us. The membership gets you some nice publications

and invitations to "members only" events. Mostly, you get the satisfaction of continuing the work Franklin started.

Library Hall, with the statue of Franklin inset into the façade, is just across the street from the museum and houses the collection of some 13 million rare books and other objects. The library is open to all researchers who demonstrate a need to use the unique resources under its care. To gain access to the collection, you'll be asked to explain the nature of your inquiry and perhaps make an appointment. I've done research there, and it was very easy to navigate.

Here is a secret known to Philadelphia tour guides. Go around to the side entrance of Library Hall and just walk in. Along the walls of this reception area are glass cases in which APS puts out a changing display. There is never a line, and the visit is free. The hundreds of tourists wrapped around the block waiting to get into Independence Hall across the street don't know what they're missing. You might be looking at Lewis and Clark's original journals or William Penn's Charter of Privileges from 1701 that formally established Pennsylvania's government and guaranteed the "freedom of conscience" that you still possess. Leading up to the 4th of July, they usually have Jefferson's handwritten draft of the Declaration of Independence on display, and you will likely have it all to yourself to silently contemplate. Pop in every month to see what's new.

The next museum exhibition, "Curious Revolutionaries: The Peales of Philadelphia" will run from April 7 through December 30. The museum is located at 104 S. 5th Street. Library Hall is open to the public between 9 a.m. and 4:45 p.m., Monday through Friday. Visit www.amphilsoc.org or call 215-440-3440 for more information.

Al Cavalari is a certified member of the Association of Philadelphia Tour Guides and gives tours as a volunteer for the National Park Service. For a day job, he operates The Flag Guys, a flag business in upstate New York.

"...to be conducted in the sincere spirit of inquiry after truth, without fondness for dispute or desire of victory"



Independence Hall postcard, c. 1907



The side entrance of Library Hall

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STEPPING BACK IN TIME

BY SANDRA ROTHMAN

Who Was Levi Ganges?

Why is he buried near the swings at Weccacoe Playground?

Society Hill and its surrounding neighborhoods are rich with a complicated history. What may appear one way is often revealed, upon deeper examination, to be something entirely different. To understand this more fully, let's take a walk a few blocks south of our community. Here we find an outdoor play area that's more than slides and swings, and an ordinary man whose story sheds light on a troubling historical period.

At first glance, Weccacoe Playground at 400 Catharine Street appears to be a pleasant urban retreat. Few people would guess that it's also a graveyard. Buried in the southeast corner lies Levi Ganges, an African American man with a compelling backstory, who died from a stroke at the age of 88.

To comprehend why Levi, along with well over 3,000 men and women of African descent, is anonymously interred under the asphalt first requires an understanding of some of 18th-century Philadelphia burial norms.

Stranger's Burying Ground

In the early 1700s, the local government set aside a potter's field cemetery for the entombment of travelers who died while passing through Philadelphia, as well as residents who lived at the margins of its social order. Located at what was then the outer edge of the city, it was named the Stranger's Burying Ground. Today we call this green graveyard Washington Square.

Thomas H. Keels notes in *Philadelphia Graveyards and Cemeteries* that most religious institutions originally barred interment of African Americans. The Stranger's Burying Ground was one of the few burial options available to the Black community.

After the Revolutionary War, Black leaders attempted to lay claim over the ground's "Negro" section, most likely the northwest corner of the square. A series of petitions written to the City Common Council between 1782 and 1793 represented this community's first civil and political assertions of autonomy and self-determination. It also reflected the enormous importance attached to this burial site and the ancestral remains interred within it.

The group's last petition was voluntarily withdrawn when members of the African Church, formerly the Free African Society, changed the

dialog by purchasing land at 5th and Adelphi Streets, where the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas opened in 1794. Also founded in that year at 6th and Lombard Streets was Mother Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME). The Black community was finally able to bury its dead with dignity.

Bethel Burying Ground

Together with trustees, prominent Black historical figure the Right Reverend Bishop Richard Allen purchased the Catherine Street site in April 1810, because Mother Bethel AME Church had by then used all its available burial space. The location was perfect as it was within walking distance of the church, but outside the city's southern boundary of present day South Street. The discrimination that discouraged Black burials within city limits would not apply here. The plot of slightly more than one-quarter acre, named Bethel Burying Ground, remained in active use by the congregation until 1868. Levi Ganges died and was laid to rest there on September 14, 1846.

The Ganges Africans

Very little of Levi's personal history has survived. A death certificate assures us that he lived a full life, died at 88 years of age and was buried at the Bethel Burying Ground. A notation in the records of the Philadelphia Saving Fund Society documented that in August 1831, Levi opened a savings account while residing at what is now 225 Market Street. That's the entire paper trail. However, based on Levi's surname "Ganges" we can hypothesize quite a bit about his past.

The *Philadelphia Gazette* published a notice on August 4, 1800, asking readers to donate clothing for the 135 Africans aboard the *U.S.S. Ganges* who had arrived at the Lazaretto, the city's quarantine station on the Delaware River, totally naked and in need of "linen cloaths [sic] for their accommodation."

The Ganges saga was one of the earliest cases of slave trade violation confronted by the new republic. It reveals not only the country's *continued on page 13*

A walking tour through local history.



Near the swings at Weccacoe Playground in Queen Village are the interred remains of more than 3,000 African Americans.

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Who was Levi Ganges? *continued from page 11*

sectional differences over slavery, but also Philadelphia’s legal response when confronted with these issues.

This story began when the *Ganges*, a U.S. Navy sloop, captured two American schooners off the coast of Cuba with kidnapped African men, women and children on board. These ships were in violation of the 1794 Slave Trade Act, which prohibited American vessels from participating in the slave trade. They were brought back to Philadelphia for adjudication in federal court, where the judge placed the surviving victims under the care and supervision of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society. All were all given the surname Ganges, indentured throughout the Philadelphia area to mostly Quakers and later became free.

It seems very probable that Levi was one of these Ganges survivors based on his age and last name. If so, we know that he was indentured for a minimum of four years, obtained some level of education and learned a skill. At the end of his indenture, he received two full suits of clothing, one of them new, and a modest sum of money between \$15 and \$25.

The Weccacoe Playground

The Bethel Burying Ground served its community well until the church encountered financial difficulties in the late 1860s. At first it rented the property for wagon storage, but by 1872, local businesses were dumping trash on the site, and the city began to receive complaints. Mother Bethel sold the property to the city in 1889 and used the funds to build the present church on the same Lombard Street site.

By 1910 the cemetery had been transformed into Weccacoe Square, first used as a children’s

vegetable plot and then a playground as part of the Progressive Era’s American Playground Movement. More about this effort can be found in the feature about Starr Garden in the November/December 2016 *Reporter*.

Slowly, Bethel Burying Ground faded from local memory as slides and swings replaced tombstones and an iron fence replaced the original brick wall.

Paying Respect to the Dead

Thanks to historian Terry Buckalew, who discovered the graveyard in unrelated research, Bethel Burying Ground has come back into public consciousness. In 2013, an archaeological investigation was performed on behalf of the Pennsylvania Horticulture Society before the start of scheduled playground renovations. The report, found at www.bethelburyinggroundproject.files.wordpress.com/2015/01/1.pdf, is interesting reading.

Buckalew has a fascinating site at www.bethelburyinggroundproject.com.

As a result of the investigation, this 19th-century African American burial ground was named to the National Register of Historic Places in February 2016. Ongoing discussions between the various stakeholders will eventually determine an appropriate way to honor this spot where thousands of Philadelphia citizens of African heritage were laid to rest. Many were members of the founding generations who labored to establish the city’s formative free Black community in the late 18th century as well as those, like Levi Ganges, who endured the struggle for autonomy and equality in subsequent decades.

Sandra Rothman, a retired educator for the School District of Philadelphia, is the editor-in-chief of the *Reporter*.



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EXERCISE AND SOCIALIZE

Even though our winter was comparatively mild this year, you might still need to bundle up for chilly spring mornings if you join one or both of Society Hill’s 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. Any-one is welcome to participate in this non-stressful, one-hour exercise & 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 us.

THE ANNUALS EVENT

The Hill-Physick House Yearly Plant Sale

May 5 through 7, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
See ad on page 6.



WELCOME BASKET RECIPIENTS

A Major Milestone Reached!

SHCA welcomes new homeowners to Society Hill in a grand way: a basket packed with fresh foods, neighborhood information and gift certificates to many area restaurants, theatres, shops, services and museums. If you or someone

you know is a first-time homeowner in Society Hill within the last 12 months, contact Martha Levine to make an appointment to receive a basket in your home. She can be reached at marthalev6@gmail.com or 215-629-0727.

"It's such a warm and wonderful gesture. We are so pleased to be here in Society Hill"



Connor and Caroline Liddic



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"We look forward to participating in the activities of the Civic Association"



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Vijay and Patricia Kapur

"Such a special and personal way to welcome us into this neighborhood."



Carl and Rhonda Moody



Stephanie Brian and Teddy

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800 Baskets and Counting

We thank all of the businesses and organizations that partner with us

to fill the baskets. Their donations are the lifeblood of the Welcome Basket program.



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Martha Weaver and Thomas Brennan



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'FIX THE BRIX'

BY MARTHA LEVINE

Fix Your Brix – Fix the Neighborhood

What is the aim of the “Fix the Brix” program? Why can't people just level their own sidewalks? Why doesn't the city take care of it?

“Fix the Brix” is a subsidy program that acts as an incentive for homeowners to make their sidewalks safe for pedestrians. It not only benefits the homeowner, but creates a level surface for all of us as we navigate our way to the gym, to the supermarket, to movies and restaurants, and while walking our dogs.

The City of Philadelphia has no sidewalk program; therefore we have taken it upon ourselves to improve sidewalks in the public walkway. Remember, your home ownership extends to the curb in front of your house, and any injuries there are your liability.

To date, over 200 property owners have participated in this initiative. Still, too many sidewalks, both brick and cement, have loose or uneven surfaces that pose a safety risk.

Here's how it works:

- Participants in the program will receive a subsidy of 40 percent of the total invoice for the leveling of their sidewalks, brick or cement. Current SHCA members receive up to \$400; non-members receive up to \$300.
 - First take a “before” photo of your problem sidewalk and email it to me at marthalev6@gmail.com.
 - Choose a mason (or arborist) to do the work — we can provide a suggested list if needed.
 - After the work is completed to your satisfaction, make a copy of your paid invoice and mail the original to us at: SHCA, P.O. Box 63503, Philadelphia PA 19147. If possible, include a copy of your cancelled check.
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ON OUR SHELF

BY RICHARD DE WYNGAERT

Intimate Family Memoir Chronicles Rise of Christianity

Shanghai Faithful by Jennifer Lin

Jennifer Lin, an award-winning investigative journalist for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, turns towards the personal in her new book *Shanghai Faithful*. Lin chronicles the history of Christianity in China from the early 19th century to the present through the lives of her ancestors, both an intimate family memoir and a sweeping historical saga. Weaving together rich historical detail and familial anecdote, Lin dramatizes the rise of Christianity in the face of anti-Western sentiment in China.

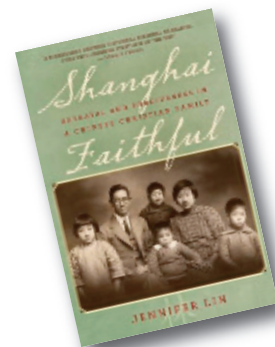
A compelling cast of characters animates Lin's story. Two powerful figures are at the center of the narrative: Lin's grandfather Reverend Lin Pu-Chi, an ordained priest and Western-trained educator, and her great-uncle Watchman Nee, an independent preacher and leader of a fracture Christian group. Lin Pu-Chi is a model pupil in China's Western schools who goes on to earn a masters at the University of Pennsylvania. Once home in China and married, he rises through the ranks of the Anglo-Christian community. Meanwhile, Watchman Nee's group, the Little Flock, gains nearly 70,000 followers and becomes a powerful force against the Anglo-Christian Church.

Despite their differences, both Watchman Nee and Lin Pu-Chi are marked men for the anti-Christian Communist revolution. Mobs form and red terror rises. Chairman Mao launches the Cultural Revolution and the Five Year Plan, spreading famine and fear. The Lin family is targeted by Red Guards, forcing the family into retreat in the countryside and causing the younger generation of Lins to resent their family. The drama carries readers to an opera house courtroom, where Watchman Nee is denounced for counterrevolutionary activities and sentenced to twenty years in prison. Lin describes with rich detail the trial of Watchman Nee and the subsequent suffering of the Lin family.

Lin culls from diverse sources, including missionary archives in England, records at the Lin Ancestral Hall and an archive of letters from Lin Pu-Chi to his son Paul, who expatriated to the United States before the Communist takeover in China. For Lin's investigative mind, these letters are like the last page of a detective novel. Constrained by the fear of surveillance and the limits of language for describing trauma, Lin Pu-Chi withholds from the letters all but the most superficial details of Lin family life. *Shanghai Faithful* is written from the moments withheld in the letters; it brings to surface long-hidden family stories and fills in the gaps with rich emotional life. It offers a sometimes touching, often painful, eye-opening account of a Christian family in China.

Jennifer Lin will be appearing at Head House Books this spring. See www.headhousebooks.com for more details.

Richard De Wyngaert is the owner of Head House Books, Society Hill's only local, independently owned bookstore, located at 619 S. 2nd Street. The reviewer for this article is **Hannah Salzer**, a bookseller with Head House Books.



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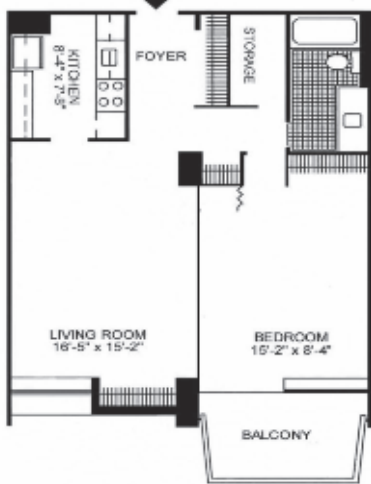
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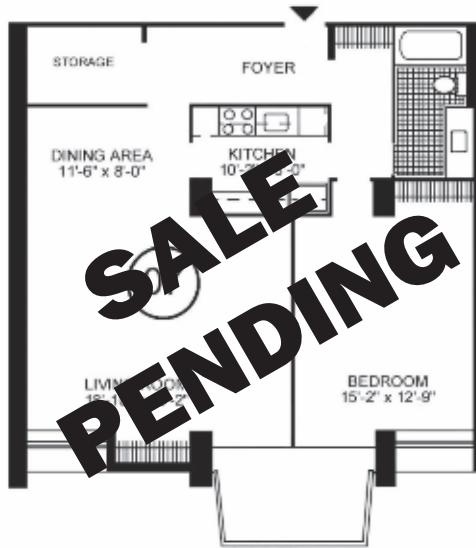
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SOUTH STREET HEADHOUSE DISTRICT

BY MIKE HARRIS

A Little Bird Spreads Its Wings

“In this industry, you never stop,” declared Jessica Nolen, the cheerful entrepreneur behind The Little Bird Bakery just off South Street at 517 S. 5th Street. Even though our interview fell on her 30th birthday, Jessica had been up since the crack of dawn baking.

No stranger to hard work, Jessica’s culinary career kicked off at age 13, when she launched “Desserts by Jessica” and whipped up delicious treats for a bar in her neighborhood. From that point on, Jessica knew that her future lay in the food services industry, and she threw herself into improving her skills. “I took every home economics and food class I could throughout high school,” this baker proclaimed. She further developed her interest in baking at trade school, which she attended for several years, and then moved to Philadelphia in 2005 — spotting that the city was growing and that Philadelphians are serious about their food in general and their baked goods especially!

After working in several restaurants in Philadelphia, Jessica joined the team at local neighborhood eatery Whetstone Tavern. She met her future husband, Whetstone’s head chef Jeremy Nolen, as well as the husband-and-wife team behind Brauhaus Schmitz, the award-winning restaurant on South Street.

The Perfect Pretzel

Brauhaus was searching for an authentic Bavarian-style pretzel, and Jessica was able to deliver. She and her husband tirelessly tested a slew of recipes until that eureka moment, when they knew they’d cracked it. “The water in Philly is just perfect for making German-style pretzels. Our pretzels are fluffier and have a slightly different flavor than the traditional Philly pretzel. The Bavarian twisted salted pretzel is really our trademark and is probably the thing I am most proud about,” Jessica reported.

The bakery carries German-style pastries, including a remarkable Sacher torte, coffee cakes, apple strudel and, of course, her hand-twisted pretzels.

The Daily Special

She is currently exploring two new facets of the business: moving into wholesale and offering daily bakery specials for her loyal neighborhood clientele. She explained, “I’ve been testing a daily bakery special. On Tuesday for example, my locals know that we’ll have barley and sage bread, on Friday it’s cinnamon buns, and Saturday they can

expect fresh croissants. We have a loyal base who now expect us to produce certain things on certain days. One customer told me that my apple strudel is even better than her grandmother’s. I’m German on my dad’s side, and that’s quite a compliment!”

What lessons would Jessica have to share with other potential female entrepreneurs who are considering launching a new business? “When you go out on your own in this industry, and it’s still a largely male-dominated industry, you have to bring your A-game,” she commented.

“Women are wonderful entrepreneurs because they lead with their hearts. There’s a proliferation of female-run businesses in our neighborhood, like Roz’s Homemade Goodies, JuJu and the Fitzwater Cafe.”

For further information about Little Bird contact www.littlebirdbakes.com.

Roz is Celebrating 20 Years in Business!

On the same block of S. 5th Street resides a much-loved local gem, Homemade Goodies by Roz. For those who don’t know Roz’s story, 20 years ago she was working as a bank teller when she got a break from a local restaurant. Roz supplied the restaurant with her famous Jewish Apple Cake and it sold out within the hour! This was enough to convince her to follow her heart and pursue her passion for baking. Her Jewish Apple Cake is still one of her best-known specialties, but today she offers a wide array of kosher, dairy-free baked goods and can even cater vegan baked treats on request.



Little Bird Bakery is just off South Street at 517 S. 5th Street.



Jessica Nolen is proudest of her Bavarian twisted salted pretzels.



Homemade Goodies by Roz can be found at 510 S. 5th Street.

HEADHOUSE PLAZA DESIGN HIGHLIGHTS

Recently, the South Street Headhouse District presented the community the finalized design for the improvement of the area that is now the center median of 2nd Street between Lombard and South Streets. The project is being coordinated with city officials; it is tentatively scheduled to begin work in late spring 2017 and be completed by fall 2017. Design highlights include:

- Beautifying fountain, public art elements
- Expanded buffering curb around the Lombard Street fountain
- Traffic calming at 2nd & South Streets
- Wider pedestrian center median
- Squaring the corners of north and south intersection to improve pedestrian crossing safety
- Removal of broken center median
- Parking kiosk and utility box relocation
- Additional green space
- Redesign of 2nd and South Street intersection to create attractive and helpful gateway
- Improved lighting and safety
- New plantings and stormwater management
- Passive-use seating and community amenities
- North- and south-end open-shade canopies



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THE LIPPINCOTT

227 S. 6th Street



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SOLD! WE CAN SELL YOURS, TOO!

Custom 3 bedroom plus den, 2 and a half bathroom with private terrace overlooking Washington Square. 2,932 sf | **\$2,250,000**

Acme Project Update *continued from page 1*

The community breathed a little easier when Councilman Squilla informed us in March 2016 that the developer was in negotiation with Acme for a long-term lease of approximately 20 years.

Between March and November 2016, SHCA maintained an outstanding appeal on the second zoning use permit, but was asked by Alterra to postpone the hearing because it was still negotiating the lease with Acme, and SHCA agreed to do so several times. On November 29, Alterra applied for a new permit for the current 65-foot project.

John Gibbons, the principal and architect of KSK Architects Planners Historians Inc., outlined some key details. He first informed the group that a 15-foot height bonus is being used to obtain the 53-foot height, with 38 feet being the height allowed without the bonus. A 15-foot height bonus is granted for a fresh food market, i.e. an establishment using 50 percent of its display space for fruit and vegetables. The plans show a 3,124 square-foot fresh food market out of a first floor of 17, 680 square feet. The additional 15-foot height allows for a total of five stories.

In addition to the fresh food market height bonus, the Philadelphia Code offers developers another exception to certain residential density rules. This is the green roof bonus for a layer of

vegetation that covers an otherwise conventional roof that can provide runoff volume reduction. Without a green roof, the Alterra project would be 47 units. With the construction of a green roof, they could build 65 units. Visit www.phillywatersheds.org to learn more about this initiative.

The proposed project is still required to go through a civic design review and be presented to the Historical Commission. Richard DeMarco, an attorney hired to assist SHCA with the permit appeal outlined how both processes work. The civic design review requires the developer of a proposed project to present its plans to a registered community organization for input. According to DeMarco, the developer is not required to comply with any requested changes.

Though the existing site is listed as “non-contributing to the district,” it is required to go before the Historical Commission for approval before the developers can go forward. The Civic Design Review Board then reviews the project.

Several audience members helped galvanize the neighborhood when they expressed the view that developers often try to divide the community, and our community should not allow itself to be divided.

Note: SHCA filed a timely appeal of the conditional permit. As of the publication date, no hearing on the appeal has been scheduled.



Existing southeast view.



Proposed southeast view.



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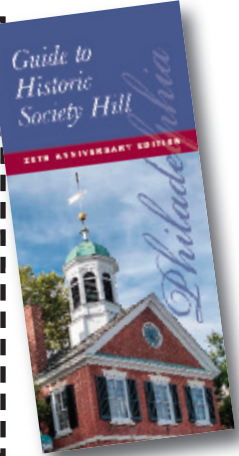


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Guide to Historic Society Hill Now Available for Purchase

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MEMBERSHIP REPORT

BY MATT DEJULIO

2017 Membership Drive Ahead of Last Year

By early February, 824 Society Hill residents had already renewed their association membership — about four percent ahead of the same time last year.

Winners of the restaurant certificates for those who renewed by December 31, 2016, were Murray Savar and Lynne and Franklin Roberts. Congratulations to these lucky folks!

Although renewals at this time are slightly ahead of last year, which saw a record membership total of 1,127, non-renewals are likewise ahead of last year; 359 residents have not yet responded to two mailings. And only 63 new members have signed up so far this year — somewhat behind last year at this time. If you have delayed in sending in your renewal, or wish to join, please do so today.

We welcome each of over 3,600 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 DeJulio is a retired publishing executive. He has served SHCA as its administrator since 2001.

Neighborhood Checklist

- ✓ See a Franklin light that's out? Call 311 to report it.
- ✓ Keep our sidewalks safe. Turn on your front door lights after dark every night.
- ✓ Use your home security system! Let it help protect you.
- ✓ See graffiti on our neighborhood public spaces? Email todd@graffitiremovealexperts.com. For removal on private property, call 311 or 215-686-8686.



Society Hill
CIVIC ASSOCIATION

Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____ Apt. # _____

City, State, Zip _____

Home Phone _____

Work Phone _____

Email (print clearly) _____

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

Residential Memberships

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

Business Memberships

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

Additional Contributions

- \$ _____ Washington Square Beautification
- \$ _____ Sidewalk Cleaning/Graffiti Removal
- \$ _____ 5th Street Legal Fund
- \$ _____ Franklin Lights
- \$ _____ Tree Tenders
- \$ _____ McCall School

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Charge VISA/MasterCard:

Number _____ Exp Date _____

Signature _____

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

- Clean-Up Day
- Washington Square
- Zoning & Historic Preservation
- Franklin Lights
- Social Events
- 5th Street Development
- Dilworth House
- Property Taxes
- Local Crime Incidents
- Reporter
- Fundraising
- and Alerts

Please return completed application to:

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

NIFTY NEIGHBORS IN MY OWN BACKYARD

BY JANE BIBERMAN

Elizabeth Morris's Enduring Legacy

Take Home a Furry Friend!



Max, a player in this year's Puppy Bowl.



Shelter adoptions coordinator Cat Barood and Dr. Laura Barry, of Society Hill, with two adopted chinchillas.



Enjoy the shelter's outdoor mural.

Because Morris Animal Refuge is America's first animal shelter, having been established in 1874, we think the dogs, cats, birds, rabbits and even a couple of chinchillas deserve our attention as probably the cutest residents in our neighborhood. Society Hillers have contributed to the success of the shelter, which has found "forever homes" for tens of thousands of pets during its long history.

It was cat-lover Elizabeth Morris, of 222 Pine Street, who is responsible for the present-day shelter at 1242 Lombard Street. She obtained a charter and turned the main house and attached carriage house that then occupied the premises into a shelter — the very first in the country. At the time, stray cats and dogs were picked up and delivered to the new shelter by horse-and-carriage-drawn ambulances. Today, a handsome van with the distinctive Morris logo transports the animals. Currently, the shelter can accommodate some 150 cats, dogs and assorted other species, with a network of foster care homes and facilities throughout the area handling the overflow.

Ms. Morris, who was a young lady in her early 30s, enlisted her friends to work at the new enterprise. She was also a lobbying force against animal cruelty. Today, the refuge has an active board of directors of 14, a staff of 15 and some 100 volunteers overseen by CEO Lewis Checchia, himself a resident of Media. "No one cared about animals in Philadelphia before Elizabeth Morris," says Checchia, 51, who is the proud owner of two rescue dogs and a cat from Morris. He relates that Elizabeth's own father, as well as her fellow residents in the neighborhood, looked askance at her endeavors at a time when animal rescue and refuge were not the accepted pursuits they are today.

"Elizabeth Morris was a pioneer — a female in a male world that cared little about stray animals," Checchia adds. "I estimate that today we find homes for about 1,000 pets a year. We have a really good program, and people from all over Philadelphia and the suburbs come to adopt out animals." The shelter is easy to spot because of its colorful and distinctive outer wall, courtesy of the Mural Arts Program of Philadelphia. Artist David Guinn painted the joyful scene of frolicking dogs and cats that has adorned the building since 2003.

"We boast that in our 143-year-old history, no animal has ever been turned away," says Checchia. "We keep animals for as long as it takes to find them homes. We also provide our animals veterinary care and offer an affordable spay and neuter program. Providing education to the general public about the care and feeding of pets is another essential service we offer."

The shelter, which has limited space, is renovating its facility and a fundraising program is underway. Morris will be hosting its 20th Annual Furball on Saturday night, April 1, at the Independence Seaport Museum, to celebrate animal welfare in the city and to raise money for its renovation. Checchia invites everyone to attend its gala fundraiser. For tickets, go to Phillyfurball.com.

In the meantime, Checchia encourages potential adopters to visit www.morrisanimalrefuge.org or stop by and check out its adorable residents. Who knows, you might even find a talented dog like Max, the pit bull mix who was chosen to play in this year's Puppy Bowl on February 5. "Max arrived as a stray and went on to be a star," says Checchia, adding that a wonderful family in south Jersey adopted the pup.

Jane Biberman, freelance writer and former editor of *Inside Magazine*, contributes to a variety of publications.

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233 - 241 S. 6th Street



2 bedroom plus den area, 2 bathroom custom-designed by Cecil Baker with a sun-filled living room with floor-to-ceiling windows, adjacent dining area, designer-appointed kitchen, and a balcony boasting panoramic Washington Square, Center City skyline, and Delaware River views. There is spacious den area that could be converted to a second bedroom, separate den currently used as a home office, lavish master suite with custom closets, and contemporary bathrooms. 1,818 sf | **\$1,195,000**



Beautifully renovated south-facing 1 bedroom, 1 bathroom featuring a fully renovated kitchen and breakfast bar that opens up into the great room. The private balcony boasts unobstructed 270 degree city views to the east, south and west, and the generously-sized bedroom has a custom walk-in closet. Additional highlights include ample natural light from southern exposures and hardwood floors throughout. 928 sf | **\$399,900**



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3 bedroom, 2 bathroom, coffee bar, and living area with floor-to-ceiling windows boasting spectacular views of Washington Square, spacious adjacent dining room, and sliding glass doors that open to a private balcony. The updated eat-in kitchen is accessible from both the foyer and the dining room, and the master bedroom offers a walk-in closet and fully renovated ensuite bath. 2,045 sf | **\$1,050,000**

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A chance to live in history!

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13,673 sf | **\$4,950,000**

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