

SOCIETY HILL

# Reporter

March/April 2025  
The Newsletter  
of the Society Hill  
Civic Association  
[www.societyhillcivic.org](http://www.societyhillcivic.org)

## Make a Contribution to Your Neighborhood By Joining the SHCA Board



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

**D**o you have great ideas about how to improve your community? Are you willing to roll up your sleeves and pitch in to get the job done? If the answer is yes, then consider volunteering for a position on the Society Hill Civic Association (SHCA) Board of Directors. We are a team dedicated to preserving the character and community of Society Hill. We address changes and challenges by listening to all sides and working together to find solutions. We represent a community of 3,000 households — those living in high-rise condos, apartments, and single-family homes — plus many active institutions like Old Pine Community Center, Mother Bethel Church, and the Athenaeum. Besides our role as the Registered Community Organization for zoning issues in our area, we help with playground improvements,

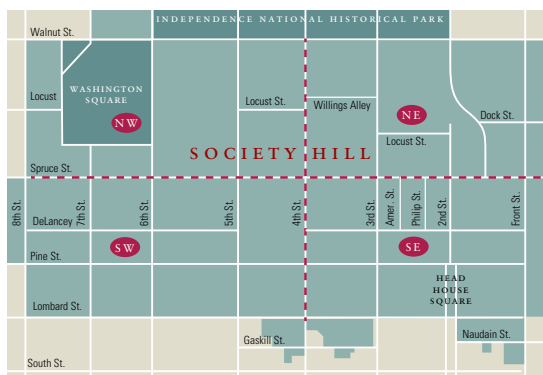
support historic renovations of important buildings, and contribute to the maintenance and beauty of Washington Square. We do a lot. Join us!

This year's elections will take place at our May 21 Community Meeting. Members will elect a president,

two vice presidents, a secretary, a treasurer, and up to eight directors-at-large, all for one-year terms. In addition, four of the 12 quadrant directors' terms are ending and will need to be filled.

SHCA's Nominating Committee puts together a slate of candidates from those continuing their service and new people willing to join the board. To nominate yourself or a neighbor, please contact the Nominating and Elections Committee by emailing [info@societyhillcivic.org](mailto:info@societyhillcivic.org) by April 2, 2025. Please include a short, one-paragraph bio and note the reasons you would like to serve on the board. Nominees must live within the boundaries of Society Hill (see map below), be at least 21 years old, and be an SHCA member. In addition, nominees for quadrant director must live in that quadrant.

Visit [www.societyhillcivic.org](http://www.societyhillcivic.org) for more information about SHCA, its board, and the nominating process. All nominees will be listed in the May/June issue of the *Reporter*.



**Society Hill boundaries and quadrant dividers.**

Wednesday,  
March  
**19**

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Society Hill Civic Association Meeting  
Wednesday, March 19, 2025

**Pennsylvania Hospital,  
8th & Spruce Streets**

**5:45 p.m.**

#### **Board Meeting**

Pennsylvania Hospital's Cheston Room

**7:00 p.m.**

#### **General Membership Meeting**

Pennsylvania Hospital's Zubrow Auditorium  
Topic TBA

### E-A-G-L-E-S Eagles!



**Fans took to the streets to celebrate victories.  
More photos on page 17. Brandon Engelhardt Photo**

## In This Issue...

### Page 6

A Taste of Argentina  
in Society Hill



### Page 10

Tree Tenders:  
Trees and Heart Health

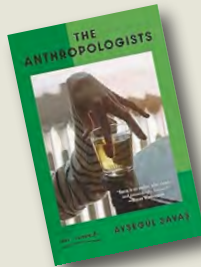
### Page 13

Keeping Posted: Imitation:  
The Sincerest Form of Flattery



### Page 16

Out and About: City of  
Champions Celebrates



### Page 21

On Our Shelves:  
*The Anthropologists*



### Page 23

Nifty Neighbor in Her Own  
Backyard: Jane Biberman

### Page 25

Welcome Gift Bags:  
Let Us Welcome You to  
the Neighborhood!



### Page 29

Graffiti Happens:  
Out Damned Spot, Out!

### Page 31

Three Guaranteed Winners,  
Dollars to Donuts



SOCIETY HILL

*Reporter*

NUSA  
Award-Winning  
Newsletter  
First Place  
2020

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#### Submission Deadline

May/June Issue: April 1

#### Society Hill Civic Association

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Find past issues dating back to  
1950 at [www.societyhillcivic.org](http://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](mailto: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.

## SHCA BOARD OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

#### President

Susan Burt Collins

#### 1st Vice President

Claudia Carabelli

#### 2nd Vice President

Bonnie Halda

#### Treasurer

Susan Butler

#### Secretary

David Haas

#### Directors at Large

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Carol Hanlon  
Mark Keener  
Bob Kramer  
Joe McLaughlin  
Al Meinster  
Danielle Sandsmark  
Vacancy

#### Continuing Director

Larry Spector

#### Quadrant Directors

Northeast: Lorna Katz Lawson,  
Mary Purcell, Ellen Schwartz  
Northwest: Stacey Ackerman,  
Bernard Gelman, Ramona Johnson  
Southeast: Vacancy,  
Jay Borowsky, Tanya Brassie  
Southwest: Martha Levine,  
Ned Scharff, Mike Fox

#### Condominium Representatives

Hopkinson House: Mary Tracy  
Independence Place: John Masi  
Penn's Landing Condos: Priscilla Lo  
Society Hill Towers: Jeff Fogg  
St. James Court: Ellen Geller\*  
The St. James: Helen Grady\*  
Bingham Court: Bernice Koplin\*

\*non-voting courtesy representatives

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY SUSAN BURT COLLINS

## What's Going on at SHCA? Where Do We Go from Here?

**S**tarr Garden is going to be renovated and upgraded. SHCA and Friends of Starr Garden secured a grant of \$350,000, which comes on top of monies already committed by the city and donated by SHCA and Poor Richard's Foundation.

Green Court, located between S. 4th Street and Lawrence Court, was restored, with new bricks where needed, curbing around trees and such, and some tree work completed on S. 4th Street.

Through our charitable arm, Society Hill Preservation Foundation (SHPF), SHCA provided most of the funding to restore Washington Square's historic guardhouse at S. 6th Street, keeping the original details of the 1866 structure. The park's sprinkler system got repaired, and its rodents were chased. As I write this, SHPF is ponying up funds to buy mulch and spring plant material.

We continue to fix bricks, make sure Franklin Lights are working, do clean-ups spring and fall, plant trees, and hold up our end of the deal to keep our neighborhood lovely and green. None of this could have been done without the leadership and funds from SHCA and the Preservation Foundation.

The tougher stuff: we are continuing to engage with problems emanating from South Street. Currently we are working to stop the proliferation of smoke shops, and we meet regularly with police officials and the city on issues of safety arising from nightlife activities along South Street. We make it clear how much the police support on South Street, particularly in summer months, makes a difference to life here in Society Hill. We are also in regular conversation and cooperation with Queen Village Neighbors and Delancey Square Town Watch. Our interests are the same: keep things safe and clean while honoring the historic character of Society Hill.

### Board Relationships

On the other hand, SHCA's health as a civic organization is less than perfect. Our board, at 30 members, is too big to allow for easy communication or forging a common purpose. It's difficult for new board members to get fully involved when legacy members hold leadership roles. Finally, the board must guard against the development of factions, something that is not only ugly but also harmful, as it impedes effective

communication with one voice, when SHCA reaches out to city officials and the community at large.

Over the past 27 months, we at SHCA have made changes to encourage broader participation by all of the community, young and old, homeowners and renters. We've made sure that we don't stop doing what needs to be done just because somebody stands up and says, "Oh, we never did it that way before!" For example, it used to be that board meetings started at 5:30 p.m. But the early start time excluded people not yet finished with the day's work or at home having dinner with children. We want involvement not just of old people but also people who skew younger, who are more tech savvy, and who have keen interest in things like the local school, the community center, and the playground. Our meetings are now at 6:30 p.m. We paid attention and changed. We did small things, like using electronic banking instead of paper checks with someone paid to ferry a check for a signature, again something that was new and surprising to some. But it saved time and money. We are using technology to make this organization more transparent and efficient. There certainly have been glitches along the way, and some are uncomfortable with the changes, but for others it is a signal that we welcome new people and new ideas.

### Keeping the Neighborhood's Character but Adapting to Change

Even in our beautiful neighborhood, there exist properties that are likely to remain empty and ugly unless we get creative about change. There is the church on the 400 block of Pine Street that sits empty and has been for sale for years. There is an empty lot at Front and South Streets, a fenced wasteland, that was the site of the now-defunct Downey's. There is the Ritz movie theater at Walnut and Dock Streets that is in disrepair and a likely candidate for some type of development. There is virtually all of the east side of S. 2nd Street between Pine and Lombard, including the old CVS. There are empty storefronts and unlicensed uses on the north side of South Street on the 100, 300, and 400 blocks.

All of these neglected properties challenge the quiet, residential character of this neighborhood. We need to address properties such as these with foresight and open minds.

*continued on page 5*



**Susan Burt Collins,  
SHCA President**

*We are using  
technology to  
make this  
organization  
more transparent  
and efficient.  
We welcome  
new people and  
new ideas.*



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*continued from page 3*

We know how to make things better. Following years of inaction, SHCA secured counsel in 2023 to address the hazardous property at 410 Spruce Street. As a result of our efforts and by dint of court action we initiated, the property has been sold to a developer who will restore it as a single-family building.

#### **Relationships with City Government and Other Neighborhood Groups**

We are part of the Crosstown Coalition, a city-wide group of Registered Community Organizations (RCOs) that works to address issues affecting all of us, including school funding, trash collection, safety, and the like. It is a collaboration to get things done. Some of our more long-standing board members have criticized our active participation in an organization like the Coalition that involves our neighborhood working with other neighborhoods. Aren't we in Society Hill too different from the others? This criticism misses the point. Yes, we are a particular kind of place: less dense,

less commercial. However, we are most effective not standing alone, but when working in concert with others, including RCOs from other Center City neighborhoods. An example was our action on the proposed bus station on S. 2nd Street. Working with the Crosstown Coalition, we reached out to neighboring RCOs, as well as Independence National Historical Park and Councilmember Squilla, and the proposal quickly died.

On bike lanes, the hottest topic now, we can work toward a compromise with others. Bike lanes are not something we can stop, but we can do our best to manage how they are installed, what type of barriers or curbs are put in place, and how much parking is given up to loading zones. Conversations with city officials, including Councilman Squilla, are the most likely way to produce compromises intended to avoid the most onerous restrictions on pick-ups, deliveries, and related activities.

All of this and more are the problems we have. Do we want to reduce board

size? Do we want to start welcoming all community members, including people living in the new high rises that contain rental units? Do we want to address abandoned properties? Do we want to work on some sort of compromise on bike lanes that protects cyclists, and at the same time lets us in Society Hill do the things we need to do to get on with our lives? Isn't that the job of a community organization, to advance and protect the interests of everyone living there?

We have an election coming up at SHCA, and I encourage people who have not previously served to apply for spots on our board. We need your ideas, your views, and just a bit of your time. Please contact the chair of the Nominating Committee, Claudia Carabelli, at [info@societyhillcivic.org](mailto:info@societyhillcivic.org), and tell her of your interest in helping us help Society Hill.

**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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## THE GREAT SOCIETY HILL CLEAN-UP

BY AL MEINSTER

## Our Rite of Spring

*Save the Date: April 5th for sweeping, shredding, and e-waste disposal.*

There are two reasons to make note of April 5. We will again lovingly tend to the appearance of the neighborhood by tidying our yards and sidewalks, in addition to disposing of unwanted documents and electronic devices.

SHCA will provide leaf bags, available in Delancey Park (a.k.a. Three Bears Park) as early as 8 a.m. However, upon requests sent to Al Meinster k3eax@yahoo.com, bags may

be delivered, beginning April 1, to the homes of those who wish to make an early start.

Our state representative Mary Isaacson, will once more provide a shredding service located in the Front and Lombard Streets parking lot during the hours of 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. At the same location, the city's Sanitation Department will have a collection point for e-waste disposal.

**Al Meinster** is an SHCA board member.

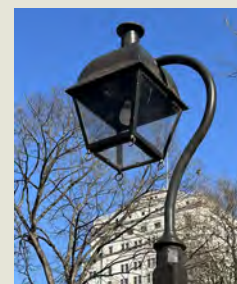


**Neighbors on the 500 block of Spruce Street gather for their post clean-up photo.**

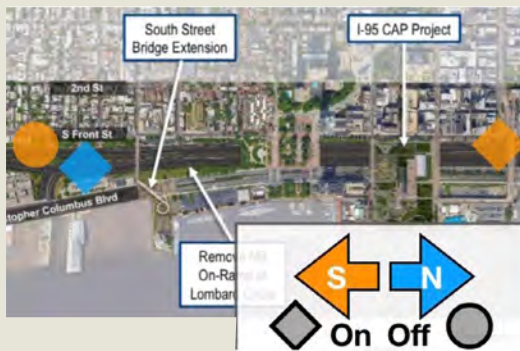
## Lighting Our Way in Washington Square

Funds raised by the Washington Square Affair are again being put to good use. Those donations, now held by Independence Historical Trust and dedicated to the care of Washington Square, helped pay for the cleaning and light bulb replacement of all the lanterns in Washington Square. This task had been on the work list for the Square and it is now done. Thanks to Society Hill resident Norman Liberman for the

suggestion and to Fred Manfred for seeing that the work was completed. As always, SHCA and its fundraising arm, Society Hill Preservation Foundation, support beautification and maintenance of this neighborhood and national treasure. Take a stroll in the evening to appreciate what a big difference this small change makes for visitors' comfort and safety. Enjoy... spring is coming, and our Square will be blooming.



## Visions for I-95 Report Now Available



The report resulting from last October's joint community meeting is now available. At the meeting, 150 Philadelphians from Society Hill, Old City, Queen Village, Pennsport, and Whitman gathered to share their visions for a reimagined I-95. The meeting was led by Frank Jaskiewicz of JzTI, a firm that provides transportation planning services for

the development and preservation of sustainable communities.

The report, highlighting the challenges, opportunities, and most of all, the communities' needs, can be found at <https://rb.gy/bs9ype>.

An update will also be presented at SHCA's March 19 Community Meeting.



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## MALBEC ARGENTINE STEAKHOUSE

BY MARC S. RASPANTI

## A Taste of Argentina in Society Hill



My family and I have never had the good fortune to visit Argentina, although it is on our list. However, we have done the next best thing locally, dining many times at Malbec Argentine Steakhouse, located at 402 S. 2nd Street. Malbec Restaurant is the corner anchor bistro on the western side of Head House Square in what I now call "Restaurant Row." A growing number of high-quality restaurants already occupy the square or are coming in the future. Malbec is a cozy Argentine restaurant in space once occupied, until about 2012, by the popular Artful Dodger. It is owned, curated, and lovingly tended to by a real Argentinian native, Walter Aragonéz. I had the good fortune to sit down with Walter and get to know him and his restaurant a little better.

As a local history buff, I have always been intrigued by the building that Malbec now occupies. Built in 1771 and more than 250 years old, it once served as barracks for the Continental Marines prior to the Revolutionary War. At about 1,300 square feet, it is a dark, cozy, intimate space with gentle evening lighting and an Old World romantic feeling. Malbec seats about 65 at the tables and about 20 at the impressive wrap-around bar. During warm weather, additional seats are available outside.

Let's spend a moment on the bar, my favorite part of the restaurant. It is copper with a look of hardwood and a palpable European feel. The bar is nicely laid out, with the main cocktail station resembling a center altar in the entrance of the restaurant. Walter has put real thought into what spirits inhabit his restaurant. As the name reflects, Malbec stocks some fine Malbec wines at fair prices. Wines are also available for convenient takeaway. Moreover, Walter's cocktail offerings are creative, frequently changing, and interesting. I find his white and red sangria to be a true summer favorite. Malbec stocks some fine liquors, aged scotches, unique gins and vodkas, and what I learned is the national drink of Argentina, Fernet-Branca, often

enjoyed with Coke. Indeed, I recently learned 75 percent of Fernet-Branca in the world is consumed by Argentinians. The bar also offers other lesser-known but delicious spirits, such as Cynar, Averna, sweet and dry Italian sipping vermouth, Sambuca, and a variety of cocktail bitter selections.

The signature event of Malbec is an exquisite happy hour every Tuesday through Friday, 4 to 7 p.m., and Sunday 3 to 7 p.m. It features good wine offerings and ever-changing cocktail additions, along with satisfying bar appetizers, including homemade pork sausage, skirt steak, fresh calamari, artisan cheeses and charcuterie, and the finest homemade empanadas in the city. The light, flaky empanadas are made fresh from an old family recipe and can be ordered in steak, shrimp, chicken, mushroom and cheese, or ham and cheese varieties. Always ask for extra made-on-site chimichurri sauce on the side. If you're lucky, you might even run into current or past Argentine soccer players.



**Argentine soccer memorabilia**

If the happy hour menu hasn't filled you up, Malbec has additional signature offerings worth enjoying. The sizzling skirt steak and homemade sausage are two of my favorites. Lamb and pork chops are also worth trying and very satisfying. Lately, some excellent fresh fish dishes such as salmon and branzino have been added to the menu. The mashed potatoes and French fries are always fresh. All are very good. If you're

*continued on page 15*

## MALBEC ARGENTINE STEAKHOUSE



Malbec owner Walter Aragonez

really hungry and have a willing partner, the paella for two must be tried. Classic Argentine desserts are always available, such as flan, a delicious caramel custard, or warm crêpes rolled and filled with dulce de leche.

Some things that frankly surprised me are the fresh pasta offerings. Walter has strong Italian roots on his mother's side of his family, which shows in his Argentine-influenced homemade pasta dishes, as well as fresh ricotta or spinach cheese ravioli, homemade fettuccine, and potato gnocchi. All pasta dishes are made from scratch and have lately become a favored offering for me. Apparently, eating gnocchi on the 29th of each month is an Argentine tradition done for luck and prosperity.

I was suspicious, as an Italian, to order anything non-meat-based at an Argentine restaurant. But for a variety of reasons, I learned the error of my ways. Argentina and Italy enjoy close cultural, religious, and historical ties, in addition to both countries' love of soccer, dance, wine, and spirits. Indeed, the famous tango dance is presented once a month and is worth watching. Weekend brunch offerings include omelets, sandwiches, and avocado toast, as well as their complete dinner menu. Malbec has a lively brunch crowd. In the summer, food and drink can be enjoyed al fresco at several wonderful people-watching tables that surround the restaurant. As an added bonus, the outside tables remain kid and dog friendly.

Now a little bit more about the owner, Walter Aragonez. Walter migrated to the United States in 1999 from Rosario, Argentina. He is now a proud naturalized American citizen. He was a graphic designer and worked in the restaurant business in Argentina and New York, but his dream was to open an Argentine restaurant in the United States. Fate brought Walter and his family to Philadelphia, specifically, the Society Hill area, to live. Eventually in 2015, he opened up his restaurant in the

Shambles area. Walter surveyed the Philadelphia food scene and concluded his homeland's food entrees were lacking.

When he and his wife saw the "For Rent by Owner" sign on his future restaurant, his wife, Gisella, said, "Walter, I feel something... this is our place." That was nearly ten years ago. Her words were prescient. Walter loves the Society Hill neighborhood, lives and works here, and is proud that many of his regulars are from the immediate neighborhood. In his limited free time, he does all he can to contribute to the well-being and continuing renewal efforts of the Head House District.

Walter has a few codes he lives by in his restaurant. There is no replacement for hard work and attention to detail. He tries to serve customers like they are dining at his home. Virtually all recipes are family recipes, ingredients are fresh (he does a lot of the shopping himself), and all food is made from scratch after a customer puts in his or her order. While meat is king in Argentina, Walter is very flexible, providing customers with vegetarian, vegan, and gluten-free options. Malbec is considerate of all food allergies. Indeed, I have a clam allergy but can order a seafood pasta free of clams.

If you haven't ventured into Malbec, or haven't been there for some time, it's well worth the visit. On most days and nights, you will see Walter at a small table in the back of his restaurant, proudly tending to his staff, customers, and friends. Special events, as well as tango demonstrations, are announced on Facebook, Instagram, and on Malbec's webpage.

**Marc S. Raspanti**, an active Center City trial lawyer, resides with his wife in Society Hill. In addition to his passion for the law, he considers himself an amateur historian.





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**'FIX THE BRIX'**

BY MARTHA LEVINE, CHAIR, CLEAN &amp; BEAUTIFUL COMMITTEE

## Making Sidewalks Safer One Brick at a Time

Society Hill... What a community we live in! Nonetheless, we do have sidewalks that need repairs. SHCA can help you fix your trip-worthy sidewalks with our "Fix the Brix" subsidy. Created in 2009, owners can get a subsidy of 40 percent of the total invoice, up to \$500 for current members or up to \$400 for non-members, for sidewalk repairs, including tree pits. Why do we care? Good sidewalks not only make Society Hill look more attractive, they prevent dangerous trip-and-falls. We want our neighborhood to be beautiful and safe. During the 1960s, the Philadelphia Redevelopment Program installed our brick sidewalks to give the neighborhood a certain character. Attractive as they are, these sidewalks can require extra maintenance, as the bricks shift due to tree root growth or ground settling. Fixing your sidewalk helps the whole neighborhood look better and be safer.

Neighbors fixing their sidewalks and making them safer and more attractive helps make this a better community.

Do you have a sidewalk that needs repair, either brick or concrete? We can help you with our "Fix the Brix" subsidy.

### 5 Easy Steps to Get the Subsidy

- 1 You will need to upload "before" and "after" photos with your application. Take a "before" photo of the sidewalk that is in need of repair.
- 2 Choose a qualified contractor (a mason is preferred).
- 3 Make sure the work is completed to your satisfaction. Take an "after" sidewalk photo.
- 4 Go to [www.societyhillcivic.org](http://www.societyhillcivic.org), click on "What we Do" then "Fix the Brix and Tree Tending," then "Fix the Brix Request Form" and fill out the application. Upload the photos, the paid invoice and proof of payment. Click "Send."
- 5 Receive an SHCA subsidy check within weeks.

**Tree pit before and after****BENEFIT OF SHCA MEMBERSHIP**

BY MARTHA LEVINE, CURATOR OF THE LIST

## The One & Only Society Hill List of Contractors

*Ya Gotta be a Member to Get One!*

To the best of my knowledge, SHCA is the only civic association that provides a free list of contractors to its members. For many years, it has been a joy for me to curate this list as a service to members who appreciate having access to this popular resource. It is edited and updated several times a year to add new neighbor-recommended contractors and to delete those who have retired or no longer come to the city. Neighbors stop me on the street or email me with their favorite contractor recommendations.

**Need a list?**

This list is from our community to our community. All new and renewing members will receive an email with a link to download the list. Some of the typical comments from recipients who have received the list in the past are:

*"It's like gold."**"Thank you so much, Martha and SHCA. I didn't know where to start looking for a contractor, and this really helped."**"The list is such a valuable service from SHCA."**"I'm on my fifth list and I can't wait for the next updated one."***What's on the list?**

The List of Contractors is 11 pages of contractors under all types of categories: general contractors, handymen, electricians, plumbers, painters, carpenters, HVAC, interior design, window washers, arborists, gardeners, and even a miscellaneous section. You name it, we have it.

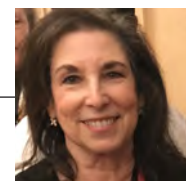
**Why is a Neighbor Recommended List So Important?**

All contractors on the list have been highly recommended by our own Society Hill neighbors, who share our neighborhood

and have similar types of house needs, old and new, which provides a trust factor. The list is a great way to start your search for an ideal contractor, but we recommend recipients get a few references in addition.

Join or renew today to receive your copy of the list!

**Martha Levine** is an active longtime SHCA board member.



## TREE TENDERS

BY CLAUDIA CARABELLI

## Trees and Heart Health

Historic architecture is not the only thing that gives our neighborhood so much charm. Our tree-lined streets are also an important part of what makes Society Hill such a beautiful neighborhood.

There are numerous reasons to plant and support a healthy tree canopy. Natural beauty goes without saying. Trees also help cool the area. Just take a walk across town on a hot summer day. Once you hit Washington Square, you notice an immediate drop in temperature. This also helps lower cooling costs and increase energy efficiency. The air is healthier with lots of greenery surrounding us. Through the process of photosynthesis, trees take in carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) from the air and release oxygen (O<sub>2</sub>) into the atmosphere, thus making it healthier for humans and wildlife alike. Living in an area full of trees has even been linked to better mental health by reducing stress,

improving mood, and lowering blood pressure. Kind of makes raking up all those leaves every fall totally worth it.

Now a new study out of the University of Miami has found that living among trees and vegetation can actually be good for your heart. They studied 250,000 Medicare recipients and found that those living in the greenest parts of Miami-Dade County were 25 percent less likely to suffer a heart attack than those in the least green neighborhoods. It's thought that green spaces encourage outdoor physical activity, which in turn helps mitigate some of the risk factors for cardiovascular disease. It's well known that maintaining a healthy weight, exercising regularly, consuming healthy foods, and not smoking help decrease your risk. The cooling that trees provide can also help reduce heat-related illnesses that put a strain on those with already existing heart conditions.

The study authors do acknowledge that this report has some limitations. Socioeconomic and racial disparity may limit one's access to green spaces as they limit access to treatment for heart disease. Poor urban environments may benefit the most from tree planting campaigns. All things considered, trees still appear to be a positive factor in maintaining a healthy heart.



Do you have an empty tree pit? Would you like the Tree Tenders to plant for you? Applications for Fall 2025 planting will be due in April. Reach out to me at [ccarabelli@comcast.net](mailto:ccarabelli@comcast.net) for more information.

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

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## POLICE SAFETY UPDATE

BY CLAUDIA CARABELLI

## 9th Police District PSA Meeting

Last year our 6th police district merged with the 9th district, to form one larger district that serves our neighborhood and beyond. Stretching from river to river and Lombard to Poplar Streets, it's now the largest police district in the city, handling 130,000 reports in 2024.

**PSA (Police Service Area) meetings are held the first Wednesday of the month at 6 p.m. and are open to the public.** They're located at 100 South Broad Street (first floor, entrance on Chestnut Street). This is a great opportunity to get current updates directly from police officers and to voice your specific concerns. January's meeting was hosted by Lt. Andre Ford, who oversees the Center City District, and officer Joe Ferrero, who was assigned to Society Hill for many years. Topics covered at the meeting included:

**Homelessness**

The homeless population in Philadelphia is now estimated to be around 2,200. This is up from 1,800 prior to the Kensington clean-out. A second clean-out is planned in the near future and another bump in numbers is expected. Many unhoused people are dealing with substance abuse and/or mental health issues.

If you know of any areas where homeless people are camped out, please call 911. They will send an officer, an outreach worker, and a sanitation truck. They'll dispose of the encampment and offer services to the individuals, which they can accept or refuse. Police are cracking down on dumpster laws (they're required to be locked) to limit access to cardboard that's used for shelter. The police also recommended not putting mattresses or couches out with your trash. Instead, call sanitation for a special pick-up. If left curbside, mattresses and couches can be used to furnish another encampment.

The biggest takeaway from the police was: do not give anything to panhandlers. They reported that money is typically spent on drugs or alcohol. Sharing food, although it may seem like the humane thing to do, allows people to refuse needed services and remain on the street that much longer. Donating money or goods to homeless shelters and similar charities is a much more productive way to address the larger problem. **Broad Street Love** offers meals, a mailing address, clothing, hygiene, case management, legal services, and medical care at 315 S. Broad Street. **Project Home** offers some of the same services along

with permanent, subsidized housing. They are located at 2826 West Diamond Street.

**911 Calls**

Residents voiced concerns about slow response time for 911 calls, and sometimes no response at all. Although police staffing has improved, they're still undermanned. They've streamlined their application process, but it will take a while to reach optimum staffing levels. Calls are assigned a priority level, so serious offenses are obviously responded to first.

There were complaints of officers responding only to say they couldn't do anything about the caller's concern. That is not OK. Lt. Ford emphasized that you should always **ask for a supervisor** in those situations. You should know that while you can make calls to a specific police representative, emails are even better, because they are required to be responded to in a timely fashion and they provide you with a "paper trail."

Something new: you can now **text 911** and type in your complaint or concern.

**Retail Theft**

Shoplifting remains a chronic problem, resulting in the closing of some drugstores and convenience stores. Unfortunately, there are merchants who buy stolen goods for a small price and resell them in their own place of business. The police have cracked down on some of these, and they are always on the lookout for more. Here's how you can help. If you spot CVS or other store-brand labels on items in a corner store, please call 911 to give them a heads-up.

There are two officers assigned to retail theft. One monitors cameras so that shoplifting suspects can be better followed and apprehended. Not surprisingly, many of the shoplifters have substance abuse issues, are often homeless, and steal to support their addiction.

I know I learned some new things at this meeting. The police who attended offered constructive approaches, and promised to follow up with concerns that were raised. I encourage residents to attend, so they can be heard and get answers to the many quality-of-life issues that still trouble our city.

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



*Something new:  
you can now  
**text 911**  
and type in  
your complaint  
or concern.*



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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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## KEEPING POSTED

BY AL CAVALARI

## Imitation: The Sincerest Form of Flattery

In the spirit of April Fools, we again offer cards to show how imitation is the best form of flattery. Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell have been copied by various institutions, foreign governments and even by Mother Nature. Can you tell the real thing from the imposters?



### 1. Liberty Bell Park in Jerusalem

Established in 1976 to honor the American Bicentennial, the seven-acre park in Jerusalem has playground equipment, sculptures, skateboard facilities, a skating rink, basketball and volleyball courts, a soccer field, ping-pong tables, flower gardens, and two theaters. It hosts numerous events. It has two Philadelphia connections.

According to the *Jerusalem Post*, in 1955 the City of Philadelphia gave the second Knesset a Liberty Bell replica that was meant for a new building which was about to be built. Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek was a long-time influential leader and active in building the new park. The city was looking for a bell replica anyway, and he reasoned that there was already one in the Knesset which the general public never got a chance to see. Why not move the bell to the park?

The Knesset agreed, but with the stipulation that a plaque be installed in the park explaining that the bell was being placed there, with the discretion of that body, so as to honor the original intention of the donors. The plaque, however, was never made, and eventually, how the bell wound up in the park at all was forgotten. Authorities had been trying for years

to answer the question by searching various archives and reaching out to the public through radio and social media. The mystery was not solved until 2023, when some letters were found in the Knesset Archives. Before then, there was no record or memory as to how the bell wound up on display in the park instead of in the Knesset.

The other Philadelphia connection is that the Philadelphia chapter of Hadassah, a Jewish women's organization, was a donor to the park's creation. This card is in the collection of Independence National Historical Park.



### 2. Liberty Bell Road Trips

A community needs symbols which are so beloved and important that they can be embraced by everyone, even people who disagree on everything else. The American flag is such a symbol, and so is our dear old Liberty Bell. We have never been as polarized as we were during the Civil War, when the discord became so bad that Americans killed each other in large numbers. Only 20 years later, the commissioner for the World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition in New Orleans wrote to the mayor of Philadelphia, and asked if the City of Brotherly Love would allow its famous

bell to travel there and be shared with the people of the South. He believed that the bell would be an ambassador of good will that could help bring the nation back together and would "...meet with all the universal approbation and the heartiest greetings of all the people of the South. Our ancestors fought and bled for the time-enduring principles which the bell rang out on July 4, 1776, and, although the bell is the property of the City of Philadelphia, yet are we not co-inheritors of its glories? In the name of those mutually earned glories, we ask you to let it come to New Orleans." Louisianans signed petitions requesting the bell.

Philadelphia's mayor wrote in agreement: "The consideration of the subject [sending the bell to New Orleans] demands the setting aside of any sectional or partisan views. If the presence of the Old Bell which rang out the birth of a great republic can be the means, by its presence in New Orleans, in restoring or cementing the same patriotic spirit in the entire nation at this time, it will bring credit and renown to this city, and make evident to the people of the South that the city of Brotherly Love, true to her history, is anxious to aid in the restoration of perfect harmony throughout the nation."

Thus in 1885 the bell made its first of six goodwill road trips. Our card from Oregon is from the final 1915 trip, taking it to the West Coast and back. This might be a good time for us all to go visit the bell again and ponder our "co-inherited glories." Plan at least a half hour so you can read the fine museum displays leading up to the bell chamber. There is no charge.

**Fact check:** there is good reason to believe that the bell was not rung in 1776. The tower had become so structurally unsound that it was intended for demolition, making it an unsafe place to swing a two-thousand-pound bell.

**Fact check:** the bell has always been the property of the City of Philadelphia.

*continued on page 14*

## KEEPING POSTED

continued from page 13



Liberty Bell, Philadelphia, Pa.

### 3. Liberty Bell Imposter?

This card must give us pause. When you visit the bell, you see that a large bracket is installed inside and grips its edges. There are also bolts installed in the crack. This bell does not have those things, but it is not an imposter. The hardware was not installed until the 1915 trip, to stabilize the bell against the robust vibrations of rail travel. When the bell returned, there was some concern that the hardware might actually be holding the bell together. Rather than find out, it was deemed prudent to just leave the travel rigging in place. This card is fun because it shows the bell *au naturel* in an earlier era.



### 4. Real or Replica?

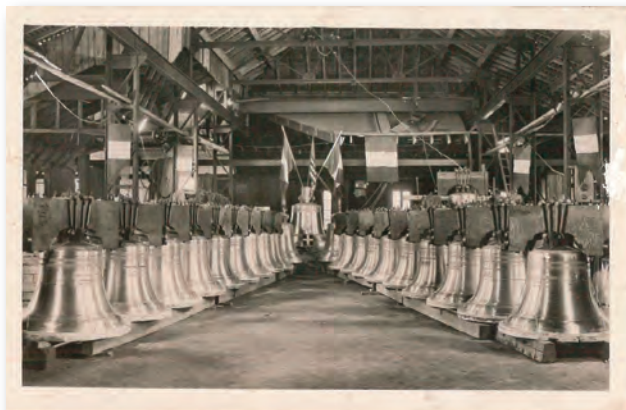
This one does look convincing, but what is going on with that wishbone stanchion? Plus, there are no stairs at the Liberty Bell today. But this bell is indeed our bell in the 1960s, when it was displayed on the ground floor of Independence Hall. It's fun to know that people could touch the bell then. Notice, too, the park ranger in the lower right. Back then, the National Park Service dressed its rangers by gender. Women were not to wear the iconic uniform we all recognize. Their fashion was modeled after airline stewardess uniforms. The bell was moved out of Independence Hall on New Year's Eve to begin the 1976 Bicentennial. It is now on display across the street.



### 5. Wishbone Stanchion

Here is a better shot of the bell installed in the mounting stanchion. Except, April Fools! It isn't. It is yet another replica, but very accurate, right down to the bolts in the crack and the "spider" bracket mounted underneath. The venue is Forest Lawn Memorial Park, a burial ground in California. Designer Hubert Eaton was "...a firm believer in a joyous life after death. He believed that most cemeteries were 'unsightly stone yards,' and pledged to create one that would reflect his optimistic beliefs and be 'as different, as unlike other cemeteries as sunshine is to darkness, as eternal life is unlike death.'" The park is 1,500 acres of sculpted planned forest and landscaping.

*This card shows the last 20 Liberty Bell replicas that were sent from France to U.S. state capitals in 1950.*



### 6. Lots of Liberty Bells?

The caption on this card's back reads in French "the last 20 replicas of the Liberty Bell before being sent to one of the capitals of the United States." In 1950, as part of a "1Save for Your Independence" Savings Bond drive, the Treasury Department ordered a replica Liberty Bell for each of the 48 states, as well as the territories. The Paccard Bell Foundry in France was given the order as part of the Marshall Plan, to create jobs in war-torn Europe. The foundry is still in business. This card is in the collection of Independence National Historical Park.

continued on page 15



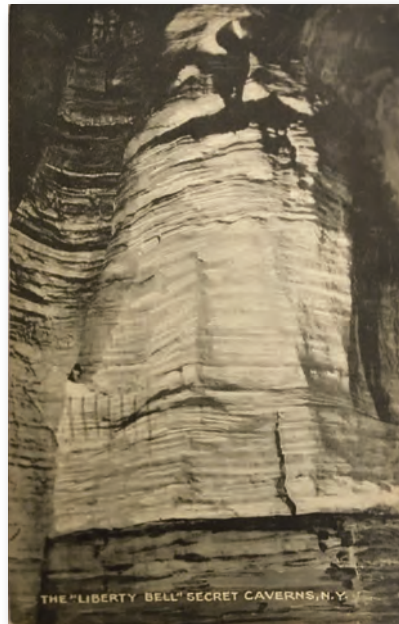
## KEEPING POSTED

continued from page 14



### 7. Independence Hall, Real or Replica?

Independence Hall has been copied in various places. At first glance this example is very convincing, but no, it is April Fools. It is the replica building at Greenfield Village, Henry Ford's history museum in Dearborn, Michigan.



*Maybe we should pick a day when people in all 50 states go stand before their state's Liberty Bell and think about it as a shared unifying symbol.*

### 8. Secret Caverns, New York

Even Mother Nature gets in on the April Fools game, but I don't think her replica will fool anyone.



### 9. The Bell On Floats

Fourth of July parades commonly have floats that display a Liberty Bell. Is this one real or fake? It is the authentic bell, taking part in a week-long celebration of Philadelphia's history and civic pride. Founder's Week was held from October 4 to 10, 1908, to commemorate the 225th anniversary of the city's founding. There were parades five days in a row, with each parade being entirely different from the others. They all had a theme. The genuine Liberty Bell was paraded through the streets as part of the "History Day" parade on October 8. Noted Philadelphia photographer William Rau seems to have shot every entry in all five very long parades.



### 10. Montana State Capitol Bell

Here is Montana's bell copy from the 1950 Treasury Department bond drive. A plaque has since been installed beneath the bell which reads "In standing before this symbol, you have the opportunity to dedicate yourself, as did our founding fathers, to the principles of the individual freedom for which our Nation stands." Maybe we should pick a day when people in all 50 states go stand before their state's Liberty Bell and think about it as a shared unifying symbol.



**Al Cavalari** is a certified member of the - Association of Philadelphia Tour Guides. Write Al at [flagguysdn@aol.com](mailto:flagguysdn@aol.com).



OUT AND ABOUT

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HALDA

# City of Champions Celebrates





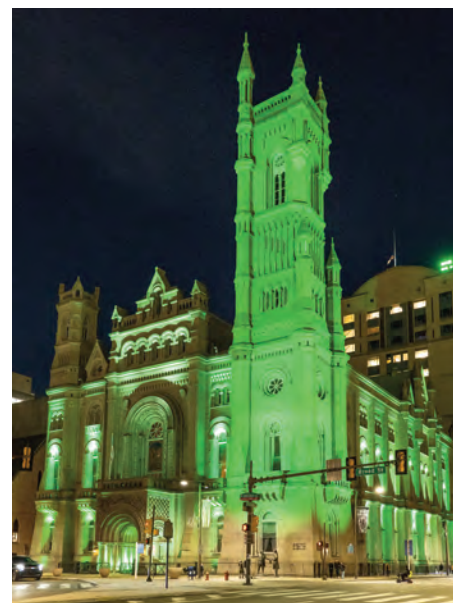
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OUT AND ABOUT

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## URBAN EDEN

BY MARY STURDIVANT

## What Makes Society Hill an Urban Eden?

Curling on my couch this cold winter evening, I contemplate “hygge,” that Danish concept of cozy living. It’s also the name of a good burger joint on Fairmount Avenue in Spring Garden. Looking over snowy rooftops in Society Hill, I reminisce about falling in love with this neighborhood in 1968. A boyfriend attending Villanova brought me on a date to the Craft Fair at the Shambles at the Head House. Forget about the boyfriend, it was real colonial homes, the brick sidewalks, Franklin lamps, and shady streets that seduced me.

My mother had always made coming to Center City for shopping a special treat. But here was an area where people *lived*. They exuded creativity and vibrancy. Finally, in 1975, I found a roommate with a second-floor, two-bedroom apartment in a converted residence on the 300 block of Pine Street. My tall front windows looked into St. Peter’s cemetery. *This* was Penn’s “greene countrie towne,” but with easy access to the vibe of a big American city and my job at IBM. I was living the life!

My love affair continues unabated today. It is hard to convey to people who don’t live here how wonderful it is to live with our American history. Our founding fathers traveled these same streets. (*Pssst!* There are cobblestones underneath the asphalt on 5th Street. I remember the day it was paved over. Actually, I remember the day after, because the deed was done in the darkness of night.)

My sister is putting pressure on me to move in with her and her husband, in a five bedroom mid-century home on a cul-de-sac in Brentwood, Tennessee. Local zoning mandates 1.5 acres minimum for homes, and a minimum of three acres if you stable a horse. How to explain that I can drop off clothes at the cleaner, pick up milk at the Hop House bodega, pick up a book at the Athenaeum, stamps at the post office, drop off another book at the Independence branch of the Free Library, get my coins counted free at my bank, pick from seven different cuisines for take-away dinner, and chat with a half

dozen neighbors in the Square while traversing the same linear feet it would take us to drive to the top of her cul-de-sac? Caring neighbors like Tania Rorke created Penn’s Village so that people like me could age in place here.

What makes Society Hill an Urban Eden? The bare minimum is safety and cleanliness (streets, water, and air) from our city government. The city is now ahead of my condo in trash and recycling after a very slow start. I have photos of the old igloos at Starr Garden to illustrate what our volunteer efforts looked like.

*Forget the boyfriend,  
it was real colonial homes,  
brick sidewalks, Franklin  
lamps, and shady streets  
that seduced me.*

I once asked the city controller, when he was speaking at an SHCA meeting, “What is the best-run department in the city?” “Water,” he replied without hesitation. Because we are still in a drought, I help out by filling my house plants’ watering can under the spigot while I wait for the hot water. Every drop helps.

Once we feel safe and are living in a clean environment, what makes a paradise? I wish every realtor would give a copy of Jane Jacobs’ *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* to every new owner (especially suburbanites) along with the keys. This book was an epiphany for me into how urban neighborhoods work. Bike lanes? Heavens, yes! Barrier lanes? Heck, no!

Competing agendas exist. I loved the horse-drawn carriages after Becky Stoloff and others got them diapered. But I stand down to Bill Hawkins and others who shuttered the operators for inhumane treatment of the horses. Treating my play grandkids to rides on the Duck Bus was fun. Getting tourists killed — well, negligence is never a good business practice. I like peace and quiet,

but I also enjoy interacting with the tourists. When asked where to get a good cheesesteak, I say, “This is Philadelphia. Any hole in the wall will make a great cheesesteak.” But I usually admit to preferring Lamberti’s on Chestnut or Ishkabibbles on South, with extra provolone and no whiz!

We are not an island. As horrible as the COVID pandemic was, I remember really enjoying the peace and quiet and clean air of streets with almost no traffic. Electric vehicles might get us there again. But then we will have to work on charging station infrastructure.

We sit smack between Market Street East and South Street. Whatever happens at either place affects us. 76Place was controversial, and the competing agendas both had valid points. Personally, I wrote thank you notes to both Brian Roberts and Cherelle Parker, opining that the press conference announcing that the Sixers would stay at the South Philadelphia sports arena was “the best since Obama announced Osama bin-Laden was dead.” But the development of Market Street remains an open question. Put your two cents in. Speak up and out. The future belongs to you.

What makes Society Hill an Urban Eden? I would love to hear people say of us,

*They don’t care what color your skin is.*

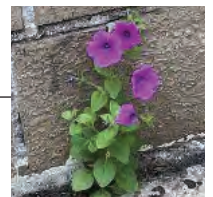
*They don’t care about whom you love.*

*They don’t care where or even if you worship.*

*But if you don’t take care of your property and recycle responsibly, they will treat you like unbagged dog doo-doo.*

Hygge or  
La Dolce Vita?  
Can we have it all?

Long-time neighbor **Mary Sturdivant** is a passionate gardener who helps with 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.”





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## ON OUR SHELF

BY IZZY HALLORAN

A Review of *The Anthropologists*

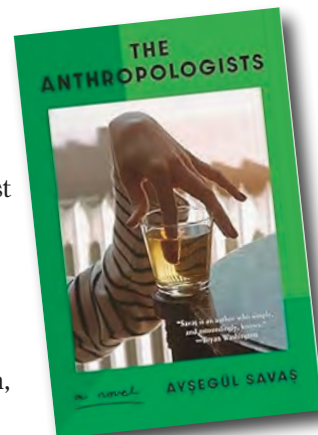
*The Anthropologists* by Ayşegül Savas is a novel about living and maintaining relationships as a cultural outsider in the place one calls home. The novel revolves around the narrator, a documentary filmmaker named Asya, and her husband Manu. As immigrants in an unnamed European city in which they reside, Asya and Manu must navigate their outsider status in everyday life. Asya is an excellent observer, identifying meaning in the ordinary actions of living. She seeks to understand the country around her, eager to participate in their cultural practices. Asya fails to blend in with the locals, further isolated by her inability to speak fluently the native language. Asya and Manu only have a few friends — a fellow immigrant named Ravi and a local named Lena, from whom Asya often feels disconnected.

*The Anthropologists* consists of 104 precise, compact chapters. Although the book is short in length, it is abundant in gripping scenes that capture the tension between the characters and their city. When Manu and Asya decide to purchase an apartment in the city, their feelings of physical and emotional distance from their families are heightened. Their parents do not understand why they have chosen this life, one without a greater community, where they must work hard to prove themselves. Asya wonders too, if the life she

and Manu have created is worth the insecurity it produces. *The Anthropologists* possesses an intimate quality, like that of a personal journal in which the narrator constantly weighs the components of her life until the scales even out.

The characters' relationships in *The Anthropologists* are so complex and honest that the novel reads like nonfiction. Savas skillfully crafts a cast of four vastly different characters who form their own small world. Asya examines each of their philosophies of living as a way to understand what motivates them as people. The existential questions that grip Asya are a familiar product of our current time. A victim of constant comparison, Asya's mind is plagued by a fear of missing a necessary component of living. She addresses this insecurity by inventing traditions and rituals with Manu, Lena, and Ravi. *The Anthropologists* is a reminder of the human ability to find joy and fulfillment in the mundanity of daily routine. Sava teaches us how to take advantage of our agency, to carve out a life in an unfamiliar world.

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



## Franklin Lights Need our TLC

The ever-present Franklin Lights are a symbol of SHCA and our neighborhood. To keep them in good shape and well-lit, all residents need to take responsibility for them. This includes reporting outages, damages, or total knockdowns to the city.

**To report problem lights, call 311, go online to [www.phila.gov/departments/philly311](http://www.phila.gov/departments/philly311), or use the Philly311 app to give a report, including the exact address of the problem light fixture.** We all know that good lighting makes neighborhoods safer.

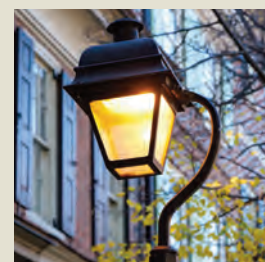
**LED Update**

Currently, the Streets Department is installing the new LED lights all over Philadelphia, including Society Hill. SHCA's Franklin Lights committee is working with the city to assure that the changes to our lights are the most appropriate for our historic district. The light fixtures,

from Ben Franklin's original design, will look the same, but the fittings will be different to accommodate LEDs. Factors to consider include wattage or light output, warm or cool light color called kelvins, and glare. We'll keep you posted.

**Speaking of Good Lighting**

Is your block well-lit? You can do your part to keep our sidewalks bright and safe by making sure your front door lights are on from dusk to dawn. You can do this manually or purchase a device that automatically turns the light on and off at set times. You may need an electrician to install. A simple, low-tech method is the Dusk to Dawn sensor LED outdoor light bulb that has an automatic on-off feature. A good choice is the "warm white" color that is softer on the eyes than "daylight," which has a bluish-white color. These bulbs are available at hardware stores and on Amazon.



**Make sure your front door lights are turned on from dusk to dawn.**

## Clip and Save Contact Information

### City Representatives

Councilman Mark Squilla, 1st District  
215-686-3458, 215-686-3459  
mark.squilla@phila.gov

Legislative Aide: Sean McMonagle  
Sean.mcmonagle@phila.gov

### State Representatives

State Rep. Mary Isaacson, 175th District  
215-503-3245  
isaacson@pahouse.net

State Senator Nikil Saval, 1st District  
215-925-3119; pasenatorsaval.com

### Federal Representatives

Congressman Dwight Evans  
215-389-4627  
www.evans.house.gov

Senator John Fetterman  
215-241-1090  
www.fetterman.senate.gov

Senator Dave McCormick  
215-405-9660  
www.mccormick.senate.gov

### Society Hill Action Contacts

#### Society Hill Civic Association

Samantha Brown, Administrator  
215-629-1288  
info@societyhillcivic.org

#### Society Hill Reporter

Judy Lamirand, Editor in Chief  
judy@parallel-design.com

Graffiti removal on public, not private, spaces  
ashley.hutchinson@urbanscapespecialist.com  
Franklin Light Outage, 311

### Key Contacts

#### Center City District

Prema Katari Gupta, President & CEO  
215-440-5500  
info@centercityphila.org

#### Washington Square West Civic Assn.

Tami Sortman, President  
215-346-6411  
info@washwestcivic.org

#### South Street Head House District

Ellen Ingersol, Exec. Director  
215-413-3713  
southstreet.com

#### Queen Village Neighbors Association

Cait Allen, President  
215-339-0975  
info@QVNA.org

#### Center City Residents Association

215-546-6719  
centercity@centercityresidents.org

### Useful Numbers

**Fire, Emergency and Police**  
911

#### 9th District Police Station

(general information)  
Capt. Anthony Ganard  
215-686-3090

#### South Street Police Mini-Station

(quality of life issues)  
Lt. Steve Ricci  
215-922-6706 (mobile)  
215-686-3030

#### City Hall

215-686-1776

#### City Child Abuse Hotline

215-683-6100

#### State Child Abuse Hotline

800-932-0313

#### Philadelphia Historical Commission

215-686-7660

#### Homeless Intervention, Project Home

215-232-1984

#### Independence Branch Library

215-685-1633

### Useful Links

#### Philadelphia City Planning Commission

215-683-4615  
www.phila.gov/cityplanning

The City Planning Commission is responsible for guiding the orderly growth and development of the City of Philadelphia. Its site contains development reports, city statistics, maps and other publications.

#### Philadelphia Architects and Buildings

www.philadelphiabuildings.org

This site serves as a source to determine if your home is on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. The Philadelphia Architects and Buildings database provides authoritative information on three centuries of Philadelphia buildings and designers.

### City Services

Most City of Philadelphia issues are now being handled by the City's 311 system. You can reach 311 from the their website, by email (philly311@phila.gov) or by phone (311). Your report will be identified by a case number which will be given to you for tracking. A free Philly 311 app for your smartphone is available from the App Store and Google Play. You can use the app to send reports and keep track of progress.

#### 311 Issues

Abandoned Property - Police Dept.  
Abandoned Vehicles - Police Dept.  
Air Quality - Health Dept.  
Animal Management - Health Dept.  
Complaints Building Permits - Streets Dept.  
Building Violations - L&I  
Curb Deterioration - Streets Dept.  
Dead Animal in Street - Streets Dept.  
Dumpsters - SWEEP Unit  
Food Store/Restaurant - Health Dept.  
Graffiti, Upper Floors - Anti-Graffiti Network  
Hazardous Highway Condition - Police Dept.  
Hazardous Waste Household - Streets Dept.  
Illegal Dumping/Sanitation Violations -SWEEP

#### Business Questions Commerce Dept.

215-683-2100

#### Confidential Narcotics Reports

Narcotics Intelligence Squad  
215-685-1137, 311

#### Dead Pet in Home PSPCA

215-426-6300, 311

#### Problem Gas Leaks, Philadelphia Gas Works

215-235-1212

#### Graffiti

1st Floor, Center City District,  
215-440-5500

#### Homeless Issues

Outreach Coordination  
215-232-1984  
Center City District  
215-440-5500, 311





## A NIFTY NEIGHBOR IN HER OWN WORDS

BY JUDITH LAMIRAND

## So Long, and Thanks for All the Interviews!

Jane Biberman has interviewed more than 80 of Society Hill's Nifty Neighbors, and she has been gracious enough to share their stories with us through her column in the *Reporter*. Jane is ready to turn over the reins of the column to a new writer, but before that happens, let's interview Jane. I have the sneaking suspicion that she is a Nifty Neighbor in her own right.

**Jane, what brought you to Society Hill? How did you first get involved with the *Reporter*?**

I moved to Society Hill in 2005 because my apartment on Rittenhouse Square banned dogs, and I had two rescues. I moved to Independence Place and met the *Reporter* editor Bernice Hamel. The rest, as they say, is history.

**When did you start writing?**

I started writing as an English major at UPenn. I started my career at *LOOK* magazine, of blessed memory. It was on Madison Avenue, and I lived in New York with my parents. I was in the "make-up and scheduling" department and dummied the magazine. This was back in 1966. We would actually paste on ads and use press type. Famous writers like Leo Rosten worked on the same floor. Then I worked for an ad agency that made ads only for books. I had to read many books and suggest copy for book jackets and print ads. Then I worked in Paris for six months selling the *Herald Tribune*.

**What other publications have you written articles for? Were you the editor of any of them?**

When I came home from Paris, I found a job at *Philadelphia Magazine* writing copy for Alan Halpern, the founder of the magazine. He got me a job as associate editor of *The Jewish Exponent* newspaper where the editor, Charles Shapiro, gave me writing assignments. I would go to the New York public library to do research. Then the business manager, Richard Waloff, started *INSIDE* magazine and made me its editor. I also wrote many articles for *INSIDE*. At the same time,



**Jane gives Mick a smooch. You can read more about her donkeys in the September/October 2017 issue of the *Reporter*.**

I freelanced for the *Penn Gazette* at the University of Pennsylvania. That's where I really learned to write. The editor of *Penn Gazette* was Tony Lyle. He was tough, but I learned by interviewing many well-known people, such as Beverly Sills. I also started writing features for *Diversion* magazine, a travel magazine, and freelanced a lot for *Women's World*.

**What got you interested in writing?**

Hmm...no one has ever asked me that before. I love reading and books, but I can't say I wanted to be a writer. Not surprisingly, I think it's my interest in people with interesting stories. For example, when I interviewed Holocaust survivors, I wanted to tell people about their experiences. I interviewed survivors in Berlin, Amsterdam, and Paris. I won several awards at *INSIDE* magazine, and one was for interviews with Holocaust survivors that was reprinted in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*.

**What do you like to read?**

I have loved books about animals since childhood: *Lassie Come Home*, *Black Beauty*, etc. All I did was read. I hated to go out, and I have not changed all that much. I love short stories, and Somerset Maugham is my all-time favorite short-story writer. I love movies, too.

**And your love of animals is legendary!**

I am an "animal person." As a small girl, I had a collection of stuffed animals. While my cousin loved dolls, I had Winnie-the-Pooh and Eeyore. I'm not sure why I didn't name one of my own donkeys Eeyore! Now that I am "grown up," I share my home with a dog (Dash) and a cat (Octopuss), three donkeys, and a horse. Don't laugh, but I just bought an old book called *Dogs, Dogs, Dogs*. And I've been volunteering for the Bucks County SPCA for 14 or 15 years.

**When did you become interested in animals of the equine persuasion?**

I started riding when I was seven and just retired my last horse. My favorite horse while I was a kid was named Beau Geste (I loved the Gary Cooper movie). The best horse of all was Ziggy Stardust. He died a few years ago at the great age of 33, unusual for a thoroughbred. We rode all over Bucks and Chester counties. When he died, my vet rescued my white donkey, Mick. He's going strong at about age 40.

**Have you written about your donkeys?**

I just finished collaborating with Rabbi Howard Bogot on a children's book about my two donkeys. It was his idea, and he has published a few books for kids. It's being illustrated now by an artist in Abington. He has been published, too. It will be fantastic if my book gets published.

**What are you up to now?**

I've been reading Japanese novelist Haruki Murakami. My favorite is *First Person Singular*. Now I'm reading *Norwegian Wood*. I'll be 82 soon and get panic attacks when I think of all the books I haven't read yet!

*Thank you, Jane.*

*We wish you and your animals the best.*

**Judy Lamirand**

became the *Reporter's* Editor-in-Chief in 2022 and has been its graphic designer and proofreader since 2002.





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## WELCOME GIFT BAGS

BY MARTHA LEVINE, COORDINATOR

## Let Us Welcome You to the Neighborhood!

New Society Hill homeowners can choose to have a Welcome Gift Bag presented to them. It's like an old-time tradition brought back to life right here in our community. The gift bag contains a bottle of wine, a bag of La Colombe coffee, Naked Chocolate artisan chocolates, and valuable neighborhood information, plus many gift cards to local restaurants, entertainment, retail, services, and museums.

We thank our newest Welcome Gift Bags recipients, pictured below, for choosing to become the newest SHCA members.



John &amp; Bernita



Yohann, Nathalie &amp; Gaurav

If you are a new homeowner in Society Hill as of 2024-2025, you may choose to receive a Welcome Gift Bag. The bag will be presented to you at your home and takes about 45 minutes. A typical reaction upon receiving this gift is, "Thank you... Oh my, I didn't expect such a generous gift!"

To get on the list for a Welcome Gift Bag, please email Martha Levine at [marthalev6@gmail.com](mailto:marthalev6@gmail.com) or call 215-629-0727.



## New Gift Bag Donor Fits Right In!

Special thanks to our new Gift Bag contributor, **Triad Wellness**. Look for their certificate in your Welcome Bag.

Triad Wellness is Society Hill's premier personal training studio, offering expert coaching in strength, mobility, and injury prevention. One-on-one training, small group classes, and specialized programs are designed to help clients move better, feel stronger, and stay pain-free.



Triad Wellness Personal Trainers

**Thank you to our loyal business donors who make this program possible. We ask you to thank them by patronizing their establishments.**

*Restaurants*

**Bistro Romano**, 120 Lombard Street  
**Bloomsday Cafe**, 414 S. 2nd Street  
**Bridget Foy's**, 200 South Street  
**Cavanaugh's Headhouse**, 421 S. 2nd Street  
**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  
**Reading Terminal Market**, 1136 Arch Street  
**Rosy's Taco Bar East**, 624 S. 6th Street  
**Starr Restaurant Group**, [www.starr-restaurants.com](http://www.starr-restaurants.com)  
**The Twisted Tail** (Southern), 509 S. 2nd Street

*Entertainment*

**1812 Productions** (all comedy), 1714 Delancey  
**Arden Theatre**, 40 N. 2nd Street  
**Ghost Tour of Philadelphia**, 215-413-1997, [ghosttour@ghosttour.com](mailto:ghosttour@ghosttour.com)  
**Lantern Theatre**, 10th & Ludlow Streets  
**Phila. Chamber Ensemble** (at Old Pine Church), [www.pceconcerts.org](http://www.pceconcerts.org)

*Retail, Services*

**Adornamenti** (jewelry), 1006 Pine Street  
**Head House Books**, 619 S. 2nd Street  
**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.** (fitness), 401 S. 2nd Street, lower level  
**Naked Chocolate**, [www.nkdchocolate.com](http://www.nkdchocolate.com)  
**Oggi Salon & Spa**, 1700 Locust Street  
**Paper on Pine** (stationery), 1310 Sansom Street  
**Pileggi on the Square** (salon), 717 Walnut Street  
**Reading Terminal Market**, 1136 Arch Street  
**Sam Shaw's Treatery** (culinary & lifestyle boutique), 306 South Street  
**Show of Hands** (craft gallery), 1006 Pine Street  
**Stump Plants**, 622 S. 9th Street  
**Triad Wellness**, 507 S. 4th Street

*Museums*

**Museum of the American Revolution**, 101 S. 3rd Street  
**National Liberty Museum**, 321 Chestnut Street  
**Physick House & Powel House** (museums), 321 S. 4th Street

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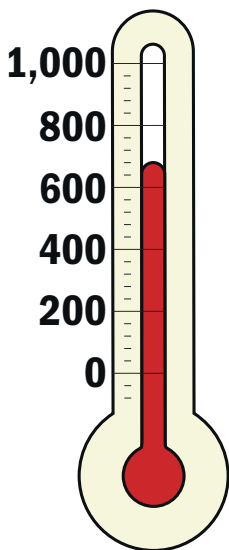
BY SAMANTHA BROWN

## Your Membership Counts

Special thanks to all who renewed their membership before December 31, 2024. All of you were entered in a drawing for a \$100 gift certificate to Fork Restaurant. The winners are Diane and Bruce L. They have owned their Society Hill home for 40 years. Their two children were raised here and are now adults living in other Philly neighborhoods.

Whether you mailed in a check or registered online, your membership counts. As of mid-February, we had 670 2025 members. Our goal is 1,000 members.

**2025 GOAL FOR  
NUMBER OF  
MEMBERS**



### 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](http://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

We salute long-time members and warmly welcome new neighbors to join us. If you haven't done so yet, sign up today!

Let's honor our history while shaping an even brighter future for Society Hill.

**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](http://www.societyhillcivic.org/join).

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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(print clearly)

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- ☐ \$ 40 Senior/Student/Single
- ☐ \$ 150 Georgian Grantor
- ☐ \$ 300 Jefferson Benefactor
- ☐ \$ 500 Washington Benefactor
- ☐ \$1,000 Benjamin Franklin Benefactor

#### Business Memberships

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

Total Membership \$ \_\_\_\_\_

If paying membership dues by check, please make the check payable to:

**Society Hill Civic Association**

#### Donations to Society Hill Preservation Foundation

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](http://www.societyhillcivic.org/join)

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## Great for Gifts and Thank You Notes!

These cards capture the beauty and history of our wonderful neighborhood. The inside is blank, so the cards can be used for all occasions — thank yous, birthdays, holidays, keeping in touch, etc. At \$24 per box, each box contains 12 full-color cards, and each card features a different view of one of our favorite places in Society Hill. Great for personal use or gifts. One neighbor used them to notify friends of their new home in Society Hill. Over 90 boxes have been sold so far. All proceeds on sales benefit SHCA 100 percent. The cards will be delivered to your Society Hill door. All photos were taken by SHCA board member, Martha Levine.

Orders are limited to two boxes per household. To view all 12 cards and to order, go to [www.societyhillcivic.org](http://www.societyhillcivic.org) and click on “What’s Happening.”

Photographs by SHCA Board member Martha Levine.  
Printing by Jeffrey Stockbridge, Fine Art Print.




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**GRAFFITI REMOVAL**


---

BY MARTHA LEVINE, CHAIR OF CLEAN & BEAUTIFUL COMMITTEE

## Graffiti Happens: Out Damned Spot, Out!

Like it or not, graffiti is everywhere in our city. Although Society Hill is a quiet residential neighborhood, foot traffic comes through on a daily basis, due to our proximity to South Street and Walnut Street. We welcome visitors, but we would rather they not leave evidence that they were here, which some feel compelled to do.

Fortunately through your membership and support, SHCA is able to provide us with a graffiti removal service, Urbanscape Specialists. Their representative visits us twice weekly to remove graffiti, stickers, tape, flyers, etc. on public objects like mailboxes, poles, controller boxes, and Big Belly trash receptacles. This service leaves us relatively graffiti-free, but it is an ongoing problem. We all know that leaving graffiti on surfaces for any length of time invites more graffiti.

### How can I help to expedite removal graffiti?

If you see graffiti on poles, mailboxes, controller boxes, Franklin lights, please email Urbanscape Specialist representative, Ashley Hutchinson at [ashley.hutchinson@urbanscapespecialist.com](mailto:ashley.hutchinson@urbanscapespecialist.com).



**Big Belly with graffiti, before and after it was cleaned by Urbanscape.**

Please provide the exact address of the site (sending a photo as well is helpful), and it will be cleaned within a few days, weather permitting.

Let's keep graffiti out of our community.

---

**Martha Levine** is an active longtime SHCA board member.

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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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NJ Electrical #34EB01613200 | DE Contractor #DE-2024-000010523

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## KIDS KORNER

BY THE FOX FAMILY

## Three Guaranteed Wins: Bet Dollars to Donuts

**Beiler's: saving the best for last.****Donut Rankings**

Just in time for Fat Tuesday, a perfect day for eating cake and donuts (just like every other day), the Fox Family happily provides the following summary of our favorite donut shops, visited over the past year, in order of preference.

**1 Beiler's Doughnuts**

Tons of choices, affordable, and delicious.  
[www.beilersdoughnuts.com](http://www.beilersdoughnuts.com)  
 Reading Terminal Market, 51 N. 12th Street

**2 Mochinut**

Made with rice flour, these donuts were very light and fluffy with a bit of crunch.  
[www.mochinut.com](http://www.mochinut.com)  
 108 Chestnut Street

**3 Hello Donut + Coffee**

Plenty of choices, and the donuts taste fresh and very flavorful, while not overpowering.  
[www.hellodonutsphl.com](http://www.hellodonutsphl.com)  
 2557 Amber Street

**4 Frangelli's Bakery**

Selection of baked goods was limited. We enjoyed them, but they were not favorites.  
[www.frangellis.com](http://www.frangellis.com)  
 847 W. Ritner Street

**5 Kouklet Brazilian Bakehouse**

Not your typical donuts. They were hard to cut and share as they were filled with cream (not a bad thing) and extremely messy (five alarm napkin alert!).  
[www.kouklet.com/](http://www.kouklet.com/)  
 1647 E. Passyunk Avenue

**A La Mousse**

145 N. 11th Street  
[www.instagram.com/alamousse/](https://www.instagram.com/alamousse/)

After all those delicious donuts, we somehow managed to crave more sweets! So, on a Sunday afternoon in late November, Jordan asked to go to A La Mousse. She had been introduced to this dessert hotspot by a friend and really enjoyed it. On our way back from doing some shopping in New Jersey, we drove to Chinatown. As we all know, parking in Chinatown can be difficult. Jaime managed to find a space along Vine Street and the crew walked back to 11th Street. There was a short line, which worked out, because it gave everyone the chance to review the many options. Owen ordered a mango cake, Jordan chose a cake shaped like a bear, and Jaime chose the triple layer chocolate cake. Jordan said her cake was even better than she remembered, and tasted like a bear! Owen said his was one of the best cakes he'd ever had. Jaime really enjoyed the layers of chocolate and mousse. Prices ranged from \$8 to \$9 for each individual dessert. Open late for your post-kid's-bedtime cravings!



**Jordan points to a red cart containing \$5 bills bundled in stacks of 100. About 450 bundles are placed in each cart, and the carts are stored in the basement of the Federal Reserve building. The cart pictured contains around \$2.25 million.**

**Money in Motion at the Federal Reserve Bank**

10 N. Independence Mall West  
[www.philadelphiafed.org/education/money-in-motion](http://www.philadelphiafed.org/education/money-in-motion)

Money in Motion is a small, free exhibit at the Federal Reserve Bank about — you guessed it — everything money! We learned about famous economists, what cash looked like historically, and what the Federal Reserve does. We also played each other repeatedly in the three-person trivia game. They even gave us money for free! Sure, it was shredded into thousands of little pieces. But with some glue and a dream, anything can happen! Pro tip: enter on the N. 6th Street side if you don't want to make circles around the block.

**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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### Antonio Atacan

Associate Broker

215-917-1213 | antonio@kw.com

- Society Hill Resident for 25 Years
- Studied at Wharton Business School
- Class Parent at Society Hill Synagogue Pre-School and St. Peters School
- Society Hill Civic Association Member
- Founded Keller Williams in Center City in 2006, The Atacan Group and Venture Philly Group
- Sold almost \$1 Billion in Philadelphia Real Estate

#### CLIENT TESTIMONIAL

“Relocating back to the US after several years in France, it was important for me to partner with a realtor with an analytical, focused and a comprehensive perspective. Antonio's Wharton background and his honest, numerate perspectives spanning decades of experience sealed the deal for me.

We appreciated his understanding of our specific brief – that reduced wasted efforts on either side. While I had accidentally spotted a particular property myself, Antonio and his team executed the various process steps superbly and speedily. Antonio's valuable guidance on pricing competitiveness, and on evaluating the specific quality parameters of the condo were most helpful and appreciated. His candor, his knowledge, his humility and his ready laugh make him an immensely trustworthy, reliable and likable partner.

I wholeheartedly recommend Antonio, and VenturePhilly. ”

Neel S. | Philadelphia



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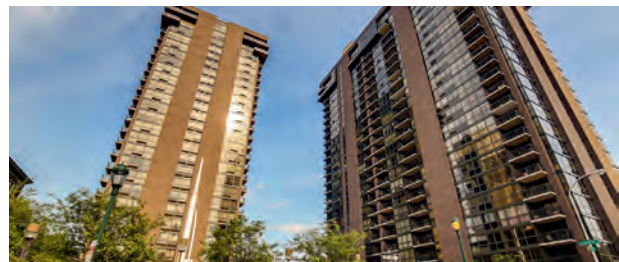
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