



SOCIETY HILL

Reporter

www.societyhillcivic.org

2025 Membership Drive Kicks Off

Celebrating 60 Years of Service



Scan this QR code and click on JOIN NOW to start or renew your SHCA membership.

SAVE THE DATE

Wednesday,
December 11th
SHCA Holiday Social
at



Find more details and RSVP online
www.societyhillcivic.org

The 2025 Society Hill Civic Association (SHCA) membership drive has begun, and we're excited to celebrate our 60th anniversary with you! This milestone is possible because of you. As a member, you are the driving force behind everything we do, from **Keeping the Character of Society Hill** to ensuring our community continues to thrive and move forward. Since 1965, it's been your dedication that has preserved our neighborhood's unique charm and built the strong connections we all share. By renewing your membership, you continue to shape the future of Society Hill, making it a vibrant, welcoming community for all. Here are just a few initiatives you helped make possible:

- **Bringing Community Together:** We keep you informed with our weekly email newsletter the Spotlight, the bimonthly *Reporter*, and quarterly community meetings with relevant speakers. New neighbors are warmly welcomed with gift bags filled with local information and gift cards.
 - **Beautifying Our Neighborhood:** Your membership contributions help subsidize tree planting, pruning, and sidewalk leveling in the community.
 - **Keeping Us Safe:** We work with officers of the 9th District Police Department on problems relating to traffic, noise, and crime. Our network of volunteer block coordinators distributes important information quickly and efficiently.
 - **Keeping Us Clean:** Membership dollars fund regular sidewalk cleaning by the Center City District, weekly removal of graffiti, and spring and fall neighborhood clean-up efforts.
- Join fellow neighbors in shaping our community by scanning the QR code, visiting our website at societyhillcivic.org or mailing in the form on page 25, and renew your membership today. Let's work together in Keeping the Character of our beautiful Society Hill while Moving Forward toward an even more vibrant future!
- **Preserving Our Historic Charm:** The condition assessment in early 2024 of the Headhouse and Shambles conducted by SHCA led to the creation of the New Market & Head House Conservancy, a non-profit organization established to restore the structure and begin a revival of this valuable resource.
 - **Keeping Our Character:** 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.

Wednesday,
November
20

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Society Hill Civic Association Meeting
Wednesday, November 20, 2024

Carpenters' Hall
320 Chestnut Street

- 5:45 p.m. **Board Meeting**
- 7:30 p.m. **General Membership Meeting**

Speakers: Steven Sims, Superintendent
Independence National Historical Park

Topic: What's going on at Independence Park? Come and hear Steven Sims talk about plans for the park, followed by a Q&A session. Bring your questions!



Steven Sims,
Meeting Speaker

Under the Shambles



Neighbors gathered under the Shambles for wine and pizza at the September 18th Meet & Greet.

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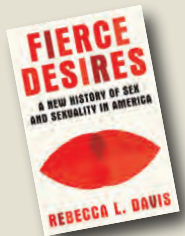
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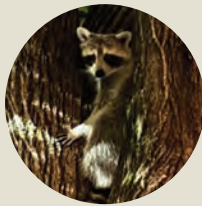
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SOCIETY HILL

Reporter

NUSA Award-Winning Newsletter First Place 2020

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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.

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 SUSAN BURT COLLINS

Working Together

It is no longer summer, and we are no longer in Kansas, Dorothy. Storms are brewing (really well-brewed by now), elections have consequences, the controversy about bike lanes never subsides, and continues to roil our community. All that is to say, fall is here — and so is the work of being a community. We need to handle challenges and disagreements by talking and listening. As I have said before, we don't operate in a vacuum. We work with other civic associations to find common ground. With a range of voices singing in unison, we increase the probability of solving some of the problems we face. A past example is the roaring ATVs, dirt bikes and three wheelers that disturbed our nights. We fussed, we asked for help from police, we asked for more police resources from the city, and action is being taken. Many say this summer was quieter. This is just one example of working in concert with others.

On to the issue of bike lanes. There are changes under discussion for Spruce and Pine Street bike lanes to improve safety. The changes are opposed by some and cheered by others. The Crosstown Coalition, a group of all of the Registered Community Organizations in Philadelphia, got into the discussion. They formed a task force that is researching options, looking at best practices, and even traveling to Hoboken, New Jersey, (who knew Hoboken would be a trend-setter!) to learn from their success in creating safer streets. SHCA's David Haas is on the coalition's task force, where he is working hard to find a compromise that will increase bike safety in our neighborhood.

On another challenge, we took a strong position by signing a statement opposing the renewal of the liquor license for Mirage Lounge on the 100 block of South Street. The reasons for our opposition were based on a pattern of problems and failures that present concerns for public safety. SHCA was a co-signer along with Queen Village Neighbors Association and Delancey Square Town Watch — a stellar example of working with others to achieve our ends.

Meanwhile, Paul Boni and his Zoning and Historic Preservation Committee worked hard to reach an agreement on design changes to a high rise development at 7th and Sansom Streets.

The changes in the design will mitigate traffic problems caused by a garage entrance and include alterations affecting the appearance of the building at street level. This was done with little fanfare and much compromise, and resulted in a plan that met most of the developer's needs while giving the community a less troublesome addition.

Now the really good news. The New Market Head House Conservancy is moving forward to restore and preserve the historic structure. Thanks to your generous response, we have raised \$43,500 in just a few weeks. A very large donation was made by Poor Richards Trust to get us started. Many others added to the fund being collected in the Society Hill Preservation Foundation for the Conservancy. Of course, the project needs much more, about \$1.5 to \$2 million more, to accomplish the restoration of the site. But strong participation by the community demonstrates to the city and potential grant funders that this is a project valued by those most affected: the neighbors of the Headhouse and the Shambles. In addition,



we are getting that beautiful blue clock in the cupola fixed! We are doing a targeted fundraising effort, "It's About Time," just for the clock, for which we need \$43,500. When the project is completed, the time shown will be accurate, the clock will chime, and the face will be a blue shining beacon at night, just as

it was in the 1800s. Of course, the works will be modern, but the clock will no longer be stuck in time. It will tell everyone that we value both our history and moving ahead.

Stay tuned. A big event under the Shambles is in the planning stages for June 12, 2025. We are working to bring together the best parts of Society Hill and all the varied people that live within our neighborhood. In sum, SHCA is tending to old relationships and building new ones so that we can be custodians of the past while meeting and navigating the inevitable changes that occur in a vibrant city like ours.



Susan Burt Collins,
SHCA President

*Tending to old
relationships
and building
new ones*

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.



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FALL 2024 CLEAN-UP DAY

BY AL MEINSTER

The Great Society Hill Clean-Up

This fall, we will again join in that annual communal event, The Great Society Hill Clean-Up, to take place on November 23 and December 7. Gone will be the masses of leaves that cause flooding by clogging our sewer inlets, create slippery sidewalks, and may even set cars afire. The cleanup goes beyond the removal of leaves on our sidewalks and yards, as it extends to disposal of confidential documents by shredding and disposal of e-waste.

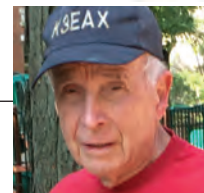
There will be significant changes in leaf removal on December 7. We will discontinue the practice of moving our cars to the street's other side as this would place the re-parked cars in the bicycle lanes, a situation that endangers cyclists. The Sanitation Department has been asked to have its team equipped with leaf-blowers clear the leaves from beneath parked cars so that the sweeper/vacuuming trucks may remove them.

Leaf bags aplenty will be available in Delancey Park (Three Bears) on December 7 beginning at 8 a.m. Also, bags may be delivered to your home as early as the preceding Wednesday for those wishing to have an earlier start; learn more details in future Spotlights and from your block coordinators. The filled bags are to be placed at the corners of the numbered streets by 12 noon for collection by Sanitation.

The paper shredding and e-waste collection on November 23 sponsored by State Representative Mary Isaacson will take place starting at 10 a.m. in the parking lot located at Front and Lombard Streets.

Should questions arise, I can be reached at k3eax@yahoo.com.

November 23 & December 7



Al Meinster is an SHCA board member.

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A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE ON ENGAGEMENT

BY BRANDON ENGELHARDT

Hello, Neighbor!

My street's sidewalk doesn't allow the dual passage of a stroller and an Irish Setter. It connects to a corner where nobody follows traffic rules. Walk straight and take a left, and you'll go by a tavern that appears to be a tomb of our past, passed-on by the city. Continue, and you'll notice plastic cones scattered as dollar-store protection for safer streets, juxtaposed with an idling Amazon truck in a bike lane just a few feet further. Pass that and you'll walk by a school with a 2017 facility report suggesting an "end of life expectancy" with an estimated \$36 million needed for upgrades. Completing the loop, you'll end your stroll in The Shambles, where just two years ago the area would produce the sounds of diners in jubilation, but today emits an echo of clatter off the empty storefronts as the cobblestones get clobbered by cars.

If you aren't engaged, it's easy to have the sentiment described above, but let me offer a different perspective. That narrow sidewalk creates countless neighbor interactions, including last week's brainstorm and 311 submission blitz to repair a downed Franklin street lamp. That abandoned historical pub has a new shingled roof, with renewed life scheduled soon due to private investment. Those plastic cones, born from tragedy, have led to successful city-wide peaceful demonstrations for safer streets and a new bike lane safety bill. That school in need of repair provides some of the city's best safe, quality education to a student body that looks like the melting pot that is America. Those Shambles continue to be the neighborhood's town square each market Sunday, with three new commercial leases signed this summer.

I grew up in a small town, a town that had less traffic lights than dairy farms. Since then, I've lived in major cities for the past 14 years. Here's what I've observed. For some reason, as more people crowd into a smaller space, they become less likely to know

their neighbors or to extend a helping hand. I suppose the bystander effect we learned about in Psych 101 is real!

I'm guilty of popping my airpods in on my dog walks and avoiding eye contact on the sidewalk, or ignoring a piece of debris even though it's right next to the trash can. But I'm going to challenge myself to change that. I've learned that a smile, hello, or thank you to a neighbor goes a long way toward community. So with that, here are a few thank yous.

Thank you to my neighbors Val, Tanya, Abas, Norma, Kevin, and Darya. To Martha Levine and Linda Skale for organizing the Society Hill Garden Tour, raising \$20 thousand for our neighborhood. To SHCA, the Conservancy, and Susan Burt Collins for bringing us together at The Shambles at September 18th's meet & greet. To the Delancey Square Town Watch for organizing Halloween so our kids can have a safe space to be kids and show us how community togetherness can make us proud of where we live. To all the folks who organize our Clean-Up Days. To those who help organize our Sunday Farmers Market. Last, but most certainly not least, a huge thank you to all organizers who close down our streets to cars so we can enjoy the outdoors, like during the Pickleball tourney, Derby Day, South Street Fest, Fall Fest, Cinco de Mayo, VegFest, Holiday "sleigh" rides with Santa... and all the other events that brought our community together.

"More, more, more!" the crowd chants. From everything I've witnessed, Center City District's Open Streets on West Walnut on Sundays in September have been a smashing success. Should we consider advocating for Open Streets here on weekends and restore COVID's extended outdoor dining policy?

Just as cobblestones lose their strength and become uneven when not tightly bound together, a neighborhood loses its effectiveness and resilience when its residents aren't connected and engaged with each other.

Things We Can Do Today

Here are a few ideas.

- **Volunteer.** Read *The Reporter* for opportunities. My wife and I volunteered at the Garden Tour and had folks over for a BBQ after. It was fun!
- **Sign up for the neighborhood newsletter** at societyhillcivic.org: scroll to the bottom and click "Get our e-newsletter."
- **Use 311.** It works! Download the app Philly 311 onto your phone.
- **Follow Delancey Square Town Watch.** Email dstownwatch@gmail.com to receive their newsletter. Consider installing a front door camera. I use the wired Ring front door and highly recommend it. If you need help with installation, email me.
- **Spot and report graffiti.** Email ashley.hutchinson@urbanscapespecialists.com. Save Ashley as a contact in your mobile phone so whenever you see graffiti on public property in our neighborhood, you can snap a photo and email it to her instantly.
- **Support our local businesses.** Shout out to our friends at Tamalex and Bistro Romano on Lombard Street, Queen & Rook Cafe on South Street, and, at Headhouse Square, Twisted Tail (where we had our rehearsal dinner), Bloomsday, and Malbec (great happy hour deals)!

**Brandon Engelhardt**

has been a neighbor in Society Hill since 2021. He and his wife are most famous for their spunky-spirited, red Irish Golden named Fitzgerald. Email Bengelhardt2014@gmail.com.

SPOTLIGHT NEWSLETTER

BY CASEY ORLOSKY

Stay Informed & Connected



The Society Hill Spotlight is more than just a newsletter; it's a way to stay connected to the heart of our neighborhood. Every Thursday morning, this weekly email brings you the latest news, upcoming meetings, local events, and essential resources that matter most to our community. Occasionally, we will dispatch a News Flash, which provides critical updates about issues in our neighborhood.

We know that staying connected goes beyond just our corner of the city. That's why we also share events from nearby neighborhoods, so you can enjoy the best of what all of Philadelphia has to offer.

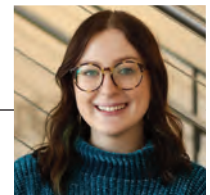
Each issue also shines a light on our wonderful local businesses. The Spotlight makes it easy to discover hidden gems and take advantage of special deals. We love celebrating the small businesses that make Society Hill feel like home.

The best part? The Society Hill Spotlight is completely free, and you don't need to be a member to sign up. Whether you've just moved in or have lived here for years, and whether or not you've joined SHCA as a member, you are an integral part of this neighborhood.

Subscribing is easy. **To sign up, simply scan this QR code** using your phone, and you'll be added to the mailing list. By doing so, you'll ensure you're always up to date with the latest happenings in our community and beyond.



Casey Orlosky is SHCA's Social Media & Spotlight Coordinator



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TREE TENDERS UPDATE

BY CLAUDIA CARABELLI

Fall and Spring Planting

Our Tree Tenders volunteers will be hard at work in the neighborhood planting five new street trees on the morning of **Saturday, November 16**. If you see us out and about, please say hello, or better yet, grab a shovel and join us. It's dirty work like this that keeps Society Hill green and beautiful.

Want a tree?

Our spring planting will take place sometime in April. **The deadline to apply is November 24**. If you have an empty pit, please consider applying for a tree. It's a simple application, free to you, and volunteers will do the planting and provide you with ongoing instructions for care. This applies to street trees only. A dead tree will need to be removed (stump included). SHCA offers subsidies to help cover the cost. The pit can't be directly in front of a door or too close to electrical boxes or street signs. When in doubt, apply anyway. You'll find out if you were approved or not.

How to apply

- DEADLINE IS NOVEMBER 24
- Go to www.phsonline.org. Click on For Neighborhoods, then Tree Programs, and then Get a Tree. Go to Step 5 "Street Tree Application."

Tree Tenders Information

- Group leader: Claudia Carabelli
- Phone: 215-582-3728
- Email: ccarabelli@comcast.net

Just reach out if you have questions or need help with the application. Thanks for considering.



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



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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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URBAN EDEN

BY MARY STURDIVANT

Hydroponic Garden Wall

The annual Society Hill Garden Tour provides the curious with opportunities to peek into the private paradises our neighbors have created. Many of us were amazed to discover amongst us a couple raising a pair of hens, another neighbor keeping bees, and so many others who had built water features with soothing sounds to drown out city noise pollution. I was most intrigued by Ed Tawyea's hydroponic wall. Hydroponics grow plants in water with liquid supplements and no soil. A green wall solves the problem of limited space with city dwellers' ancient answer: Go up!

Let's set some expectations for you here. First, Ed is retired from the Jefferson University Medical School library and academic computing. No longer needing a space to decompress, he moved to Society Hill to be nearer the action. But while he was living near the Wissahickon Creek, he became fascinated by flora seemingly growing right out of the rocky cliffs. Dripping water provided an inkling as to how they survived. A spark was ignited. Now he had time to experiment. It started in the basement with a *Draecena*. It lived!

What does a gardener do with a long blank wall? There was a lot of trial, error, learning, and redoing in this project. Ed puts the D, I, and Y in Do It Yourself. For the rest of us, I can recommend *Field Guide to Urban Gardening* by Kevin Espiritu. Chapter 7 is devoted to hydroponics with lots of practical tips. It reminds me of an old adage often attributed to our own Ben Franklin, "Learn from the mistakes of others. You cannot possibly live long enough to make them all yourself."

Ed, still a librarian at heart, recommends the French botanist Patrick Blanc, the champion of green walls. We both recalled a Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's "proof of concept" installation years ago in our neighborhood, which emphasized food production. Because Ed has a plot in the community garden on Locust Street for vegetables, he concentrates on aesthetics in his personal space.



Ed Tawyea and his hydroponic wall.

What does a gardener do with a long blank wall?

Ed's hydroponic wall is made of PVC boards, attached to a wooden frame and covered with a black geotextile made from recycled water bottles. Each plant is wrapped in an acrylic felt and placed into one of over 220 slits in the black covering. Stainless steel staples help fix the felt wrapping to the PVC wall. Before you start a DIY project in front of a brick wall, remember that historic brick, which is softer than new brick, is easily damaged. It's not easy for homeowners to determine if a wall is historic brick or not. If in doubt, consult a preservation contractor.

Water is the next major component. After the hydroponic solutions literally ate through the aluminum tubes, Ed switched to vinyl. Electric pumps get the water to the top, where gravity takes over. Over 25 emitters spray his plants. Ed estimates 30 gallons of water fill the system, with half in the pipes and half in the reservoir. The fertilizer solution, which Ed buys online, is a classic mix of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium (NPK) with a secret sauce of minerals.

Michael Pollan, in his wonderful book *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, credits the German chemist Fritz Haber with unlocking the miracle of nitrogen in 1909. Except for its corrosive effects, Ed is pretty positive about the cost effectiveness of this type of gardening.

Ed cites the challenges as mainly pump failures and recommends having

a backup. Finally, there are the mice, rats, voles, squirrels, and raccoons who treat urban gardeners as their unpaid laborers in food production.

As I gazed around his city oasis, I noticed how many of his plants I would consider house plants. That led to a discussion of overwintering. Succulents, bromeliads, philodendrons, ferns, and coleus come inside. Stairsteps leading to the skylights become their new home. Annuals are left outside to die and be composted. Grow lights in the basement take care of the rest. It probably helps that Ed has no pets.

My biggest takeaway from the visit came at the end. Ed pointed out how green walls and hydroponics are great hobbies for gardeners who can no longer bend over or kneel to dig and weed. You stand or sit in front of the wall to move, rearrange, prune, trim, or deadhead your plants with no strain on hips, knees, or back. This has real possibilities.



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

KEEPING POSTED

BY AL CAVALARI

Three Lost Buildings on One Street Corner

What can one say about a man deemed important enough to be on the one hundred dollar bill? It can be said that Ben Franklin became a fugitive when he skipped out on his indentured service contract in Boston. He arrived here, the largest city in North America, at age 17 with a “Dutch dollar, and about a shilling in copper.” He had neither a job, nor a place to stay. He knew no one. Within five years, he was a partner in a printing business and, within six years, he purchased the *Pennsylvania Gazette*.

It can be said that he worked on inventions: bifocals, lightning rod, stove, urinary catheter, and the glass armonica, a musical instrument for which Mozart and Beethoven composed. He was the first to chart the Gulf Stream. His experiments with electricity made him world-famous. He was the first to use commercial franchising in the Americas. He led the development of a nighttime street patrol, street lighting, street cleaning, and street paving. He is credited as a chief founder of The University of Pennsylvania, The Pennsylvania Hospital (for which he introduced the idea of matching fund grants), The Philadelphia Contributionship insurance company, The American Philosophical Society, and The Library Company, all of which are still in business. He founded the Union Fire Company.

He held multiple appointed and elected offices at the city, colonial, and state levels. He helped create the colonial militia and, during the French and Indian War, put himself in harm’s way as an officer on the frontier. He served in Congress, and was our ambassador to France, where he was instrumental in securing that nation’s aid. He signed the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, and the Treaty of Paris that ended the Revolutionary War. While he used enslaved labor as household help early on, he later became president of the Philadelphia Abolition Society.

The National Park Service has erected wayside exhibits showing the wonderful buildings that were sadly torn down

in the 20th century. The loss of this architectural legacy is a clarion call for us to be more willing to preserve and repurpose beautiful old structures. These postcards tell the story of three such buildings.

The modern card shows Library Hall at the corner of 5th and Chestnut Streets. The building is now the home of the American Philosophical Society (APS), an organization founded by Franklin in 1743 for the purpose of “promoting useful knowledge.” The APS arose out of an informal club Franklin started named “The Junto,” a small group of friends who met regularly, at what today we would call a book club or study group. Junto members realized that if they pooled their books, they would have a larger collection available for all to use.

Out of this concept, Franklin founded the Library Company of Philadelphia in 1731. The country’s first successful lending library, it was a membership organization funded by those who purchased a “share” to join and then paid a yearly fee. Today it is still in business as a research library. Its collection and exhibits are free for anyone to use, although those wishing to support it can still buy a numbered “legacy share.” I own share #207, originally purchased in 1769 by Jeremiah Elfreth, the blacksmith and real estate developer who created Elfreth’s Alley in the early 18th century.

We’d love to have the original “Library Hall” today. It opened in 1791, but it was torn down in 1885 when the Library Company moved to larger quarters and sold the property to Drexel Bank. Drexel erected the building seen in the older post card which dates from about 1915. Notice that the front corner of



This modern postcard shows Library Hall at the corner of 5th and Chestnut, now home of the American Philosophical Society.



This 1915 postcard shows the Drexel building erected on the site of the original Library Hall.

the structure could be a stand-alone building, which in fact it was! That was the entire original project. Anthony J. Drexel became unhappy with its size and purchased the land around it so he could build an “addition.” When Independence National Bank, the tiny structure you can see tucked in between the towers refused to sell, Drexel constructed

continued on page 13

KEEPING POSTED

continued from page 12



Independence National Bank, the tiny structure tucked between the two Drexel towers.

a ten-story “H” shaped “sky scraper,” hemming it in on all three sides. Drexel’s building was a wonder. Built in 17 months, its iron framing was high-tech at the time, it was completely clad in marble, and it seamlessly fit right over the original smaller building. It became a prestigious business address for a number of important firms, including the Philadelphia Stock Exchange.

While we lost the original Library Hall from 1791, we did gain the three wonderful buildings seen in this card until, alas, they were *also* torn down in 1955, thus creating the space for the new APS

Building on the site of Franklin’s old Library Hall. As a tribute to Library Hall, the modern structure is a copy of its façade. But look at what a wonderfully fantastical design that little Independence Bank building was. Out of all three lost buildings, I think it is the one I’d most still like to have.

Banker Anthony J. Drexel became the head of the family business when his father died in 1863. In the 1870s, he became a mentor to young J.P. Morgan who would go on to dominate finance throughout the gilded age and into the 20th century. The two would eventually form a partnership that would finance railroads and industrial

companies and stabilize Wall Street. Drexel, Morgan & Co. underwrote the pay of the entire U.S. Army when Congress refused to do so, bailed out the government in the Panic of 1895, and rescued the New York Stock Exchange in 1907.

In 1891 Drexel spent more than \$3 million of his own money (\$78 million in today’s money) to found Drexel University as an “experiment” in education that “made no restrictions on religion, race, gender, or socioeconomic status” as quoted from the school’s website. This act could be a page right out of

the life of Franklin, who asked himself each morning, “What good can I do today?” Think of all the good that Drexel University has done for millions of people.

With one year of formal schooling as a child, Franklin taught himself to read French, German, Italian, Spanish, and Latin. Historian H.W. Brands calls Franklin “a genius.” By the age of 42, he was independently wealthy and turned his business over to a partner, after which he devoted himself to science, politics, and world diplomacy. From modest beginnings, over the course of his long career he would eventually stand before five kings and dine with one. His last will and testament begins with a fitting statement about the poor, tired, wet, dirty, runaway kid who arrived in our town: “I, Benjamin Franklin of the City of Philadelphia, Printer....” He still thought of himself as a leather-aproned, blue-collar tradesman. His grave at Christ Church burial ground is marked with a plain simple stone which complies exactly with his instructions and can be visited 24 hours per day.

Where would we be without people who are willing to change the world?



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BY PRISCILLA LO, MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIR

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In 2025, SHCA will proudly celebrate its 60th anniversary. Since 1965, SHCA has worked to enhance the quality of life in our community while preserving the unique character of our historic neighborhood. Today, we proudly represent more than 5,000 families, individuals, and businesses.

None of this would be possible without *you*. Your support keeps Society Hill thriving by maintaining its safety, beauty, vibrant community spirit, and the exceptional living environment we all cherish. Whether we're enhancing public spaces, protecting historic landmarks, advocating for neighborhood needs, or fostering connections between residents, you make it all possible.

Your contributions will ensure Society Hill remains both a reflection of its rich history and a vibrant, welcoming place for all. Renew your membership today to help preserve our unique character while shaping the future of our neighborhood! Find more information on how to join or renew on Page 25 of this issue.

Priscilla Lo, an advertising executive, has lived in Society Hill with her family for 15 years (and loving it). She is Chair of the SHCA Membership Committee.



SHCA pays for immediate removal of graffiti on our public spaces.



SHCA general membership meetings provide information about neighborhood issues and foster community involvement.



Kristine and Juliette are two of 45 to 50 new first-time Society Hill owners SHCA presented with Welcome Gift Bags. Each bag contains a bottle of wine, coffee, chocolates, and gift cards to restaurants, retail, services, museums and entertainment. What a great welcome!



Neighbors are told exactly where to report lights that are out or damaged to help maintain the 500 Franklin Lights keeping Society Hill a brighter and safer neighborhood.



Our popular and helpful List of Contractors contains 11 pages of contractors under all categories, such as general contractors, handymen, electricians, plumbers, window washers, HVAC and more. You must be a current SHCA member to receive one.

YOUR MEMBERSHIP DOLLARS AT WORK

...and Moving Forward for More!



The Gardens of Society Hill Tour has become an annual peek into private green spaces. This popular fundraiser shows visitors, who come from far and wide, the special gardens we create and tend.



On Spring and Fall Clean-Up Days, volunteers clear leaves with the help of city trucks. Shredding and electronics recycling services are also provided. Kasia Stien



Your membership gifts pay the Center City District to sweep our sidewalk debris on Mondays and Fridays.



The "Fix the Brix" program offers homeowners a subsidy for repair of uneven brick and concrete sidewalks that has made our community safer and more attractive.



SHCA offers a \$150 subsidy to residents who plant new trees in our neighborhood, with the help of Tree Tenders. We also offer a subsidy for tree pruning, as well as dead tree removal.



More than 40 parking spaces on Front Street below South, overseen by Park America are available for neighbors to lease on a monthly basis and for guests and visitors to use on a short-term basis. Use of the lot generates income for SHCA.



Over 3,800 households are informed of important issues through a copy of the national-award-winning Society Hill Reporter. Our email newsletter, Spotlight, keeps us up to date on a weekly basis.




SHCA advocates for the preservation and restoration of its historic buildings and keeps tabs on current issues.




The annual Holiday Social is a fun and relaxing way to meet and socialize with your neighbors at a local restaurant.


M. Levine



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SAFETY INFORMATION

BY CLAUDIA CARABELLI

911: The Go-To Number for Everything

A common misconception is that 911 calls are reserved for matters of “life and death.” While that may have been the case initially, 911 is now the number to call for **any and all** police services.

Vandalism, identity theft, auto collisions, and even loud ATVs all warrant a call to 911. The dispatcher will log the call, triage it according to severity, and dispatch officers in order of priority. True life-and-death cases will obviously be responded to first. The lesser concerns will be dealt with when an officer becomes available. Even if some don’t result in a police response, your call will be logged in the record.

This helps build the case for attention to ongoing issues. When multiple people call about racing vehicles or patterns of vandalism, that gets the attention of the authorities.

Up until recently, Society Hill was part of the 6th police district. The 6th and 9th districts recently merged into one larger 9th district covering river to river and Lombard to Poplar Streets. As Captain Anthony Ganard, new head of the 9th district, shared at a recent community meeting, “If you don’t call us, we don’t know what’s going on.”

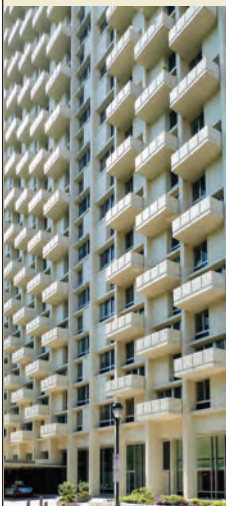
Claudia Carabelli is a former RN and retired school counselor. She co-chairs the Society Hill Tree Tenders.

Calling 911 for any and all police services builds the case for attention to ongoing issues.

Members-Only Benefit: List of Contractors

If you are a current SHCA member, you are eligible to receive our popular and helpful List of Contractors. The list has 11 pages of contractors under all categories, including painters, HVAC, handymen, electricians,

general contractors, plumbers, window washers, and more. You name it, we have it. We are happy to send members the list electronically or as a hard copy. To receive a copy of the list, contact us at info@societyhillcivic.org.



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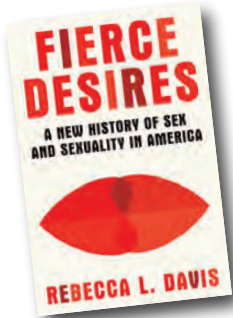
BY IZZY HALLORAN

Holiday Picks From Head House Books

Stop by Head House Books to browse a wide selection of gifts for everyone on your holiday list. Here are a few of our suggestions.

Nonfiction & Local Author

Fierce Desires: A New History of Sex and Sexuality in America by Rebecca L Davis, \$35



Fierce Desires is an engaging, informative nonfiction book by History, Gender, and Women’s Studies scholar and professor Rebecca L. Davis. Filled with intriguing historical ads, drawings, photos, and text, *Fierce Desires* provides a detailed, updated history of sex and sexuality in America that spans 400 years. Through a skilled blend of past and present stories, events, and facts, Davis weaves a thought-provoking text that successfully sets itself apart from other dense literary works.

Illustrated Children’s Book

The Art and Life of Hilma af Klint by Ylva Hillström & Karin Eklund, \$19.95

A hidden gem in illustrated books, this biographical work tells the story of Hilma af Klint (1862-1944), an abstract expressionist and pioneer in both style and form. *The Art and Life of Hilma af Klint* contains reproductions of Hilma af Klint paintings as well as photographs of her art, paired with biographical events and stories of the artist’s life and work. This book is ideal for anyone interested in art, especially children and young adults who are curious about overlooked female artists of the 20th century.

Cookbook

The Bean Book by Steve Sando & Julia Newberry, \$35

This Fall 2024 release is an illuminating guide to 50 types of beans and 100 accessible recipes. Written by Steve Sando, founder of the acclaimed Rancho Gordo bean company, *The Bean Book* features a rich variety of cross-cultural recipes and visually stunning photographs. The recipes include vegetarian, vegan, and meat meals that provide many exciting and delicious ways to elevate a single, versatile ingredient.



YA Graphic Novel

Brownstone by Samuel Yert & Mar Julia, \$18.99

Published in June 2024, *Brownstone* is a moving coming-of-age story about a teenage girl named Almudena who struggles to navigate her cultural identity. When her mother pursues an important job opportunity, Almudena is forced to spend the summer with her estranged Guatemalan father, Xavier, helping restore his broken-down brownstone. Raised by a white single mother, Almudena faces a variety of barriers while living among her father, his family, and the larger Latinx community. As an outsider who doesn’t speak their language or practice their cultural traditions, Almudena spends her summer building her relationship with her father, her heritage, and ultimately, herself. Packed with vivid illustrations and complex, well-developed characters, *Brownstone* is a heartwarming read for all ages.



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





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WILDLIFE IN THE CITY

BY CLAUDIA CARABELLI

Masked Bandits Roam the Neighborhood

City wildlife, at least in this context, does not apply to those who patronize after-hours clubs. Nor are these bandits likely to face criminal charges. What we have here are... **raccoons!** Yes, right in Philadelphia. The accompanying photo was taken on 5th Street near Pine. Our editor recently encountered two on her porch roof with one curiously peeking through the window. My dog walker once showed up at a client's home in Queen Village to find a raccoon swimming in the backyard pond. Efforts to shoo him away resulted in a bit of a stand-off. The little bugger swiped the largest prize koi, grasped it in one paw and hissed at her from behind a bush. They were subsequently able to secure the pond, but the fish was, sadly, a goner. Even the new roof on our Pocono home had to be repaired after a mama raccoon decided to tear open a soffit, rearrange the insulation and design a cozy home for her growing family. (She was humanely relocated). This is just a sampling of the many adventures of these little critters.

Fossil evidence indicates the first-known members of the family *Procyonidae* lived in Europe 25 million years ago. There are now 22 recognized subspecies of raccoon throughout the world. "Raccoon" is derived from a native Powhatan term that means "animal that scratches with its hands." These little guys exhibit a behavior called "dousing." They'll retrieve food from underwater along shorelines, picking it up with their front paws to examine and rub. This gives the appearance of washing the food. Interestingly, this behavior has been observed more frequently in captive raccoons than those in the wild.

Raccoons are easily recognized by their distinctive features, most notably the area of black fur around their eyes that resembles a mask. That, along with their propensity to get into mischief, has earned them a reputation as bandits. Their slightly rounded ears are bordered by white fur, and their distinctive tail has alternating light and dark rings.



These two young raccoons were spotted in a tree on 5th Street near Pine.

They typically weigh between 11 and 26 pounds, with males larger than females. The largest wild raccoon on record was a whopping 63 pounds. Their weight fluctuates with the seasons. Winter fat storage can double their heft from what it is in the spring. Their locomotion is called "plantigrade" which is walking on the entire soles of the foot.

Raccoons typically mate during times of increasing daylight, but it varies in each locale. Mating can last over an hour and is repeated over several nights. No one-night stands for these guys! Gestation is usually 63 to 65 days producing two to five kits (also called cubs) in a litter. It's solely single-mother parenting, as the males take no part in raising the young. Weaned by 16 weeks and ready to make their own way, they may still share a den with mom during the first cold winter. Raccoons in captivity have been known to live more than 20 years. Those in the wild rarely make it past 3 years, falling victim to hunters and automobiles. They're quite intelligent and eat almost anything.

If you encounter one of these rascals, first and foremost, **leave them alone!** Cute as they are, they're wild animals and can be dangerous if threatened or cornered. Do **not** try to catch one yourself. Call City of Philadelphia animal control at 267-385-3800 and leave it to the professionals. In the Poconos, we used a company that set baited traps, humanely relocated the captives, and treated the area with a deterrent. We had the choice of a lemony-peppermint scent or the aroma of animal urine. Pretty much a no-brainer.

If the raccoon enters your home, move slowly and quietly. Open nearby doors and windows to provide an escape route. You can even leave a trail of food leading to the open door. Seek medical attention if it bites or scratches you or you come in contact with its fur. Rabies is always a concern, so best not to take chances. Don't feed these animals. Always secure outdoor trash so it doesn't attract them.

Enjoy watching, but keep your distance, leave them alone, and stay safe.

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





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WELCOME GIFT BAGS

BY MARTHA LEVINE, COORDINATOR

No Ordinary Welcome



Alex, Allon and daughter

SHCA knows how to do it right when welcoming new neighbors. First-time house or condo owners are greeted in a special way: with Welcome Gift Bags. If you are new to the neighborhood and are interested, let us know you are here and we will set up an appointment to visit you with our delightful gift.

What's in each gift bag? A bottle of wine, coffee, artisan chocolates, and a pastry, plus many gift cards and vouchers to area restaurants, retailers, entertainment, services, and museums. In addition, we provide important information that is valuable to new residents.

Please don't hesitate. We want to hear from you! Contact me at marthalev6@gmail.com or call 215-629-0727 for an appointment.

As always, we invite you to support all of our local business donors who make this program possible.

Martha Levine is an active long-time SHCA board member.



Welcome Gift Bag

As always, we ask you to support the long-loyal business donors listed here. Without them, there would not be a Welcome Gift Bag program.

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Cry Baby Pasta, 627 S. 3rd Street
Fork Restaurant, 306 Market Street
FRIEDA (café), 320 Walnut Street
Gnocchi (Italian), 613 E. Passyunk Avenue
High Street Philly, 101 S. 9th Street
La Colombe Coffee Roasters, 100 S. 6th Street
Las Buglambillas (Mexican), 15 S. 3rd Street
Mahalo Hawaiian BBQ, 117 South Street
Malbec Argentine Steakhouse, 400 S. 2nd Street
Panorama, 14 N. Front Street
PJ Clarke's, 601 Walnut Street
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IN COMMUNITY

BY SAMANTHA BROWN

You Are SHCA, and SHCA Is You

What is a civic association? Put simply, it's a group of citizens who work together to improve their community. It's you, and it's us. Just look at the impact of your Membership dollars in this issue's center spread (pages 14-15). Isn't it amazing just how much we're able to accomplish when we work together?

I hope you'll make the decision to join as a 2025 SHCA member today.

From Your Neighbors

"We are so glad to be living in Society Hill and have been blown away by the amount of friendliness and neighborliness that exists here. The Welcome Gift Bag provided by SHCA is a great introduction to the neighborhood and is the icing on the cake."

— Dorothy

I value SHCA for its generous subsidies for sidewalk repairs and tree work. These subsidies help keep our neighborhood safe and beautiful.

— Marty

Three Easy Ways to Make Your 2025 Membership Gift

1 Use this QR code to make your gift by phone.



1. Open your phone's camera.
2. Point at the QR code.
3. Click the link that appears on the screen, and it will take you right to our web page where you can sign up!

2 Visit this URL to make your gift on computer:

www.societyhillcivic.org/join

3 Use the form on this page to pay by check.


Mail it to: Society Hill Civic Association
P.O. Box 63503, Philadelphia, PA 19147

As always, you can reach me at info@societyhillcivic.org. I am grateful to be a member of this community and to be your neighbor!

In community, Samantha
SHCA Administrator



Samantha Brown is SHCA's Administrator and has called Society Hill "home" for 20 years.



Society Hill
CIVIC ASSOCIATION

2025 Membership Form

We encourage everyone to join online by going to www.societyhillcivic.org/join.

If you prefer to pay by check, fill out this form and follow the mailing instructions at the bottom.

Name _____

Address _____ Apt. # _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

Email (print clearly) _____

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

Total Membership \$ _____

If paying membership dues by check, please make the check payable to:
Society Hill Civic Association

Donations to Society Hill Preservation Fund

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.

\$ _____ Unrestricted – Where Most Needed

\$ _____ Cleaning and Graffiti Removal

\$ _____ "Fix the Brix" and Tree Tending

\$ _____ Headhouse & Shambles Fund

\$ _____ McCall School

\$ _____ Starr Garden Playground Renovation

Total Donations \$ _____

If making a tax-deductible donation by check, make the check payable to:
Society Hill Preservation Foundation

Mail this form and your check(s) to:
Society Hill Civic Association, P.O. Box 63503, Philadelphia, PA 19147

Or join online at: www.societyhillcivic.org/join

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Exact Solar has been good from start to finish. They promptly answered any questions I had upfront, communicated very clearly what we can expect has the homeowner, provided relatively quick installation and managed all of the permits and inspections with township. Highly recommend.
- Stephen G.

Worth the Wait
I started working with Exact Solar in June 2021. They were consistently responsive and very helpful in all aspects of the design and permitting part of the process. Once the necessary approval and supply issues were taken care of, the installation itself was completed quickly and professionally, with the system going online in December/January. Exact Solar was also very helpful with setting up net metering and SREC accounts. I highly recommend their services!
- Charles L.

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Athletics, Grades 5-12



KIDS KORNER

BY THE FOX FAMILY

Beetlejuice and Birthdays in Owentember

**AMC Theatre at the Fashion District**

AMC DINE-IN Fashion District 8
1001 Market Street, Suite 3050
www.amctheatres.com

The kids have been watching the movie *Beetlejuice* since they were younger, and they absolutely love it. So when we heard the sequel *Beetlejuice Beetlejuice* was coming out the week before Owen's 12th birthday, all thoughts of birthday party celebrations went toward seeing it. A few weeks prior to Owen's September 13 birthday (Owen accepts gifts in lieu of donations), we purchased 10 tickets for Owen and six of his friends to the 5:10 p.m. showing at the AMC Fashion District. By purchasing our tickets in advance, we were able to choose seats and lock in our plan way ahead of time. We agreed that the kids could order slushies and popcorn prior to the movie. Owen ordered a special edition Beetlejuice sour apple slushie that had this fluorescent green color that could never be found in nature. He loved it! The kids enjoyed the movie as they relaxed in adjustable recliners and absorbed the brilliance of Michael Keaton at his finest. The theater is close enough to walk to and made for the most relaxing birthday party we have ever thrown!

**Marathon Grill**

Marathon Grill
121 S. 16th Street
www.eatmarathon.com

Owen's September birthday month continued with a family celebration in Center City. We played indoor mini golf (tune in to the next issue to hear about it!) and had dinner at Marathon Grill. With a party of eight, some of whom are picky eaters, Marathon Grill offered many options for the whole gang, including a large children's menu. The food was enjoyable, and affordable. The restaurant even had a television showing the Phillies game, which our home team won in dramatic fashion. The waitstaff was fabulous and everyone was very friendly. When they learned it was Owen's birthday, they even brought him a free piece of cake with a candle! Our favorite foods that evening included seared tuna, salads, a Philly cheesesteak, and lots of French fries.

**Mueller Chocolate Co.**

Reading Terminal Market, 51 N. 12th Street
(southwest side of the Market)
215-922-6164

On a Sunday at the end of Owentember (the new name for September just rolls off the tongue), our intention was to try donuts at Reading Terminal Marketplace, but we learned the donut shop is not open on Sundays. We will be back... **We will be back!** But all was not lost, as it turns out Owen and Jordan are not picky about where they get their next sugar fix. Jordan requested that we visit Mueller Chocolate Co. Jordan and Owen each chose a white chocolate marshmallow. Jaime was, *ahem*, forced to get a slice of chocolate peanut butter fudge to hit the minimum \$12 to pay by credit card. With so many choices and reasonable prices, each item was about \$4, everyone enjoyed their pick. We would definitely stop back and try something (or everything!) else on our next visit!

**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.

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