

SOCIETY HILL

Reporter

July/August 2023

The Newsletter
of The Society Hill
Civic Association

www.societyhillcivic.org

On Being an Active Citizen

BY BARBARA GELMAN



“Engage with neighbors on a regular basis.”

— Barbara Gelman



“A Republic, if you can keep it”

— Benjamin Franklin

What does it mean to be an active citizen? Why is this important? We face many challenges in Philadelphia: increased crime, a reduced police force, economic downturn, societal discord. How do we move forward and improve the lives of those in our community and our city?

Perhaps the best way forward is to engage with neighbors on a regular basis. I get a lot of satisfaction doing work as a block coordinator, because I can effect change on my block. I pass along information regarding trash pickup and special events, clean up litter, and monitor and report suspicious activity. As I do this, I end up talking with neighbors, old and new, and listen and share concerns. I find out where businesses might be opening and closing. Last week, I helped a neighbor get back into her home after she locked herself out. Talking to neighbors at the farmers market, I learned that a number of people are disturbed about trees being taken down.

Interacting with neighbors spawned the following ideas: gather keys from neighbors to prevent lockouts and start a petition to stop trees from being taken down without first consulting residents. I don't have answers, but doing something every week fights the feeling of having little control.

I have emailed the 6th district police captain and lieutenant about incidents in the neighborhood, passed along information to my block, and will continue to do this throughout the summer.

How You Can Become an Active Citizen

- Talk to your block coordinator or become one by emailing board member Martha Levine at info@societyhillcivic.org.
 - Call your government representatives: mayor, district and at-large council members, state representatives and senators, and governor. Ask them to tell you the steps they are taking to increase safety and economic development in the city. Remember, they work for you!
 - Join Society Hill Civic Association (SHCA) and a committee such as Clean & Beautiful, Zoning & Historic Preservation, or one of 11 other committees by logging onto societyhillcivic.org. There are opportunities for everyone to help people in need, families, children and older folks.
 - Consider training for town watch through Delancey Square Town Watch. Contact dstownwatch@gmail.com.
 - Educate yourself about how and when to call 911. Be prepared to describe the emergency, the person involved (age, race, clothing), and whether you believe medical care is required.
 - Do not be shy about calling 911. We are told that 911 calls are a metric used to determine the number of police to deploy to an area. Emergencies include roaring ATVs or motorcycles, drag racing, car radios blaring over the noise limit, cars running stop signs, screaming voices, people changing clothes or urinating in public, or looking like they are falling over.
 - Visit area businesses and restaurants, spend your money, and show owners your support.
- Become an active citizen, and together we'll promote new business, public safety and the historic nature of the neighborhood we love.

Garden Tour: A Bloomin' Success!



Story and more pictures on pages 15-17.

Photo courtesy of Bonnie Halda

Barbara Gelman is SHCA's 2nd Vice President.

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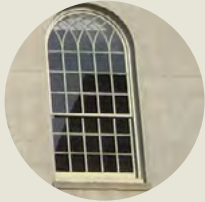
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SOCIETY HILL

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Submission Deadline

Sept/Oct Issue: August 1

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Find past issues dating back to
1950 at www.societyhillcivic.org.

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 the editor, Judy Lamirand, at judy@parallel-design.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, and, as above, include 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 SUSAN BURT-COLLINS

Is the Juice Worth the Squeeze?

My very wise middle daughter, learning that I had volunteered for a second term as SHCA president, knowing it had required a lot of time and not a little bit of frustration, asked, “Mom, you sure... is the juice worth the squeeze?” I have been asking myself that question, and I have an answer: Yes. It is indeed worth the time and effort for another year working on local concerns with a group of people who have also decided that our community is worth our time, effort and attention.

This past year we have seriously engaged with South Street Headhouse District (SSHD), which is both an RCO (Registered Community Organization) and business improvement district with taxing authority, to come to a shared vision for South Street that supports small businesses, artists, and restaurants while putting a lid on the loud bars and trouble spots. To that end, we and our neighboring residential RCOs, Queen Village and Bella Vista, joined with SSHD to add a zoning overlay that prohibits new smoking bars unless they can prove the need for a variance. This cooperation and dialogue with neighboring RCOs and public officials is ongoing. This is juice that is worth the squeeze... it gets results.

As a board, we are listening to our community’s concerns. To that end we conducted a small

survey through the Spotlight newsletter. The top issues were quality of life, safety, and historic preservation. These concerns will guide our planning and budgeting for the 2023-2024 year. We are looking at ways to enhance our walkways and sidewalks. We are hoping to sponsor weeding and plantings in tree pits, a minor change that can have an impact on our everyday experience of our neighborhood. On issues of safety, we have had meetings with officials from the police department to discuss concerns about noise from ATVs, among other issues. It is also top of mind for them, and they are looking at creative solutions. Meanwhile we are paying attention to how private security organized by some neighbors is working. As for historic preservation, we remain committed to finding a way forward with the Headhouse and Shambles, so they can become a regular and welcoming spot for Society Hill. These are a smattering of things we are moving forward on at SHCA. As always, we welcome participation, ideas, and, yes, criticism. I can promise that if you pick your interest or cause and make the effort, the juice will be worth the squeeze.



Susan Burt Collins, SHCA President

The community’s top concerns are quality of life, safety, and historic preservation.

Susan Burt Collins is a retired criminal and civil rights lawyer. She has worked to free a wrongly convicted man, taught history, and created Friends of Spring Garden School to raise money to build a playground.

B O A R D O F F I C E R S S P E A K

Michael Gorman, 1st Vice President

I have had the privilege of serving as a board member and treasurer for SHCA previously, and hope to continue the work as first vice president, specifically focusing on protecting all of the qualities that make our neighborhood such a wonderful place to live and raise a family. I hope to maintain a focus on quality-of-life issues, and help to bring additional businesses as well as residents into our area.

Barbara Gelman, 2nd Vice President

I accepted the position of second vice president to work for increasing safety, growing businesses, and maintaining the historic quality of our neighborhood. My goals are to keep residents informed about

SHCA and the city via the weekly Spotlight, to educate neighbors about calling 911 and reporting problems, and to promote new business, public safety and the historic nature of the neighborhood we love.

Bonnie Halda, Treasurer

As treasurer, my goal is to work with the board to develop an annual budget that will guide SHCA in meeting the challenges of our community. We recently conducted a short survey to find out what our members think are the top issues for Society Hill. This information will help inform future financial decisions. I believe that we can be more transparent in showing how we are spending the money entrusted to us through membership fees, generous

donations, and fundraising events. I will also look for areas where we can save money, perhaps by simplifying internal processes while still providing critical services to our neighborhood.

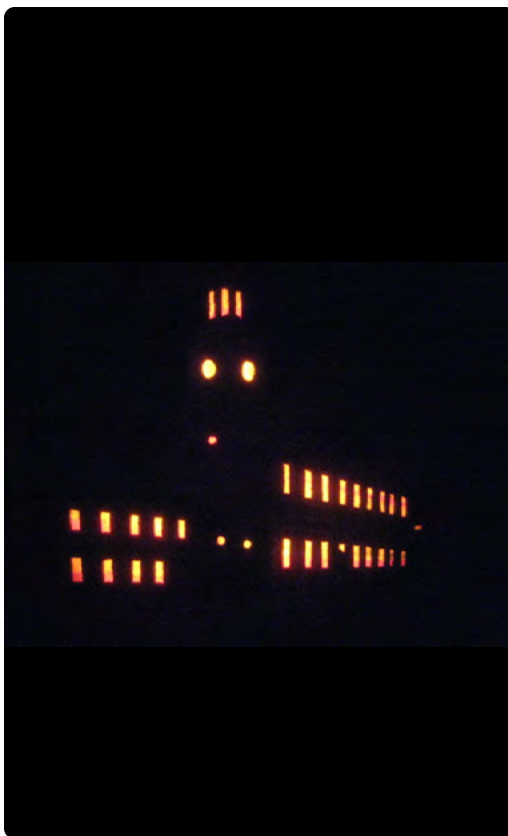
Claudia Carabelli, Secretary

After a one-year hiatus, I made the decision to rejoin the SHCA board and do my best to make a meaningful contribution to our community. While it is easy to complain, I prefer to focus on making positive changes. My priority is to look for innovative ways to address quality-of-life and safety issues that affect us all. As a Tree Tenders co-chair, I’m also interested in keeping Society Hill green with tree planting, weed control and maintenance of public walkways.

KEEPING POSTED

BY AL CAVALARI

Holding Independence Hall Up to the Light



Our card this issue is the second “Hold to Light” specimen I have shown to you. The windows are cut out to reveal a layer of colored paper underneath. In the early decades of the 20th century, postcards became a worldwide communications medium. Exchanging and collecting postcards was a popular pastime. Publishers continually found new ways to enhance the product. Holding a card up to a light source to illuminate the windows had a novel entertainment value. It dates from sometime after 1906.

July 4th provides an opportunity to focus on Independence Hall. I’ve given and attended tours there for some 12 years. It is always fun to meet fellow citizens from every walk of life and from Anytown, USA. It is a place with the power to inspire us, if we let it, and to remember that we are a family, which is the reason I say every visit there is a family reunion. Why do people from every corner of the globe travel here to find out what happened at this little Pennsylvania government building? After all, it is a World Heritage Site, one of only 900 cultural sites that the United Nations has deemed to be of such universal importance that they are worthy of preservation for the benefit of all of humanity.

It is a place we are fortunate to even still have. In the early 1800s, a bill was passed by the state legislature ordering the buildings on the square torn down and the valuable land sold to help fund a new capitol in Harrisburg. In an early act of historic preservation, the City of Philadelphia purchased the property and retains ownership of it to this day.

It is a place where enlightened 18th-century astronomers built an observatory to participate in the worldwide observation of the transit of Venus that contributed to measuring the size of the solar system and the distance from the earth to the sun.

It is also a place where 19th-century unenlightened jurists held fugitive slave trials, convicting human beings charged with the crime of escaping slavery. It is a place where the Declaration of Independence proclaimed the universal truth that all men are created equal, and yet, 11 years later, the Constitution guaranteed the ability to buy and sell human beings. Fourth of July celebrations began there in 1777, but we know that by 1805, black people showing up for Independence Day festivities on the square were cursed and driven out.

It is a place where on July 14, 1778, the first ambassador from France, our most important Revolutionary war ally, stood in the assembly room and formally recognized us. That is the same room where, in 1824, we feted France’s most famous soldier sent to us, Lafayette, who was making a grand farewell tour of the young republic he helped to create. It was during his visit that the State House acquired the moniker “Hall of Independence” or Independence Hall.

It is a place formerly occupied by the Lenape people, who by the time of the Revolution had been displaced. The Oneida nation, which still has a major presence in upstate New York, has fared better. France was not our first military ally. The honor goes to the Oneida, who broke with other tribes of the Six Nations Confederacy to take up arms against the British and have served in our armed forces in every conflict since.

It is a place where the best and worst of humanity may be experienced. An assassinated President Lincoln lay in state there on his way home. President Kennedy spoke there on July 4, 1962, saying our system was designed to “encourage both differences and dissent.” What are we to make of this place? Is it a good place or a bad place? That is a fair *continued on page 5*

KEEPING POSTED

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question. After all, it is a place where liberty was promised and liberty was denied. A place where Pennsylvania was the first state to create an abolition law and where the Constitutional Convention created the Three-fifths Clause. A place where, in 1876, Susan B. Anthony spoke, still trying to achieve full citizenship for women a century after its birth. It is a place that today is shunned by some yet celebrated by others.

Independence Hall is our family home. It is a place with the power to challenge our imaginations, a place that compels us to envision a world that can be. Great achievements and great failures are on open display there for us. It is a place that can bring us to the most valuable benefit we can derive from studying history, which is to ask this question: In a world where every single thing we need to be happy

and live in peace as we hurtle through the vacuum of space has somehow been placed here for us, what on earth have we been doing?



Al Cavalari is a certified member of the Association of Philadelphia Tour Guides. Write Al at flagguysdn@aol.com.

Our Popular List of Contractors

Are you in need of a good contractor, one that comes highly recommended by other Society Hill neighbors?

We have just the ticket. SHCA publishes a List of Contractors, an 11-page compilation sorted into categories like roofers,

general contractors, HVAC, electricians, plumbers, painters, window replacement, smart home technology, home organization, and more.

This useful list is available to anyone with an up-to-date SHCA membership.

We get about 20 requests every month for this much-sought-after list.

If you have employed a contractor with good results, and would like to recommend them, let us know, and we'll add them to the list.

The list is available in both hard copy and electronic forms.



To obtain one, either by email or snail mail, contact us at info@societyhillcivic.org.

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TREE TENDERS

BY CLAUDIA CARABELLI

Why Not Plant a Street Tree?

*Overcoming
Barriers to Street
Tree Planting*

There's no denying that Society Hill is one of Philadelphia's prettiest neighborhoods. Our beautiful architecture accounts for much of that, but so does the leafy canopy our many trees provide. Drive several blocks north of Walnut or South of Lombard, and the streets are much less inviting. What's the difference? Fewer trees. They beautify our streets, cool our air, offer shade, act as habitats for birds, and generally provide a better quality of life.

Common sense, which admittedly has been in very short supply lately, would dictate that offers of free trees planted by volunteers would be eagerly accepted. Often times they are. But a surprising amount of time they're not. What gives?

Our Tree Tenders group is comprised of trained volunteers that work under the auspices of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS). We plant street trees twice a year, spring and fall. For that to happen, the property owner must complete a very brief online application. We'll provide the information. Without their permission, our hands are tied. We try outreach via the SHCA

Spotlight, the *Reporter*, letters delivered to homes, and personal outreach from neighbors. Still, we struggle to get permission to plant.

What are the reasons?

I don't have time or resources to water it.

If this is a hardship for you, near neighbors may be able to water, even from their own supply if they're willing. The newly planted trees do require significant watering — twice a week for a total of 15 to 20 gallons per week for the first two years, from spring until the first frost, more often if we have a summer dry spell. If using a hose, give it a very thorough soaking for several minutes. Some people prefer to use the Treegator slow water release bags. PHS does not recommend them because they can harbor mold and critters, but they're certainly preferable to no watering at all.

I hate cleaning up fallen leaves.

Most trees drop leaves. I can't argue that. But isn't that a small price to pay for all the benefits? It's just one tree on your small front sidewalk. This isn't a half-acre in the suburbs. Sweeping may be "old school" but it offers a nice opportunity to interact with passing neighbors and visitors.

The tree will damage my pipes or sidewalks.

It's the number one concern of homeowners. It's true that mature trees with shallow root systems can produce large enough roots to lift the sidewalk. SHCA provides a "Fix the Brix" program to help defray the cost of repairs for that. Pipes can also become filled with tree roots if they develop a leak. PVC piping is best if you're redoing work. New trees should be planted a safe distance away from pipes and sewage lines.

Trees can cause conflict between neighbors.

Yes, people have been known to get into squabbles over our leafy friends. If YOUR tree hangs over MY property then who cleans up the leaves, trims the branches, etc. While SHCA offer subsidies for pruning, there is nothing specifically in place for tree branches that extend past your property line. Just know that if/when that happens, your neighbor is within their rights to trim whatever hangs over their property. Since we live in such close proximity to each other in the city, let's all take a deep breath and commit to trying our best to get along and compromise.

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An eyesore of an empty tree pit on Spruce Street.



A newly planted tree on Stamper Street lovingly cared for by a group of neighbors.

TREE TENDERS

continued from page 6

I only want one specific species of tree.

PHS has a limited variety available. Their arborists inspect every pit in the city and recommend the best species for each site based on size, shade/sun and appropriateness of the location. Of course, you're always free to purchase a tree and have it planted on your own. SHCA will even contribute \$150 to the cost.

I don't have a tree pit.

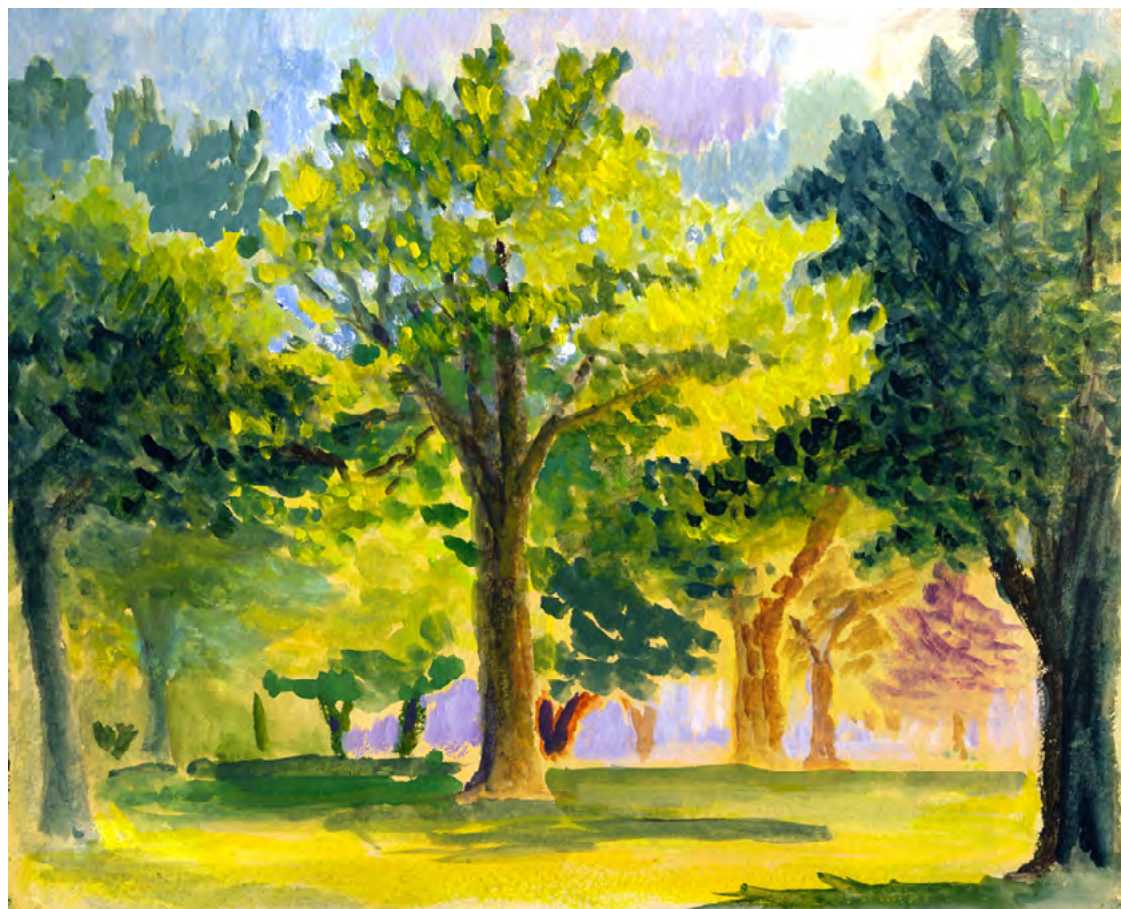
Trick question? It's actually not. If you want a tree and don't have a pit, PHS will send someone out to check the site for pipes and wiring. They'll make sure it's appropriately located away from doorways and basement egress. If all looks good, they'll dig a pit for planting by removing the bricks or concrete to create a neat, tree-ready pit.

Hidden treasures.

So far, there is no requirement for a licensed archaeologist to examine the sites for any 18th-century historical deposits before excavating the pit! Sadly, we haven't come across any hidden treasure. Luckily, no human remains either.

With fewer excuses now, what's holding you back from completing that simple application? Requests are taken throughout the year on a rolling basis. The fall tree application deadline has passed, but it's not too early to apply for a spring tree. I hope people will rethink their hesitation. I hope neighbors will reach out to encourage others to plant. Watching a living thing grow can be quite rewarding, especially when you play a pivotal role in its care. Our oldest trees have a limited lifespan. Some succumb to hits from vehicles or damage from storms. We need to constantly replace them. SHCA will help subsidize part of the cost for dead tree removal and pruning going forward. Most importantly, you'll be doing your part to keep Society Hill a green, beautiful and healthy place to live.

Claudia Carabelli is a former RN and retired school counselor. She co-chairs the Society Hill Tree Tenders.



Watching living things grow can be quite rewarding.



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Our Historic Restoration of a Horse Stable Home in Society Hill



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HISTORIC RESTORATION

BY JONATHAN RUBIN

More than 400 Panes in the Glass

We are very excited to be working on the Episcopal Community Services building here in Society Hill. For years I have walked by the building without giving much thought to its history or the beautiful cemetery that surrounds the building.

Since this building is historic, like most of the buildings in Society Hill, we must make every effort to return the windows to their original condition, using methods and materials that will last.

Painting the windows will be quite the endeavor, since they are so large and are quite decayed. There are over 400 individual panes of glass, which are held in place to the window sash by wooden mullions.

The pieces of rotted wood can be replaced, but they must have the exact same profile. A sample will be taken from the building to the mill to replicate. The mill will create a custom blade, which will be used to cut replacement wood to an exact match. When the replacement wood has been installed and the seam filled, you will not be able to tell repairs were done. Seamless!

Now, how to reach the windows? The grounds contain statuary that can not withstand the weight of a mechanical lift. We tried the idea of placing a lift outside the grounds and reaching out and over, but there is concern a lift of this size may collapse the ground and rupture the terra cotta sewer line below.

Since a mechanical lift cannot be used, ladders with customized "legs" built onto their ends will be used to create a span across the window. Without customized legs, we would not be able to access the entire window. So, ladders it shall be.



St. Paul's Episcopal Community Services Building, 225 S. 3rd Street, was built in 1761 by William Dilworth and altered in 1830 by William Strickland. The building's windows will be undergoing restoration this fall.

As usual, our 10-step procedure for restoration level surface preparation will be followed.

Demolition Phase: clean; scrape; sand; clean up the mess; apply oil primer.

Repair Phase: repair windows with glazing, and wood fill; sand and shape wood fill, then reprime; caulk.

Paint Phase: paint; clean window glass.

Instead of using brushes to paint the windows, the windows will be masked and the paint will be applied with a commercial sprayer.

See if you can follow this!

The windows will be prepped and cleaned as usual. Primer will be applied, repairs made, caulking completed. The glass will be cleaned of old paint and primer using a four-inch glass scraping tool, and then winxed (is that really a verb?) clean.

Then an even coat of masking fluid will be sprayed over the entire window, including the glass and the wood. Masking fluid is safe to spray onto the wood, in fact, it has the added benefit of creating another layer of quality material to protect the wood. The masking fluid will dry and create an opaque layer over

the entire window, protecting the glass where we obviously do not want paint. (Indeed, people think we are the sloppiest painters in the world when they see this stage halfway completed! The windows look foggy and ghostly.)

The final coat of gloss paint will be applied on top of the masking fluid, covering everything with an even layer of acrylic paint, using a commercial sprayer set at 1600 psi.

The last step, once the paint is totally dry, is to remove the masking from

each individual window pane. Removing the masking layer from glass is easy, since glass is smooth. Four simple cuts are made using a utility knife, then the paint and masking material just peel off. Voila! The windows are complete.

Using this method, several windows containing up to a total of 100 panes can be painted in one day.

Of course, like all cases of restoration painting, surface preparation is everything, and takes an enormous amount of time. But the masking technique allows us to spend more time doing prep and less time doing the tedious work of painting each individual window frame and mullion by hand.

We will begin working on the building sometime in early October. You will be able to follow us on Instagram to see the progress.



Jonathan Rubin is the owner and operator of Philadelphia House Painting & Historical Restoration www.PhiladelphiaHousePainting.com. He lived in Queen Village for 18+ years and chaired Friends of Bainbridge Green. He now lives with his wife and two kids in Merion Station.



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INDEPENDENCE HISTORICAL TRUST

BY JONATHAN BURTON

Second Bank of the United States Reopens

Why did we need a Second Bank of the United States? Wasn't the First Bank of the United States good enough? You can thank James Madison for why we needed a Second Bank and Andrew Jackson for why the Second Bank of the United States also failed after a twenty-year charter. Either way, the building as we know it has now reopened to the public after **an extensive preservation project**.

The National Park Service maintains a complex portfolio of more than 75,000 assets, from buildings, roads, and bridges, to trails and campgrounds, and utilities like power, water, and wastewater systems. The collective acreage of national parks at 85 million acres is larger in area than all but the four largest states, and it is enjoyed by more than 300 million visitors a year. Who takes care of Philadelphia's Independence National Historical Park (INHP)?

The Asset Preservation and Maintenance division is led by Division Chief Matt Hess. Considering INHP has 54 of some of the most historic buildings in the country, Hess and his team have their hands full preserving our nation's history.

The person responsible for managing the design and construction program at Independence Park and for the Second Bank of the United States project was Winston Clement. Winston received his Master of Science in Historic Preservation from the University of Pennsylvania and has been with the National Park Service for over nine years. I gathered some project details from Winston on the grand Greek Revival Parthenon-like building built by William Strickland that originally opened in 1824.

Federal funds were used to replace the roof and windows and repair the exterior stone and interior plaster. Modifications made to the roof structure over the past 200 years caused a five-inch sag in the ridge, so the roof structure was strengthened by sistering rafters, installing new sheathing, and replacing a section of ridge beam. The 1960s copper roof was leaking in many locations. The new standing seam copper roof has improved flashing details, fall protection tie-off points, and an ice melting system to prevent ice dams.

The 1970s wood windows were in poor condition, with rotted wood and failed insulated glass units. The newly constructed windows now match the older windows exactly. The Pennsylvania Blue Marble exterior was cleaned, consolidated, and patched, and open mortar joints were re-pointed. In the interior, areas of plaster that were damaged from roof leaks were patched and repainted.

The Second Bank reopened on July 1st. If you haven't been inside, or haven't been inside in a long time, I encourage you to visit. While the Second Bank doesn't have exhibits about banking or the economy (the soon-to-come First Bank of the United States Museum will have that story!), it houses a large collection of portraits of prominent early Americans painted by Charles Willson Peale and many others. Portraits hung in the southern gallery echo the first public museum Peale opened in 1802 on the second floor of Independence Hall. With 297 works of art, there is always something new to discover!

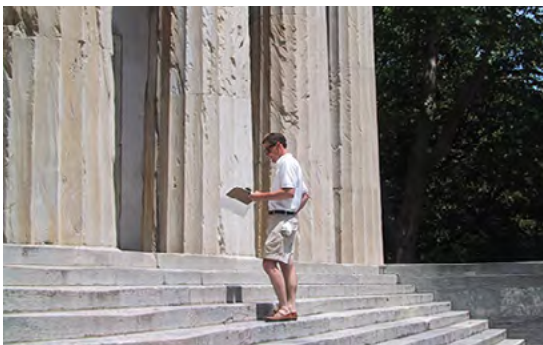


The Second Bank's North Portico, Chestnut Street

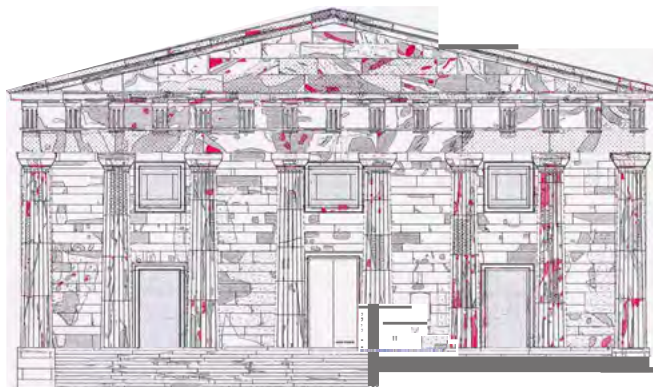
Another stage in the preservation of this grand Greek Revival edifice has been completed.



Jonathan Burton is Director of Development for Independence Historical Trust and former executive director of Philadelphia Society for the Preservation of Landmarks.



Pennsylvania Blue Marble, quarried locally, was used to build the Second Bank's portico columns. The poor performance of the marble, which can be seen in the picture above, contributed to the demise of Pennsylvania marble as a building stone.



Detailed drawings of the building's condition were made. More information about the Second Bank's ongoing restoration project and its history can be found at https://www.conlab.org/acl/secb/secb_summary.html and <https://www.federalreservehistory.org>.

Why did John Adams call Old Pine Street's Rev. John Duffield "My Patriot Pastor"?

What famous Philadelphia Orchestra Maestro is buried at Old Pine?



Old Pine Street Presbyterian Church Historic Graveyard 412 Pine Street

Monday - Friday, 9 am - 3 pm Saturday, 8:30 am - 2 pm (Closed holidays)

Discover many colorful characters while exploring this final resting place of patriots, privateers, sea captains, outspoken preachers, and American Revolution veterans.

To learn how you can help preserve this hallowed space, visit www.oldpineconservancy.org/donate

Scan this QR code for both English and Spanish self-guided tours.



Guided tours are offered on Saturdays, 10 am - 2 pm weather permitting.



Liberty Tree

by Thomas Paine

In a chariot of light, from the regions of the day,
The Goddess of Liberty came,
Ten thousand celestials directed her way,
And hither conducted the dame.
A fair budding branch from the gardens above,
Where millions with millions agree,
She brought in her hand as a pledge of her love,
And the plant she named Liberty Tree.

The celestial exotic stuck deep in the ground,
Like a native it flourished and bore;
The fame of its fruit drew the nations around,
To seek out this peaceable shore.
Unmindful of names or distinctions they came,
For freemen like brothers agree;
With one spirit endued, they one friendship pursued,
And their temple was Liberty Tree.

Beneath this fair tree, like the patriarchs of old,
Their bread in contentment they ate,
Unvexed with the troubles of silver or gold,
The cares of the grand and the great.
With timber and tar they Old England supplied,
And supported her power on the sea;
Her battles they fought, without getting a goat,
For the honor of Liberty Tree.

But hear, O ye swains ('tis a tale most profane),
How all the tyrannical powers,
Kings, Commons and Lords, are uniting amain
To cut down this guardian of ours.
From the East to the West blow the trumpet to arms,
Thro' the land let the sound of it flee;
Let the far and the near all unite with a cheer,
In defense of our Liberty Tree.



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'FIX THE BRIX'

BY MARTHA LEVINE

Houston, I Mean, Society Hill, We Have a Problem!

Whether caused by curb ramp construction or property owner negligence, loose bricks in Society Hill are a major problem. Vandalism using bricks is not limited to our neighborhood, but we can do something to avert it. We are not a gated community. Many people walk through Society Hill every day. Unfortunately, not everyone is here to admire our beautiful historic neighborhood. Let's not provide loose bricks to be used as tools for vandalism or assault weapons.

This past May, the Hill-Physick House, our historic house museum on 4th Street, had three of its windows smashed by a vandal using unsecured bricks lying close by. Not only was glass shattered, the wooden dividers (mullions) were destroyed. Fortunately, none of the important historic interior was affected. A police report was taken.

Bricks were piled on Spruce Street for months after a water department excavation.

Unfortunately, they failed to finish the job by replacing the bricks, leaving only a narrow path for pedestrians. The bricks were finally replaced only after persistent complaints to city officials by nearby neighbors and SHCA.

While the Streets Department continued their project of updating many of our ADA curb ramps, they left large piles of uncovered bricks on our sidewalks. It was then that a group of cars on 4th Street had bricks thrown through their windows. I personally contacted a Streets Department official who had the piles of bricks wrapped and secured the next day.

We ask you to take a good look at your own front sidewalk, especially the tree pits, and do one of the following:

- Remove any loose bricks or stones and store them.
- Have a mason (or do it yourself) secure your bricks or stones in place.

We cannot take for granted our charming, distinctive brick sidewalks and tree-lined streets. They come with an obligation to maintain them, not by the city, but by us. Since 2009, SHCA has been helping by offering funds to defray the costs with "Fix the Brix" and Tree Tenders subsidies.

The "Fix the Brix" Subsidy Program

SHCA has a generous subsidy program that helps owners make their sidewalks safer and more attractive. For sidewalk/tree pit repairs: 40 percent of the invoice up to \$500 for current SHCA members, 40 percent up to \$400 for non-members. It pays to be a member.

For more information, go to our website: www.societyhillcivic.org/what-we-do and read about our easy-to-use subsidy process.



Martha Levine is an SHCA board member.



Loose bricks across the street from the Physick House.



Spruce Street Water Department excavation site.



Dozens of bricks waiting to be replaced at 4th Street curb ramp upgrade.



Scene inside the Physick House after bricks were thrown through windows.



Bricks replaced after many complaints to the Water Department.



Pile of bricks wrapped and secured after an email to the Streets Department.



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THE GARDENS OF SOCIETY HILL

BY MARTHA LEVINE AND LINDA SKALE

2023 Garden Tour a Bloomin' Success

We are proud to announce that 513 people attended the Gardens of Society Hill Tour this year, a two-day event on June 3rd and 4th. Often garden tours are unpredictable due to the possibility of rain, but we lucked out with two beautiful, clear, mid-70s days. What a treat to be able to visit these otherwise private, lush, urban gardens, not usually viewed from the street.

We held a garden tour this year, instead of our usual Open House Tour, because, since COVID-19, many homeowners were not ready to have hundreds of visitors inside their homes.

Such a variety of gardens!

Tour participants were delighted to see a great variety of gardens, all meticulously maintained by their owners — labors of love, to be sure! Garden sizes ranged from small to expansive, showing what wonders you can do within a given space. Each garden reflected the owner's preferences for types of trees, shrubs, and plantings. This was a great way for visitors to get ideas for their own gardens.

Not only was it delightful to visit private gardens, it was fun to see familiar faces and meet new neighbors during the tour.

— Carol Hanlon

We offer thanks to the following: 18 garden owners who allowed us to showcase their wonderful gardens; 60 volunteers who hosted the gardens (we could not have done it without you); and our business sponsors — Bartlett Tree Experts, Liberty Tree & Landscape, Earthly Delights, and Fine Garden Creations. Refreshments were donated by Talula's Daily and volunteer bakers. The Hill-Physick House served as our headquarters. We thank our many tourgoers who hailed from more than 35 zip codes, including Center City, other Philadelphia neighborhoods and the greater metro area, New Jersey, Washington, D.C., and Queens, New York.

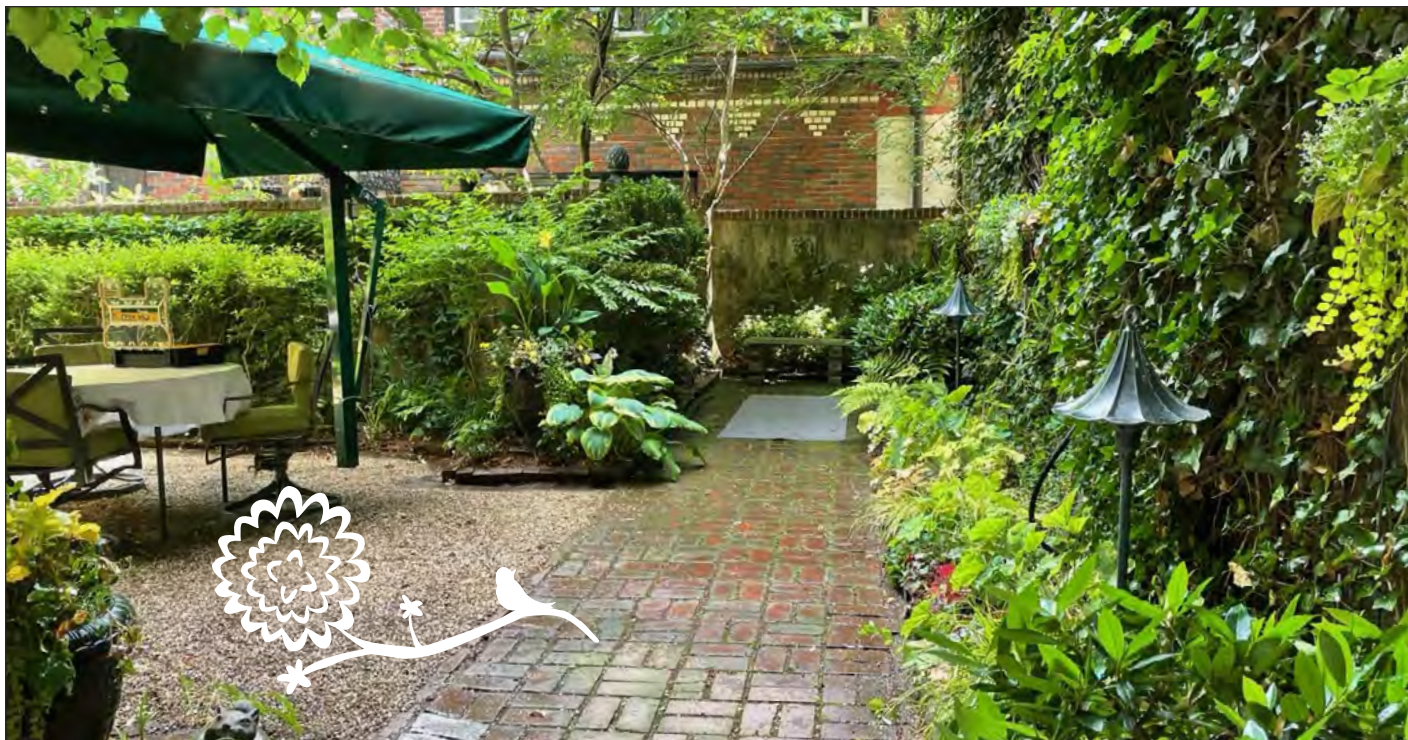
Garden Tour coordinators Linda Skale and Martha Levine thank Society Hill residents and neighboring civic associations for their support in helping us promote our event and making it a success.



Tourgoers lined up for ticket purchases at the Hill-Physick House tour headquarters...



...and started their tour with a visit to the Hill-Physick House garden.



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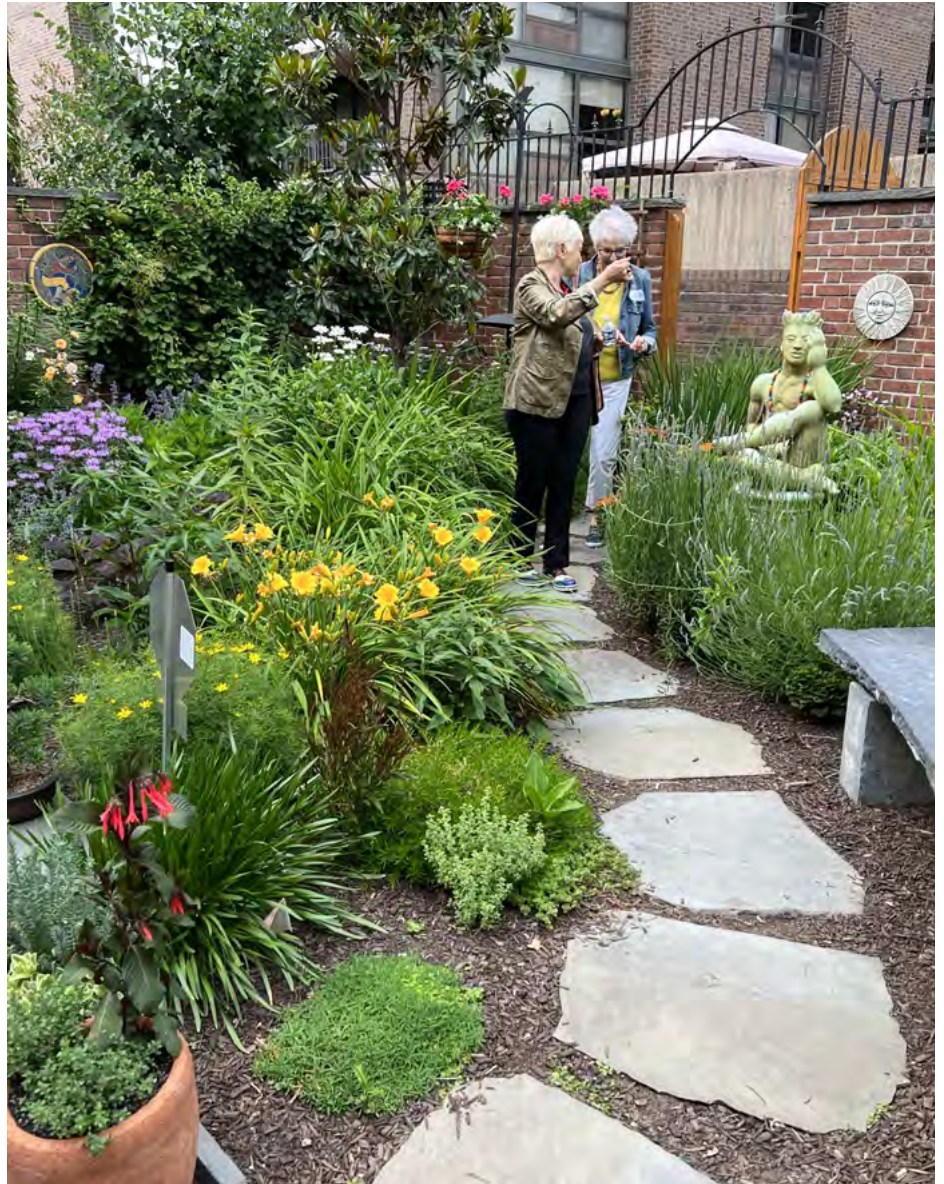
THE GARDENS OF SOCIETY HILL

PHOTOS BY MARTHA LEVINE



THE GARDENS OF SOCIETY HILL

PHOTOS BY MARTHA LEVINE



WELCOME GIFT BAGS

STORY AND PHOTOS BY MARTHA LEVINE

New to the Neighborhood?

Did you know that SHCA offers a unique service to first-time property owners here in Society Hill? If you are new, we want to welcome you with a personal visit and a special gift. The Welcome Gift bag holds a bottle of wine, a bag of coffee, and a pastry treat from Talula's Daily or FRIEDA café. Also included is important information about this beautiful and historic

neighborhood as well as many gift cards from area restaurants, retailers, services, and museums. Gift Bag recipients say this gift allows them to learn about where to dine or shop. What a great way to feel welcomed to the neighborhood! Bonus: it helps our local businesses gain new customers. See the list on page 19 of the many businesses that make this gift possible.

Contact Us. If you are a new owner as of 2022 to 2023, and wish to have a gift bag presented to you, contact us at info@societyhillcivic.org or call 215-629-0727.

All gift bags are presented in person by appointment, taking about 30 minutes. The photos below show some of our happy new neighbors receiving their gift bags.



Marina & Kayvan

“Thank you so much for meeting us yesterday. We are humbled by your hospitality and your generosity with your time and the wonderful gifts. After our meeting, we went online and signed up to become SHCA members. We look forward to being engaged members of the community and seeing you at community events in the coming years.”



Pamela & Reid



Alexandra



Jay & Donna



Gracie



Kristine & Juliette



Joe

WELCOME GIFT BAGS

Thank You, Welcome Gift Bag Donors

Please help us say thank you to our Welcome Bag contributors by patronizing their establishments, listed here.

Restaurants

- Bistro Romano**, 120 Lombard Street
- Bridget Foy's**, 200 South Street
- Buca D'oro**, 711 Locust Street
- Cavanaugh's Headhouse**, 421 S. 2nd Street
- Fork Restaurant**, 306 Market Street
- FRIEDA** (café), 320 Walnut Street
- Gnocchi** (Italian), 613 E. Passyunk Avenue
- Kanella** (Mediterranean), 1001 Spruce Street
- La Colombe Coffee Roasters**, 100 S. 6th Street
- Malbec Argentine Steakhouse**, 400 S. 2nd Street
- Panorama**, 14 N. Front Street
- PJ Clarke's**, 601 Walnut Street
- Reading Terminal Market**, 1136 Arch Street
- Starr Restaurant Group**
- The Twisted Tail** (Southern), 509 S. 2nd Street

Retail, Services, and Museums

- Adornamenti** (jewelry), 1006 Pine Street
- BFit4Life**, 400 Walnut Street
- Bloom Philadelphia** (flowers), hello@bloomphiladelphia.com
- Ghost Tours of Philadelphia**, 215-413-1997, ghosttour@ghosttours.com
- Head House Books**, 619 S. 2nd Street
- Independence Seaport Museum**, 211 S. Columbus Boulevard
- Judy Moon Massage**, 829 Spruce Street, Suite 300
- Lee's Cleaners**, 241 S. 6th Street
- Liberty Tree & Landscape Management**, 215-725-3637
- MASS F.I.T. (gym)** 401 S. 2nd Street, lower level
- Museum of the American Revolution**, 101 S. 3rd Street
- National Liberty Museum**, 321 Chestnut Street
- Paper on Pine** (stationery), 1310 Sansom Street
- Physick House & Powel House** (museums), 321 S. 4th Street
- Pileggi on the Square** (salon), 717 Walnut Street
- Reading Terminal Market**, 1136 Arch Street
- Rowbust Fitness**, 525 S. 4th Street, Suite 242
- Sam Shaw's Tretery** (culinary & lifestyle boutique), 306 South Street
- Show of Hands** (craft gallery), 1006 Pine Street

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treatment so that we apply materials only when and where they are needed. Landscape projects are meticulously executed and guaranteed. We also offer Blue Stone installations.

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McFarland Blue trucks, uniformed personnel, attention to detail and thorough clean-up of your property help differentiate McFarland. Our management of your landscape can be total or selective, depending on your needs and budget. If we cannot immediately identify the cause of a landscape problem, we will research the issue until we have solid answers to report to you. As a second-generation business, we have been satisfying our clients with a lifelong-relationship approach to service.

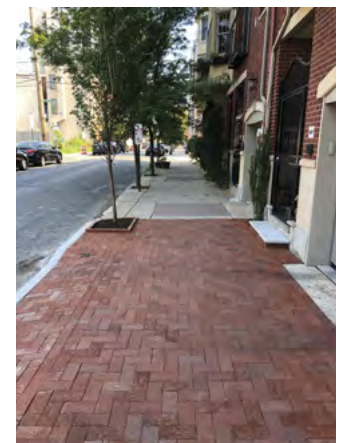
Fix Your Bricks

Brick sidewalks in Society Hill and downtown Philly are being renovated to provide a smooth, safe walking surface for pedestrians. We have experience and have repaired many sidewalks and patios in the city. The upheaval caused by tree roots can often be carefully corrected without removing or killing trees. Call McFarland to inquire about fixing your bricks.



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ON OUR SHELF

BY IZZY HALLORAN

Don't Tell Anybody the Secrets I Told You

In her memoir, *Don't Tell Anybody the Secrets I Told You*, Lucinda Williams chronicles the chaotic life of a daughter, friend, lover, and ultimately, musician. The memoir opens with stories of navigating a difficult childhood with a mother whose mental illness prevents her from being present. Her father's incredible sense of empathy towards her mother allows Williams to have a positive, albeit limited relationship with her mother. Williams maintains a close relationship with her father throughout her life. Miller Williams is described as a poet and writing teacher with a lively spirit and a love for entertaining. Her father's involvement in the counter-culture of the mid to late 20th century sparks Williams's early interest in poetry and music.

Williams's family is painted as progressive and open-minded, with a rich history of Southern abolitionist relatives, and a strong sense of morality. However, when her parents separate, her father begins dating one of his students, Jordan, who is only six or seven years older than Williams and just as much a child. Jordan's swift introduction to the family makes Williams deeply uncomfortable, but she suppresses her feelings of anger and confusion because of her admiration for her father. An intriguing part of her childhood, a deeper analysis of the impact her father's much younger partner had on her perception of love and relationships would have benefitted this memoir.

A member of a nomadic family, Williams lives in 12 different towns by the time she turns 18. Her education is far from conventional. While attending high school in New Orleans, Louisiana, she is suspended indefinitely for protesting the racially discriminatory policies and administration of the 1960s. Due to an abundance of free time combined with her father's passion for hosting, she is able to go on tour with a family friend named Clark Jones. Jones and Williams embark on a tour around Mexico playing classic American folk songs. This is her introduction to playing live shows and proves to be a pivotal moment in her budding career.

As the narrative moves chronologically into her adulthood, Williams shares memories of dozens of friends, collaborators, and lovers. She is hyper-aware of the type of man she's attracted to romantically: the bad boy, the rugged poet,

the emotionally unavailable. She recounts many stories of characters that have come into her life, most of them brief encounters that inspire her to memorialize moments through songwriting. Although I enjoyed the tales of messy trysts and free spirits, I found myself overwhelmed by the number of people mentioned in the book. I understand the urge to identify those who shaped her, but she over-complicates the narrative by trying to cram as much information as she can into 250 pages.

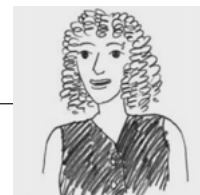
It would be neglectful not to mention Williams's relationship with a musician named Ryan Adams. In a few chapters, she refers to flirtatious encounters with Adams. During the MeToo Movement of 2017 and 2018, Ryan Adams was outed for sexual misconduct with younger female musicians. Williams addresses these accusations briefly, describing an incident in which Adams calls her after news breaks of his misconduct and asks if she thinks he's a monster. She replies, "I don't think you're a monster, Ryan. I think you just made some bad choices." I couldn't help but feel dissatisfied with the way Williams navigates this delicate situation. She proves to be out of touch with the social climate by somewhat excusing Adams's behavior. I expected more from a woman who had to fight to carve out her place in a male-dominated industry. The chapters on Ryan Adams left a sour taste in my mouth.

Although I struggled with the structure and content of certain chapters, one of my favorite parts of this memoir were the excerpts in which Williams transcribes a song and gives context to her words. I was able to listen to a song she was referencing while reading the inspiration surrounding it, and the process was hypnotizing. As a fan of Lucinda Williams and her devastatingly accurate songwriting, I couldn't put this book down. From the first page, Williams conveys an unshakable self-confidence that has made her the force she is today. With this newfound knowledge of Williams's life and career, I am astounded by her ability to translate moments of pain and loss into art that so piercingly captures the range of human emotions. Perhaps that is the mark of a true artist.

Izzy Halloran is a bookseller and Events Coordinator at Head House Books, Society Hill's only local, independently owned bookstore.



*A memoir
by musician
Lucinda
Williams*





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MEMBERSHIP REPORT

BY MATT DEJULIO

2023 Membership Tops the 1,000 Mark

By early June, 1,002 Society Hill residents had either renewed their SHCA membership or joined for the first time, slightly down from 1,023 at the same time last year. We still have a challenge to meet or exceed last year's total of 1,148. We trust that the 238 members who have not yet renewed will do so today. A final reminder went out the first week of June.

Also, remember to sign up for our **weekly** email newsletter at our website www.societyhillcivic.org, so you can keep informed on a regular basis of all important neighborhood issues.

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

Email info@societyhill.org with questions or comments, which will be shared with our board members, who represent every quadrant in our unique, historic neighborhood.

Join us to help support the many services SHCA arranges to provide to our community.

Keeping Us Safe: We work with officers of the 6th District of the Police Department on problems relating to traffic, noise, and crime.

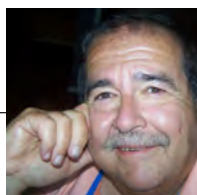
Keeping Us Clean: Membership dollars pay for extra sidewalk cleaning by the Center City District, weekly removal of graffiti, and spring and fall neighborhood clean ups.

Beautifying: Membership dollars let us subsidize members for planting or pruning trees and leveling their sidewalks. Our Washington Square Committee beautifies the square.

Preserving: The Zoning and Historic Preservation Committee works with residents, developers, and city officials to preserve the unique historic scale and overall character of Society Hill.

Connecting: We keep you informed with a weekly newsletter, bimonthly *Reporter*, and quarterly community meetings with speakers.

We encourage everyone to sign up or renew online at societyhillcivic.org. If you are not sure whether you have renewed, or if you have any questions about your membership, please contact us at info@societyhillcivic.org.



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



Society Hill
CIVIC ASSOCIATION

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Address _____ Apt. # _____

City, State, Zip _____

Home Phone _____

Work Phone _____

Email (print clearly) _____

Residential Memberships

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- \$ 40 Senior/Student/Single
- \$ 100 Federal Friend
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- \$ 300 Jefferson Benefactor
- \$ 500 Washington Benefactor
- \$1,000 Benjamin Franklin Benefactor

Business Memberships

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

Total Membership \$ _____

Your membership is important to us, but your tax-deductible contribution will help to support our many programs. All donations to the Society Hill Preservation Foundation (SHPF), a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, are tax-deductible.

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URBAN EDEN

BY MARY STURDIVANT

Weeds: Damned, Dying, Dead

Some things in gardening, as in life, deserve repeating. While we enjoyed an absolutely wondrous May, it brought so little rain as to lead us to the brink of a drought. Despite that, the grasses and weeds still popped up between the crevices in the concrete, bricks, and pavers. Don't bother talking to them. I have lectured them repeatedly, plainly telling them to go where they are wanted, like the bare patches on the lawn, but not the flowerbeds nor the cracks in the sidewalks. Unlike corn, these grasses and weeds don't have ears. They certainly don't listen.

Monsanto, bought by Bayer in 2018, created a seemingly miraculous pesticide called Roundup. One commercial featured a gardener grasping the nozzled sprayer like a Smith and Wesson, striding all Wyatt Earp-like toward the errant weeds while the haunting wails from *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* blared in the background. Roundup delivered on its promises, an efficient killer in a noir-ish reality. Unfortunately, its main ingredient glyphosate is accused of and is being litigated as toxic to humans as well as weeds. So the fast and easy solution is being pulled from the shelves by Bayer — too big a headache even for an aspirin maker.

Back to what needs repeating and appeared in this newsletter several years ago: a recipe for a non-toxic weed spray. Between the Acme and CVS on 5th Street, you can get all the ingredients.

Non-Toxic Weed Spray

- 1 gallon of vinegar
- 1 cup of Epsom salts
- 1 tablespoon of Dawn dish detergent

Mix all the ingredients and pour the solution into a spray bottle. Use on a dry, sunny day with no rain in the forecast for at least 48 hours. You don't want to dilute its effectiveness.



Be patient. The weeds will eventually be pushing daisies, an apropos euphemism. But you will still have to pull the dead debris out. This cocktail kills weeds, but it doesn't make them disappear. I also spray it as a deterrent while reciting the mantra, "Go ahead, punks, make my day." Urban gardening is not just for sweet little old ladies in floppy hats and lilac-colored pedal pushers. In town, we are tough.

Long-time neighbor **Mary Sturdivant** is a passionate gardener who oversees plot #5 in Washington Square with Ruth Ann Fenton and Jokè Nieuwland. She's a plucky petunia who advises, "When you find yourself between a brick wall and a cement slab, just do your bloomin' best."



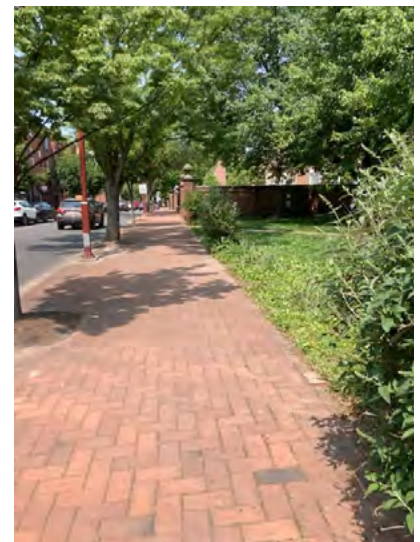
WEED PATROL

BY CLAUDIA CARABELLI

Started a few years before the pandemic by the late Madeline Miller, the Weed Patrol is a group of volunteers who labor mightily to clean up unsightly weeds in our neighborhood. The group was resurrected last year and is now coordinated by Irene Connolly. It meets on Thursday mornings most weeks.

The Weed Patrol takes on both institutional (Old Pine Community Center clean-up pictured here) and private properties. In the best of worlds, homeowners would do the responsible thing and remove the weeds themselves. A walk around the area confirms that it is not always the case. The goal of this group is to give people a jump-start on the clean up, so they will keep it up going forward.

The Weeders are a friendly, hard-working group. Want to get involved? E-mail Irene at ireneandshaun@comcast.net.



Old Pine Community Center, before and after a Weed Patrol clean up.

NIFTY NEIGHBORS IN MY BACKYARD

BY JANE BIBERMAN

Meet Notable Cellist John Koen

I was introduced to the cello at the end of fourth grade,” says John, who grew up in Texas. “We heard the fifth grade string orchestra play for us, and we had the option to sign up for the next year. I wanted to play the biggest instrument, the double bass, but I thought it was too tall for me, so I picked the second-biggest instrument!” This was in El Paso. Today, John, 56, not only teaches cello, but is a cellist with The Philadelphia Orchestra, and is both cellist and music director for the Philadelphia Chamber Ensemble.

“Other than having a toy electric organ my grandmother bought me when I was five, I had no musical exposure, except the Beatles, Chicago and Roberta Flack,” he admits. He did try his hand at other string instruments, but he longed for something very big: the cello was his destiny.

“When my grandmother took me to a music store, we purchased all the recordings we could find for the cello,” he recalls. “I loved Beethoven’s cello sonatas, Saint-Saëns’ and Lalo cello concertos. I also loved Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony. Prokofiev was my favorite composer throughout my teen years. His fifth symphony and Romeo and Juliet ballet are among his crowning achievements.” Ravel is another particular favorite. “We [the Philadelphia Chamber Ensemble] performed his string quartet last season, and I may be programming another work of his for the upcoming season. As a professional musician, I try to find new details and feelings in pieces I know well and play often, but I enjoy listening to pieces I play less often.”

He still enjoys listening to recordings of his favorite musicians: cellists Daniil Shafran, Jacqueline du Pré, Mstislav Rostropovich, and Vladimir Horowitz. Working with Leonard Bernstein and Sergiu Celibidache at the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival launched his fascination with their musical careers.

As a young student, John began private lessons with his school music teacher.



John Koen with his student Nathan Mann.

“Fortunately, she was a cellist,” he relates. “I went to an El Paso Symphony Orchestra concert and heard Sammy Mayes, former principal cellist of The Philadelphia Orchestra, perform Schelomo. I also played for Zara Nelsova when she came to town, but she told my then-teacher, “He will never be a soloist, so he should do something else.” The next time I met her was backstage, at a Guarneri Quartet concert in New York. I went backstage to thank my teacher, David Soyer, for the tickets, and Zara Nelsova was in the green room! My teacher introduced me as “my student who just got into The Philadelphia Orchestra.” I didn’t remind her we had already met!”

John studied with Soyer when he attended Curtis, where he discussed musical tastes with his fellow students and became fascinated by the artistry and character of Maria Callas, as well as the short career of Ginette Neveu.

In addition to performing, John teaches. He gives private lessons and has a studio at Temple University. A world traveler, he gives master classes around the world. He also performs with the Network for New Music as a member of the Franklin Piano Trio, made up of faculty teaching at the Philadelphia International Music Festival, as well as faculty recitals at Temple University,

and outreach concerts while on tour with the Philadelphia Orchestra.

John visited Senegal earlier this year and was about to vacation in Ecuador when we spoke in June. The orchestra’s summer schedule includes much travel — especially to Vail, Colorado and Saratoga Springs, and doesn’t allow much time off. Not surprisingly, John is very interested in languages. In addition to English, he speaks Bulgarian, German, Portuguese and Spanish and can “get by somewhat” in Chinese, Hungarian and French. He is married to double bassist Slaveiko Savov, who has a side career as a travel advisor: www.foratravel.com/advisor/slaveiko-savov. Rounding out their “string family” are two cats, Frida and Ziggy.

In 1993, John joined the Philadelphia Chamber Ensemble, exclusively made up of members of The Philadelphia Orchestra or esteemed retired members. The group was founded in 1977 by Donald and Margarita Montanaro (profiled in the January/ February 2011 issue of the *Reporter*.) While plans were being made to resume programming after the pandemic lockdown, Margarita passed on the directorship to John.

Become a subscriber to the Philadelphia Chamber Ensemble and you can attend three concerts each season right here in Society Hill at the Old Pine Church. As a special enticement, there is an Early Bird Special for those who order their season tickets before August 1st. See page 27 for more details and a subscription order form. Would you like to meet John in person? All Philadelphia Chamber Ensemble concerts are followed by wine and cheese receptions, which are hosted by the musicians. Attend a concert, and you’ll be able to chat with John and the other performers afterwards!

Jane Biberman is a freelance writer and longtime contributor to the *Reporter*.



Philadelphia Chamber Ensemble Early Bird Special

It happens every year: Autumn follows summer, and that's when the Philadelphia Chamber Ensemble's season begins. Everyone likes a bargain, and now is the time to save money and get extra tickets – a double bonus. Regular subscribers will receive one extra free ticket. Sponsor subscribers will receive two extra free tickets, and Benefactor subscribers will get three extra free tickets. Concert dates are October 13 and 15, 2023, February 9 and 11, 2024, and May 3 and 5, 2024. Friday concerts take place at 8 p.m. and Sunday concerts are held at 2 p.m. Sign up now and help prepare for the season. Please consider joining as a sponsor or benefactor by email, snail mail, phone or going online to <https://pceconcerts.org/tickets/>. Program details will be posted to the website shortly.

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HOSTS FOR HOSPITALS

BY CLAUDIA CARABELLI

Do Good. Feel Good.



With all the top-notch medical facilities in our midst, state-of-the-art care is usually just a short ride (or walk) away. For those living far from a major city, accessing treatment may require the additional cost of travel and lodging. Can you imagine stressing over the expense of temporary housing while simultaneously dealing with a medical crisis?

Hosts for Hospitals is a wonderful organization that helps fill the gap. Volunteer families are recruited to house patients and/or their families during treatment. The organization charges a very nominal fee to cover costs. As a host you need only provide a bedroom(s), clean linens and the use of a bathroom. Patients/families take care of their own meals and transportation.

Hosts can remain in the home with their guests. Or, if you're going to be away for extended periods over the summer, it can also be a great opportunity keep your house occupied. Those who have volunteered their homes universally describe it as a wonderful experience. You can meet some amazing people while offering them a much-needed lifeline. Check out the website at www.hostsforhospitals.org, or refer to the *Reporter* archives for a story in the Jan-Feb 2019 issue.

ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE

BY LOIS BECK

Bastille Day Celebration

This year, the Alliance Française of Philadelphia has chosen to celebrate Bastille Day 2023 in the most appropriate spot in the United States: Society Hill, Philadelphia. It was here that French philosophers inspired the American Revolution, and in turn the French people derived inspiration for their Revolution of 1776. It was here that they fled when their own Revolution became oppressively violent.

These émigrés brought a sophisticated, often imitated, sometimes controversial presence to the staid Anglican metropole, as French-inspired bakeries, bookstores, and restaurants sprung up everywhere. Jean-Pierre Blanchard wafted high into the air in a hot air balloon from the corner of 6th and Walnut, Marquis de Lafayette and Comte de Rochambeau worshipped regularly at Old St. Joseph's.

It is in this spirit that the Alliance holds its Bastille Day Celebration at FRIEDA, with the exquisite cuisine of Paris-trained chef, David Wong, the latest Francophone addition to our community. Find out more about the celebration at <https://www.afphila.com/events/bastille-day-2023/>.





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KIDS KORNER

BY JAIME AND MIKE FOX

Hiking Trails and Climbing the Walls

Wissahickon Valley Park

Valley Green Inn, 7 Valley Green Road
<https://fow.org/visit-the-park/>

On a beautiful spring day, the Fox family decided it was time to enjoy the great outdoors. We loaded into the car with our puppy Cali in tow and headed west to Wissahickon Valley Park. Over the years, we have enjoyed the park's many options. We first stopped by the stream, where we threw pieces of bread to the ducks and geese, which have to be the best-fed birds in the city. Once we used up our bread supply, we hiked down one of the many trails to choose from, with Owen leading the way. We hiked for more than an hour, which was impressive for both the children and the puppy. With water and snacks along the way, and restrooms right by the Valley Green Inn, we had an excellent experience.



Wissahickon Valley Park

Philly Rock Gyms – East Falls

3500 Scotts Lane B-3
<https://philarockgym.com/>

Prior to 2020 B.C. (Before COVID), Philly Rock Gym in East Falls was our favorite spot to climb and host birthday parties. During a recent day off from school in 2023 P.C. (you can guess that this means), we decided to revisit our old climbing grounds. Boy, have things changed! Since our last visit, it was no longer pay-per-climb. On a weekday, our only option was to pay for a whole day for about \$30. This was not good for us as we had only one hour to climb and one timid child who wanted to go once or twice. But we were there, so we chose to try it! According to the website, there are two options for children. You can either pay for a 90-minute session for \$29.45 per climber, or you can pay for an intro to climbing package for an adult for \$39.00 and add up to two kids for \$15 each. Another big change was the auto-belay device. This device makes climbing easy. You no longer need a human to belay or hold the child while climbing. After a five-minute lesson, it was quite easy to use. This is real AI stuff! At the East Falls location, there were four climbing walls. Owen took at least 10 climbs during this visit. Jordan was a bit more reserved but still tried every wall at least once. Next time, Jaime plans to allow more time and climb with the children.

The Continental Mid-town

1801 Chestnut Street
<https://continentalmidtown.com/>

Recently, we took our 21-year-old niece and gracefully aging aunt with us to The Continental Mid-town. This is our niece's favorite restaurant in the city. It was a beautiful evening, so we sat on the roof deck. Jaime was excited for her favorite, Rad Na noodles. Unfortunately, Rad Na were not on the menu this time. According to our waitress, there was a problem with the supply chain for the noodles. Darn you, Rad Na noodle supply chain! Luckily, the rest of our food made up for it. We ordered pad thai, calamari salad,



Climbing the walls at Philly Rock Gym

lettuce wraps, cheesesteak eggrolls, fries, and the lobster mac and cheese. The latter was everyone's favorite. The dishes tend to be served family style, so it may not be for those who aren't great sharers (like Mike). Also, the dishes come out as they are prepared. (Almost) everyone had a great time passing around and trying each dish. Continental was a great choice, and it was a lovely evening for our party of six!



The Fox family

moved to Society Hill in August 2019. They love to take advantage of the wonderful spaces and activities that Society Hill and Philadelphia have to offer. Kids' Korner will feature topics such as restaurants, parks, recreation and culture. Readers feedback and suggestions are welcome.

MCCALL SCHOOL HAPPENINGS

BY DANIELLE SANDSMARK

Little Free Library Book Sharing Box

McCall School's Garden Committee recently enhanced the schoolyard with the addition of a Little Free Library (LFL) book-sharing box. The LFL program (<https://littlefreelibrary.org/>) is an international nonprofit program geared to expanding book access and inspiring readers through a network of volunteer-organized book exchange boxes. The effort at McCall was led by Jacqueline Goldfinger, a McCall parent, author, playwright, and long-time LFL "steward," as the organization refers to their network of volunteers.

In discussing her involvement in the program, Jacqueline recounted, "I began my career as an educator and have seen first-hand how having a home environment full of books not only improves academic performance but also leads to more well-rounded, thoughtful, and curious kids. When we unlock new worlds for kids through books, there is a positive ripple effect in the entire family. Educational studies show these same results, and Little Free Library surveys show that the Libraries encourage reading while

building stronger communities. LFLs have been called the modern-day town square."

Jacqueline shared that there are currently five book boxes near our neighborhood. The LFLs at McCall and Starr Garden are the most popular for children's and teen books. The ones at Cianfrani Park, Khan Park, and near 10th & Waverly host a mix of books for all ages.

The McCall all-weather book box is located near the school entrance on 7th Street and is available 24/7. All are welcome to stop by and donate, take, or borrow books. Whether you are leaving a book, taking a book, or both, you are enriching yourself and the entire community!



McCall's all-weather Little Free Library



Danielle Sandsmark is an SHCA board member and McCall School parent.

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