



SOCIETY HILL

Reporter

May/June 2025

The Newsletter
of the Society Hill
Civic Association

www.societyhillcivic.org

The 2025 Gardens of Society Hill Tour

Saturday, June 7 & Sunday, June 8



Mark your calendar—you won't want to miss this fun, two-day event. We are back again for one of the most sought-after Society Hill events and fundraisers. All proceeds benefit the Society Hill Civic Association (SHCA).

Join us again, or come for the first time, for a delightful, self-guided walking tour of 15 or more gardens in beautiful, historic Society Hill. The gardens here are like "Secret Gardens" — treasures tucked in behind our houses, well-hidden from street view. Enter the gates to reveal lush urban gardens and outdoor spaces, of varying sizes and designs, some exploding with color, and others with native plants. These gardens are outdoor rooms, providing

refuge from city life for their owners. Come and get inspirational ideas for your own gardens.

The 2023 and 2024 Society Hill garden tours were each a huge success, attracting more than 500 visitors over two days from the tri-state area, including Center City, other Philadelphia neighborhoods, the Philly suburbs, New York, and New Jersey, plus one from Utah.



Scan to buy tickets!

We Need Your Help!

- **Gardens:** We are still looking for a few more gardens. Do you have a garden, or can you recommend one, that might be a candidate for the tour? If so, please contact us. We like variety, so all sizes and types are welcome.
- **Volunteers:** We need volunteers to host each garden and check tickets. If you provide three hours on one of the days, we will provide a complimentary ticket for the tour on the alternate day. Last year, volunteers said, "Such fun and a great way to see your neighbors and folks from other parts of the area."
- **Contacts:** Please contact our tour coordinators with your availability and/or your questions. For gardens, contact Martha Levine at marthalev6@gmail.com, To volunteer, contact Linda Skale at lcskale@gmail.com

Tour Details

- Saturday, June 7 & Sunday, June 8, 1 to 4 p.m. Tickets can be used for either or both tour days.
- \$35 each in advance; \$40 each at the door.
- Sales start May 6. Advance ticket purchase is suggested. To order tickets, go online to www.societyhillcivic.org/gardentour or call 215-629-1288.
- Pre-purchased ticket holders must check in on tour days to pick up the tour program map at **Tour Headquarters, Old Pine Community Center, 401 Lombard Street, Philadelphia**
- Tickets may also be purchased on tour days at tour headquarters after 12:30 p.m.
- Only ticket holders may enter the gardens.
- Complimentary light refreshments and rest rooms will be provided at tour headquarters. For more information about the tour, please email either tour coordinator listed above.

Thank You to Our Generous Sponsors

Bartlett Tree Experts, Daley Plumbing & Heating, Earthly Delights (gardening), Liberty Tree & Landscape, McFarland Tree & Landscape, Premiere Building Restoration.

Wednesday,
May
21

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Society Hill Civic Association Meeting
Wednesday, May 21, 2025

**Pennsylvania Hospital
8th & Spruce Streets**

5:45 p.m. Board Meeting, Great Court Room

7:30 p.m. Community Meeting, Zubrow Auditorium

Topic: TBD

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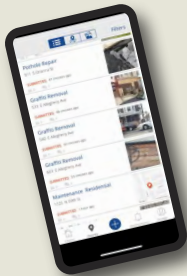
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SOCIETY HILL

Reporter

**NUSA
Award-Winning
Newsletter
First Place
2020**

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Submission Deadline

July/August Issue: June 1

Society Hill Civic Association

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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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*non-voting courtesy representatives

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

BY SUSAN BURT COLLINS

No Neighborhood Is an Island

After three productive, controversial years as SHCA president, I am delighted to hand off leadership to others. I wish them good luck and good sense. I wish them success in continuing to help our community thrive, which requires patience, hard work, and effective communication, not just with each other, but also with those outside Society Hill. We are a charming, beautiful neighborhood, but we do not stand alone. We are a proud part of a major city. No neighborhood is an island.

A myriad of changes has been made to how we administer the work of SHCA. See the following article by David Haas, who led this effort. While making these behind-the-scenes changes, we also redesigned our website pages and amplified our communications through our weekly Spotlight, endeavoring to widen our lens by alerting folks to events outside of Society Hill.

Samantha Brown has joined us as Administrator, bringing with her valuable experience as director of membership for large non-profits. Along with board member Stacy Ackerman, Samantha applied for and won a major grant for the benefit of Starr Gardens at 6th and Lombard Streets.

On the financial side, our largest source of revenue is not annual membership dues (\$50 per household) but our parking lot at 500 S. Front Street. By switching the institution where our money is held, we significantly increased the interest we earn on your dollars. Over the last 10 years, parking lot income helped SHCA fund many of the benefits and services we provide the community, including this *Reporter*, with six issues per year highlighting people and history here in Society Hill. Driving forward change, SHCA was the moving force behind the creation of the New Market & Head House Conservancy, created to relieve the South Street Headhouse District from managing the space. SHCA contributed \$25,000 to the Conditions Assessment Report of the Head House and Shambles, providing the basis for full construction documents for the renovation of this historic structure. As a result of our efforts and fundraising, the clock above the Head House

will be working. The clock's bell will be ringing within a few weeks.

SHCA paid for a traffic study to examine the effect of changes to I-95. For Foglietta Plaza, SHCA contributed \$25,000 to a study looking for ways to improve that space, hopefully leading to some much-needed greening. We not only secured grant money for Starr Garden, but also donated \$15,000 while spearheading the push for a major renovation of that space, which is underway. As for the parking lot itself, we are investing heavily to increase security at the site and decrease use of the space by partiers from nearby bars. Finally, there are all of our regular efforts: street sweeping weekly in the winter and biweekly in spring, summer, and fall; biannual neighborhood clean ups; brick repairs; tree tending; and other activities. All of this is what we will continue to do with the support and direction of the community. Share your ideas on what you want to see happen with your community dollars.

We work with partners such as Independence Historical Trust, the official philanthropic partner of Independence National Historical Park, to maintain Washington Square. We coordinate with Delancey Square Town Watch, leaders in monitoring public safety in the southeast section of Society Hill. Along with Delancey Square and Queen Village Neighbors Association, we focus attention on South Street, working to stem the proliferation of smoke shops and drug paraphernalia stores, while supporting positive changes along South Street. As much as Society Hill is a lovely residential neighborhood, we are dependent on adjacent or nearby commercial areas that allow us to enjoy the best of living in a city — restaurants, coffee shops, stores, museums, all an easy walk away. We need to continue to cooperate with surrounding neighborhoods and with the city to keep our neighborhood safe, healthy, and moving forward.

It's been a privilege, and a challenge, to serve as president these last three years. Thanks to all those who work with SHCA to make Society Hill what it is and keep working to make it even better.



Susan Burt Collins,
SHCA President

We're using technology to make this organization more transparent and efficient.

We welcome new people and new ideas.

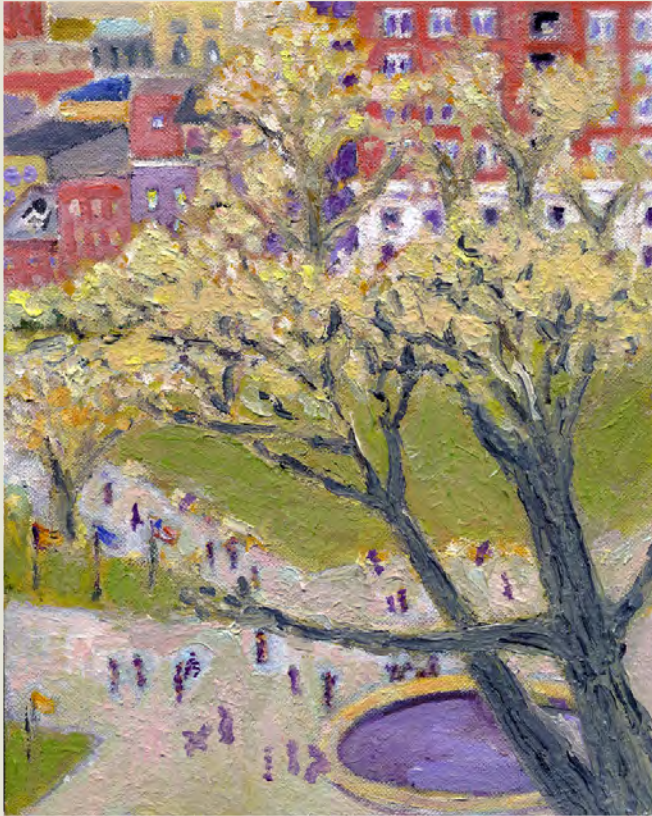
Susan Burt Collins is a retired criminal and civil rights lawyer. She has worked to free a wrongly convicted man, taught history, and created Friends of Spring Garden School to raise money to build a playground.

Members Only: The Society Hill List of Contractors

Current SHCA members have access to the **Society Hill List of Contractors**. All contractors in the 11-page list have been highly recommended by your very own neighbors. If you find that a contractor on the list has retired, or if you wish to suggest a contractor with whom you

are pleased, please contact Martha Levine at marthalev6@gmail.com. All new and renewing members will receive an email with a link to download the list, with a caveat: please do not share with non-members, as the list is a perk of SHCA membership.





From the Window 6 April 2025

by **Michael Neff**

S U C C E S S ? Y E S !

BY AL MEINSTER

Not Just Another Clean-Up Day!

Yes, 120 bags were distributed and filled. A huge amount of leaves, litter, and other debris no longer detracts from Society Hill's charm. A mark of success? Yes, but, even more so, a sign of a successful community project. The neighbors who appeared said, "I've tidied my yard and sidewalk, and now what else can I do?" These folks went on to clear Three Bears Park of leaves and litter, sewer inlets of clogging debris, and neglected sidewalks of their aging and decomposing leaves. Yes, we're a neighborhood of the civic-minded whose love for Society Hill is made evident by our willingness to assist on clean-up days.

Let us build on that reservoir of neighbors so eager to help! Prior to our Fall Great Society Hill Clean-Up Day, I will ask for and present a list of suggested locations that need attention.



Al Meinster is an SHCA board member.



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BEHIND THE SCENES

BY DAVID HAAS

Bringing SHCA Up to Date

In the last three years, the operation of SHCA's "back office" has professionalized. We adopted Google Workspace as our office management software, which allowed us to move our records online and into the Cloud, where they are secure and easily accessible. We also created societyhillcivic.org email addresses for our executives and committee chairs; you may have used our new "info@societyhillcivic.org" email address yourself more than once. The SHCA phone number has not changed, but we switched from an expensive and outdated landline office phone to a dedicated iPhone, allowing our administrator to respond quickly from any location.

We had a false start in efforts to upgrade the administrator's office. We first subscribed to a staffed service supporting multiple organizations, but they did not have the neighborhood knowledge we needed. After an extensive search, we hired Samantha Brown, a long-time resident of Society Hill, as our part-time administrator. With a marketing background, she brings dedication to the community and great new ideas.

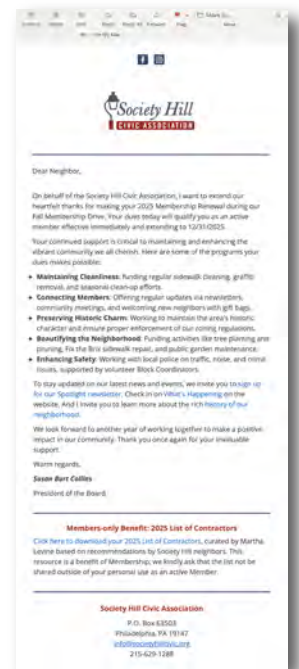
Samantha's current focus is integrating disparate paper and Excel records into our new membership database, Neon. In the last few months, we've dramatically improved the speed with which we acknowledge donations and membership

renewals. We're also becoming more proactive in reminding you of membership benefits. The new system integrates Constant Contact, our email communications tool, and QuickBooks, our financial management tool. It allowed us, for example, to email solicitations to Spotlight subscribers who were not yet SHCA members. We were able to gain 80 new memberships!

Speaking of financial management, for the first time we combined bookkeeping, accounting, and tax functions in one place, with our new accountants, J. Cohen CPAs. This change has lowered the cost of managing the organization and given us real-time access to accurate financial reporting. J. Cohen accountants are proactive in identifying areas where we can be more cost efficient because they understand what we do. For example, they helped us more closely integrate the operation of the Society Hill Preservation Foundation, our non-profit fundraising arm, to better manage donations and grants.

Let's keep SHCA moving forward!
Please email your ideas for neighborhood improvement to info@societyhillcivic.org.

David Haas is an active SHCA board member.



Letters thanking new and renewing members are sent out electronically.

VOTE IN MAY 2025

BY CLAUDIA CARABELLI

SHCA Board Officers and Directors Election

The annual election of SHCA Board Officers and Directors for the term commencing June 1, 2025, will take place in the month of May. The slate of candidates will be presented on May 1 via the Spotlight, our weekly e-newsletter, and posted on our website at www.societyhillcivic.org.

Election information and voting procedures will also be communicated to the general membership via Spotlight and our website. The vote will be for the following positions:

- Officers (five positions)
- Directors at Large (eight positions)
- Quadrant Directors (seven positions — one director each in the northwest and southwest

quadrants, and two in the northeast, and three in the southeast quadrants, (due to vacancies).

If you are a current SHCA member as of March 31, 2025, we encourage you to vote.

Thanks to Nominating and Elections Committee chair Claudia Carabelli, and members Jay Borowsky, Jeff Fogg, Mike Fox, Bernie Gelman, Lorna Katz-Lawson, and Priscilla Lo.

Thank you to departing board members Susan Butler, Claudia Carabelli, Bob Curley, Carol Hanlon, Mark Keener, Danielle Sandsmark, Ned Scharff, and Ellen Schwartz-Segal for their service.

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

PRESERVING SOCIETY HILL

BY BRANDON ENGELHARDT

Help Digitize the History of Society Hill!

My family was inspired to move to Society Hill, I suspect, for the same reasons as many of our neighbors: it's a quiet, walkable neighborhood, steeped in the rich preservation of our nation's early history. How neat is it that my morning stroll with my dog through St. Peter's Churchyard might echo the footsteps of one of George Washington's foxhounds visiting from Mount Vernon? George's dogs, by the way, had delightfully rowdy names: Sweet Lips, Drunkard, Taster, and Tippler. At a recent neighborly potluck, I had the pleasure of meeting our neighbor who lives in the former Madison household on Spruce Street. With a laugh and a raised glass, she declared, "I'm the new Dolley!"

This kind of spirited connection to the past is exactly what makes Society Hill so special, and yet, it's easy to forget that preservation here wasn't always a given. As somebody who grew up in the 1990s, I had little awareness of the urban renewal movement that dramatically reshaped neighborhoods across American cities in the decades prior. We tend to celebrate the stories of the Founding Fathers and admire the charm of cobblestone streets and restored brick facades, but we must also remember that the effort to protect and preserve this historic character was complex, contentious, and far from inevitable.

That's where the *Preserving Society Hill* project comes in. The project is the work of **Dr. Francesca Russello Ammon's** team at the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Ammon is a nationally recognized expert on urban renewal in American cities and a neighbor of ours in Society Hill. The project is a digital archive that brings to life the layered history of our neighborhood. Years ago, Dr. Ammon introduced this project during a community meeting, I'm told. But whether you're discovering the site at www.preservingsocietyhill.org for the first time, as I am, or you're eager to follow its continued growth, I highly encourage you to dive into the details. Check the following page for a few highlights that stood out to me.



Dock Street 1951. Courtesy of the Special Collections Research Center. Temple University Libraries. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

While writing about the Preserving Society Hill project over a crisp season in *A Man Full of Trouble*, my attention was drawn to the old photographs of Dock Street. The urban renewal project of the 1950s explicitly aimed to move away from the congestion, pollution, and hazards caused by heavy truck traffic serving Dock Street's industries and markets. I chuckled a bit, wondering if folks back then, too, resisted the attempts to move away from car-centric streets.

We can learn why folks were drawn to Society Hill in the Oral Histories section of the project. Harry Schwartz remarks about moving to Society Hill in 1972, "We thought Lawrence Court was a very nice place to raise a young family, because the Court really has no motor traffic through it, so it's great for young children." Or Elizabeth Browne's view of their move in 1965, "There were people around and there was plenty of foot traffic, so we always felt very safe." The charm of our street's walkability is what draws residents, diners, shoppers, and visitors here, and I hope we continue to preserve and work

towards making what was once old, new. Please consider helping digitize Society Hill's evolving story.

Learn more about the project:

Visit the Preserving Society Hill webpage www.preservingsocietyhill.org.

How you can help:

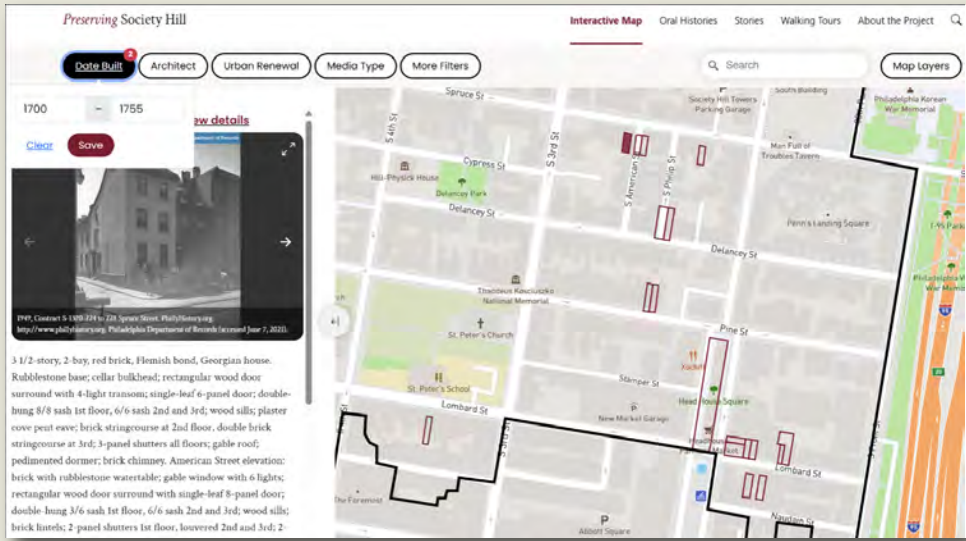
Documenting an entire neighborhood's 300-year history takes a lot of work! Thank you to Dr. Ammon's team for their incredible work thus far. To help deepen the content in the project, please consider submitting digital images of your property to fammon@design.upenn.edu along with your address. It's a plus if you've located details about your home, its original owner's history or historical registration not already included on the website.

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.



PRESERVING SOCIETY HILL

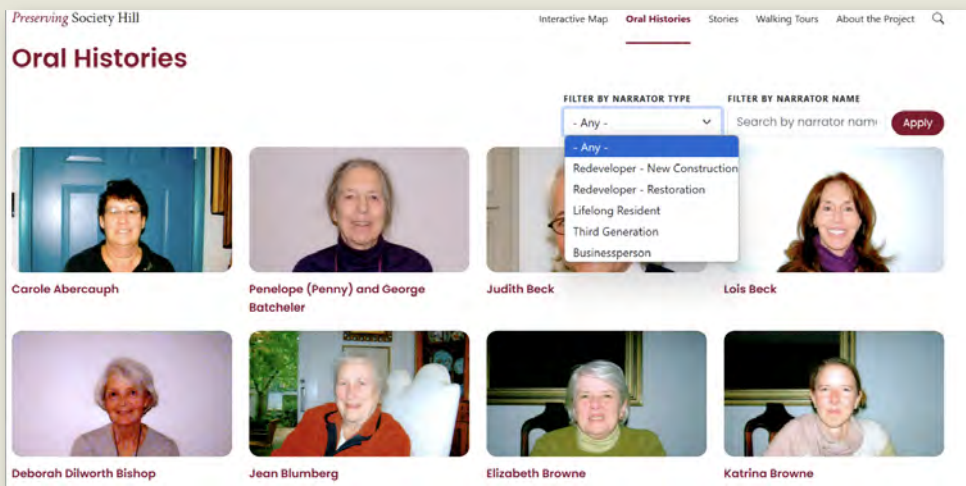
Explore the Layered History of Our Neighborhood



Interactive Map

Explore Society Hill through historic photographs with architectural and urban renewal information by each property.

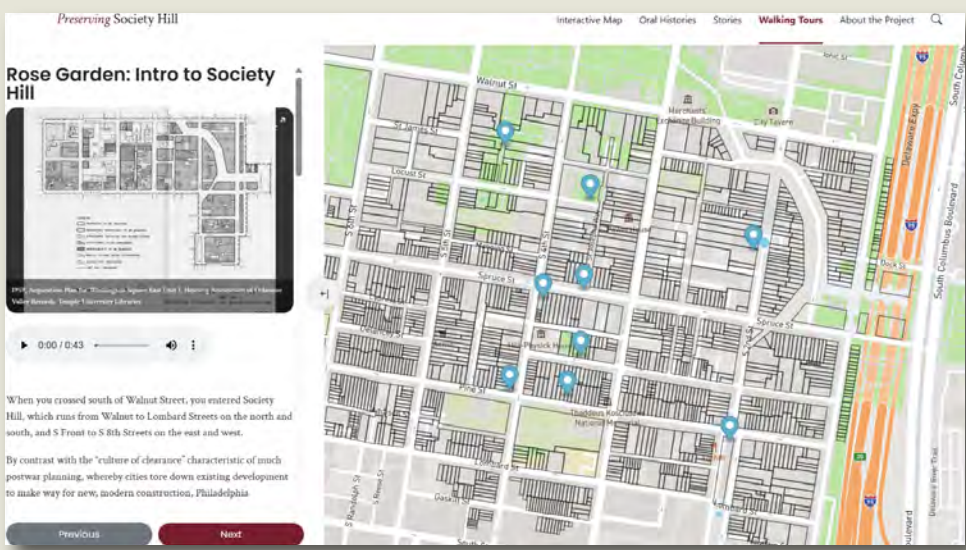
- Suggested navigation:
- Sort by when properties were built (e.g. 1700-1730).
 - Filter by pre/post Urban Renewal (e.g. new construction).
 - Click into each property and see historical photographs and snippets.



Oral Histories

Hear voices from people in our community residing in historic homes.

- Suggested navigation:
- Filter by narrator type (e.g. lifelong resident or redeveloper).



Walking Tours

Discover Society Hill architecture while on foot. Create your own walking tour to engage your guests when they visit.

- Suggested navigation:
- Choose from three different lengths (1, 1.5, or 2-hour tours).
 - Make a guided interactive map with historic audio recordings at key landmarks.

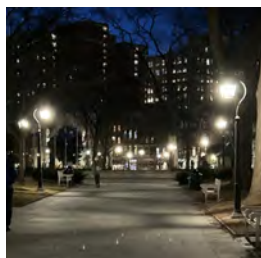
INDEPENDENCE HISTORICAL TRUST

BY JONATHAN BURTON

Prime Examples of Partnership, Squared



Last fall when SHCA welcomed Independence National Historical Park’s (INHP) Superintendent, Steve Sims, and Independence Historical Trust’s Director of Development, Jonathan Burton, to the community meeting at Carpenters’ Hall, many comments were made about the need to make improvements to the lighting at Washington Square. We listened.



Washington Square lanterns are brighter now. They have been cleaned and outfitted with LED bulbs.

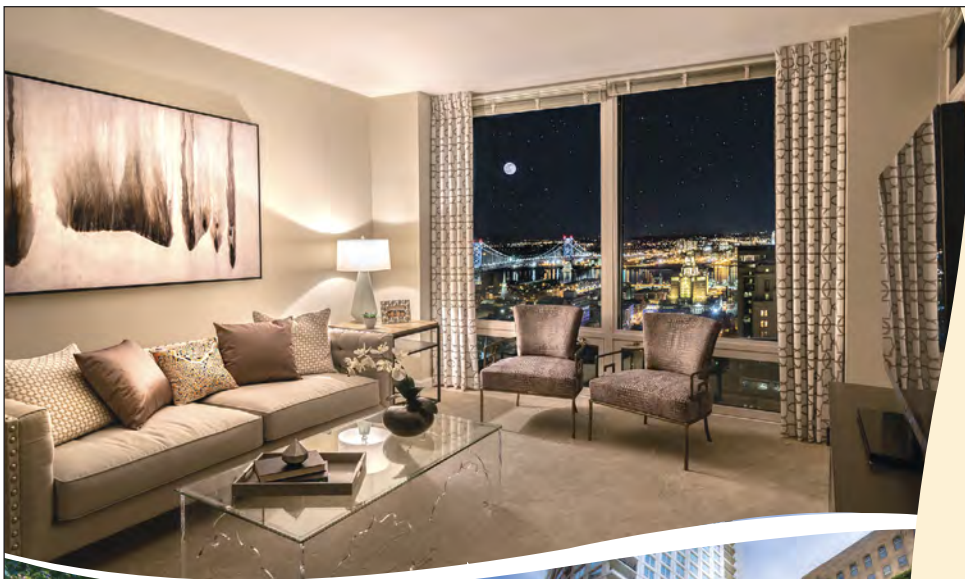
In February, the lantern portion of every lamp post was thoroughly cleaned, and new LED bulbs were installed according to National Park Service regulations. I recently walked through Washington Square at night and noticed a considerable difference. I hope you noticed, too.

The funding for this project came from your donations to past Washington Square Affairs and other fundraising efforts for the Square. This is another example of how the neighborhood can work with our national park and the Independence Historical Trust as the philanthropic partner to INHP.

Given the recent drastic cuts to the National Park Service and with potentially more devastating cuts forthcoming, public involvement with our beloved national park is needed, now more than ever.

The other prime example of our partnership, the restoration of the historic guardhouse, just received a notification about being selected for **Grand Jury Award** from the Preservation Alliance of Greater Philadelphia for the meticulous restoration project.

The restoration of the Washington Square Guardhouse (southeast) represents a significant achievement in preserving Philadelphia’s architectural and cultural heritage. Originally built in the 1890s, this guardhouse was part of a network of more than 100 portable wooden structures distributed throughout Fairmount Park. These small buildings served as shelters for park watchmen tasked with ensuring visitor safety and maintaining order in the city’s growing *continued on page 9*



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INDEPENDENCE HISTORICAL TRUST

continued from page 8

public spaces. As Philadelphia's park system expanded rapidly in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, these modest structures became integral elements of the landscape, reflecting the evolution of park management practices.

Over time, as the need for stationed guards diminished, many of these structures fell into disrepair or were removed altogether. Today, fewer than 20 of these guardhouses are believed to remain, making each surviving structure an invaluable relic of the city's park history. The Washington Square Guardhouse, along with one other, was relocated from Fairmount Park to Washington Square in the mid-20th century. This relocation preserved the structure during a time when many similar buildings were disappearing. Repurposed as a garden shed, the guardhouse provided storage for tools and supplies used by volunteers to maintain Washington Square's landscapes. Despite its modest function, the structure remained a charming and historically significant feature of the park.

Recognizing the importance of preserving this historic resource, the National Park Service (NPS) spearheaded a comprehensive restoration effort in collaboration with the Independence Historical Trust and SHCA's Washington Square Committee. This public-private partnership underscored a shared commitment to safeguarding Philadelphia's historical landmarks and demonstrated the power of community engagement in preserving shared heritage.

The restoration addressed a range of structural and aesthetic issues while adhering to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. The work began with a thorough assessment of the structure's exterior woodwork, including the roof trim, soffits, exposed structural frame, and door panels. Deteriorated components were replaced with decay-resistant wood materials, which were carefully reproduced to match the profiles and dimensions of the original elements. Areas of minor decay were stabilized using epoxy restoration products.

The roof replacement was a critical component of the project. The deteriorated cedar shingles, along with the underlayment, spaced sheathing, and flashings, were removed. Great care was taken to protect the historic tongue-and-groove beadboard sheathing beneath. In addition to

SHCA-funded Restoration Project Wins Award



The historic guardhouse in Washington Square has been selected by the Preservation Alliance of Greater Philadelphia to receive a Grand Jury Award for its meticulous restoration. The award will be presented on Wednesday, June 4, 2025 from 4:30 pm – 8:00 pm at The Bellevue on S. Broad Street. Visit <https://preservationalliance.com/preservation-achievement-awards/> to buy tickets to the 2025 Preservation Achievement Awards ceremony.

the structural repairs, attention was also given to the guardhouse's historic hardware.

The restoration project, completed in October 2024, not only returned the guardhouse to its former glory but also ensured its long-term resilience. The structure regained its functional role as a garden shed while standing as a testament to both historic craftsmanship and modern preservation techniques.

This restoration effort highlights the value of collaboration between public agencies and private entities in preserving shared heritage. By working together, NPS, the Independence Historical Trust, the Society Hill Preservation Foundation, and the Washington Square Committee demonstrated the power of community engagement in achieving meaningful preservation outcomes. The Washington Square Guardhouse now serves as a tangible reminder of the once-common park structures that played a pivotal role in shaping Philadelphia's public spaces.



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

TREE TENDER UPDATE

BY CLAUDIA CARABELLI

Spring Tree Care



Suckers like this draw energy away from the tree. Pinch them off.



Cut off larger suckers like the one pictured with pruning shears.

Spring has sprung, and with it, our trees are leafing out and providing a beautiful green canopy to the neighborhood. Even though Mother Nature does a great job of repeating this cycle year after year, she can still use a helping hand. City street trees face lots of obstacles to survival, so we all need to do our part.

If you have a young tree, planted within the last two years, now is the time to resume watering. Saplings need a good dousing twice a week, or more often if we have a dry summer. This is necessary to establish a healthy root system. While gator bags are not recommended, as they tend to harbor mold and critters, they're preferable to not watering at all. Soaking with a hose or bucket is ideal. If you're away, remember to ask a neighbor to take over.

Once your tree is two years old, you can remove the stakes and ties. The tree should be well established enough to stand on its own.

Mulching the tree pit is a perfect way to nourish your tree. While licorice root mulch is ideal, other

types are sufficient. Just remember the 3-3-3 rule. Mulch should be about three inches deep, three inches away from the trunk, and should extend three feet out from the tree in all directions, assuming your pit is that large. Mulch also helps to keep down weed growth.

Keep the tree pit clean. Remove weeds, trash, and dog droppings to keep it looking nice.

Pinch off suckers. Those cute little green shoots that appear at the base of the tree, and sometimes up the trunk, actually draw energy away from the larger tree. Be sure to pinch them off. Larger ones along the base may need to be cut with hand clippers.

The trees throughout our neighborhood take care of us by keeping the air cleaner and the temperature cooler, and providing lots of natural beauty. Let's do our part to help them along.

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



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SOCIETY HILL PRESERVATION FOUNDATION

BY BONNIE HALDA

We're Keeping the Character

The Society Hill Preservation Foundation was created as the 501(c)(3) subsidiary of SHCA to help address the needs and opportunities beyond all that the SHCA does on a regular basis. Over the past year, the Foundation has funded several large projects that are making a huge difference in our neighborhood.

The Foundation and SHCA have long supported the beautification, maintenance, and improvement of **Washington Square**, which is managed by the National Park Service. Recently, the Foundation made substantial donations to Independence Historical Trust, the philanthropic partner of Independence National Historical Park, to complete the restoration of the Guardhouse and help pay for the cleaning and light bulb replacement of all the lanterns throughout the square.



Washington Square Southeast Guardhouse

In 2024, the New Market & Head House Conservancy commissioned a **Conditions Assessment of the Head House and Shambles**, which revealed a need for significant, immediate work to prevent further deterioration and commence restoration. In response, the Foundation created a restricted account to accept donations to support the Conservancy's efforts to preserve this National Historic Landmark. This past winter, the Foundation provided funds to the Conservancy to make repairs to the iconic Lukens clock. Going forward, the Foundation has made a commitment to help the Conservancy begin a revival of this valuable space as a focal point of community life.

Starr Garden Playground, an essential community resource for five neighborhoods, including Society Hill, has needed significant care and repair for decades. Last year, the Friends of Starr Garden successfully secured grants and donations to fund the much-needed



Generous donation are being used for the renovation project at Starr Garden.



The Foundation provided funds to the Conservancy to make repairs to Head House and the iconic Lukens clock.

repairs. They are pleased to report that the planning is nearing completion and construction is on track to begin this fall. Generous donations to the Foundation from organizations and individuals are being used to contribute to this exciting renovation project.

The **Foglietta Plaza** programming study and concept design that were funded by the Foundation have been important in coalescing the various stakeholders around a vision for how the park will be used. While the path and timing are not yet clear, SHCA's Foglietta Plaza Committee continues to advocate for its realization and is seeking interim improvements to the trees, plantings, and lighting.



Foglietta Plaza

It is through these large projects, as well as supporting the regular work of subsidizing fixing brick sidewalks and planting trees, that the Foundation actively supports the SHCA vision of "Keeping the Character" of Society Hill. As a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, donations to the Foundation are tax deductible. When you go to www.society-hillcivic.org/foundation/donate/ you can designate which projects you wish to support, or you can make an unrestricted gift.

Bonnie Halda

is a retired historical architect from the National Park Service.

Her photographs of the neighborhood are featured on our website and in the *Guide to Historic Society Hill*.



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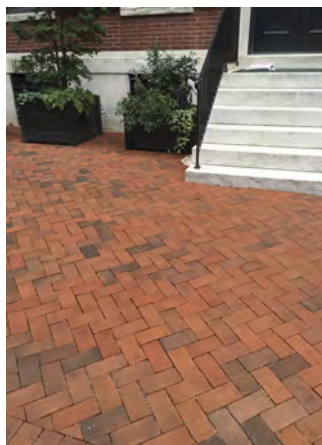
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KEEPING POSTED

BY AL CAVALARI

What If?

What if the United States were to become a “failed state,” a term coined in the 1990s to describe Somalia? Characteristics of a failed state include loss of control over its territory; loss of ability to make collective decisions, provide public services, collect taxes, and enforce laws; the rise of terrible crime and extreme corruption; failure of the judiciary; refugees; displaced persons; poverty; and economic decline. The term is controversial and has been replaced by “fragile state,” but the danger remains: any constitution can fall apart and go “out of business.” There is no more Soviet Union or East Germany. Scholars estimate the average lifespan of national constitutions written since 1789 to be about 15 years. Closing in on 250 years old, our Constitution would seem safe. Would it surprise you to learn that our first Constitution did fail?

Let’s look at what I call the “forgotten moment of American history.” To that end, I present you with a challenge. Go to Independence Hall and visit the West Wing Gallery. Unlike the main building, which is mostly accessible only on a ticketed tour, no ticket is necessary. There, resting in the case between the famous Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States, is our little-known first constitution “The Articles of Confederation,” the one that failed. Just stand in front of it and silently reflect upon the fact that any constitution can fail. It is a humbling experience.

Consider that in 1785 when John Hancock of Boston was again President of Congress, he did not once bother to travel to New York to attend a session. Why would he, when business often could not be conducted because Congress could not even muster a quorum? Congressmen had stopped showing up, and why wouldn’t they? The Articles gave Congress no power to tax. Imagine a government without reliable revenue. Instead, there was a system

of “requisitions” whereby Congress would determine each state’s expected monetary contribution based on the value of its land. However, since the Articles provided no mechanism for enforcement of this system, George Washington called requisitions “the most timid form of a request.” In reality, they were voluntary, and you can imagine how well the system worked. Historian David McCullough said the stories of soldiers leaving bloody footprints in the snow for lack of shoes are not myths.



This WWII-era postcard used two of our most recognizable symbols to remind Americans about the importance of unity.

We learn our history incorrectly beginning in grade school. It is simpler to tell children that on July 4, 1776, “a new nation was born,” which is not true. Thirteen independent “states” were born. But that word needs to be understood as it is used in the Declaration of Independence, where it refers to “the State of Great Britain.” A “state” meant a “nation.” The American states were thirteen independent nations, each with its own constitution. The Articles were very specific: “Each state retains its sovereignty, freedom and independence, and every Power, Jurisdiction and right, which is not by this confederation expressly delegated to the United States, in Congress assembled.” This was no true national government. Rather, it was a body that looked more like the United Nations or even NATO, the North

Atlantic Treaty Organization. Some historians do call the Articles a defensive treaty. In the 18th century, the word “federal” referred to the “confederated” states working together as independent political entities.

Congress was not the legislative body we know today. It was initially a forum in which the states could jointly run the war effort with systems of committees. It could not make laws that people in the states had to obey. Congress had the power to maintain a standing army but could not force the states to supply their quota of money or soldiers. It could not regulate commerce. There was no judicial or executive branch, no national court system, and no president as we understand the office. The President of Congress, elected for a one-year term, merely held the gavel and ran the sessions. He could recognize delegates to speak, he had ceremonial duties, but he had far less power than the Speaker of the House has in our Congress today.

The Articles were also impossible to alter, because any major decision required the unanimous approval of all thirteen *state legislatures*. A measure that would have provided Congress with independent revenue based on tariffs was vetoed by Rhode Island in 1781. A second attempt in 1783 was blocked by New York. Congress was ineffective. The true governing power resided in the states.

Once the war was over and the common threat of war with England was gone, there was even less incentive for the states to cooperate. States were imposing tariffs on each other when goods crossed state lines. There was no uniform currency. The alliance was fracturing over every conceivable social, political, and economic issue. Connecticut’s land claim to the entire upper half of Pennsylvania saw settlers

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KEEPING POSTED

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Mrs. Powel: "What have we got, a republic or a monarchy?"
Benjamin Franklin: "A republic, if you can keep it."

from each state in an armed conflict called the Third Pennamite War. In Massachusetts, some 4,000 farmers and Revolutionary War veterans who were being bankrupted by harsh economic conditions responded with an armed force led by veteran Daniel Shays. They shut down court systems, interfered with tax collectors, and attacked government arsenals.

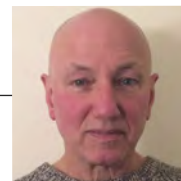
Congress was powerless to put down "Shays's Rebellion" because it had no money to recruit and equip an army. Merchants funded and raised their own force which did the government's job, but the writing was on the wall. If something was not done, many believed the states would devolve into thirteen petty nations constantly at war with each other only to be gobbled up by the big European powers. So a meeting was held in Independence Hall from May through

September in 1787 that resulted in our second Constitution, which we are still using. I think it will surprise most people to know that many of the men who signed it did not believe it would last.

Deeply flawed with its protection and guarantee of slavery in every state that wanted it, lack of universal suffrage, as well as other anti-democratic features, it was the result of a meeting that almost failed at many points along the way. The New York delegation quit when they realized that for the first time a true *national* government was being created that would have enforceable coercive power over all the people and all the states. Rhode Island did not even attend. I like to say that every man who signed it did not want it. They all would have preferred something different in one way or another. Benjamin Franklin begged the delegates to sign it "in

spite of its faults" because he expected nothing better. Many signers are on record with concern that it would fail like the first one did. A few months after signing it, Alexander Hamilton wrote a letter to a friend predicting that it would only last a few years.

After the September 17 signing ceremony, Franklin was at the Powell House on 3rd Street where Mrs. Powel asked him what kind of government they had created: "a republic or a monarchy?" He answered, "A republic, if you can keep it." Our Constitution is written on paper. It is not written in stone, and it can fail at any time.



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

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BEFORE THE STARS AND STRIPES

BY MARC S. RASPANTI, ESQUIRE

The Banners of Liberty Exhibition

I have had the privilege to preview an unprecedented collection of Revolutionary-era flags currently on display at The Museum of the American Revolution, located at 101 S. 3rd Street. When I was invited by the museum's executive staff to preview the exhibit, I did not know what to expect. I learned more than I ever knew about Continental-era flags and flags in general. This unique exhibit will be open from April 19 through August 10, 2025. It represents the largest gathering of Revolutionary War flags and banners ever assembled in more than 200 years. The opening date of the exhibit commemorated the Battle of Lexington and Concord. It is a must-see.

The museum has on special display 17 military flags, 16 of which are of Revolutionary-era military origin. Only one flag is owned by the museum. Most are on loan from a variety of donors, organizations, and locations. These proud donors include but are not limited to the museum of the First Troop Philadelphia City Cavalry, the Delaware Historical Society, Nick Manganiello and Francine Carrick, Brian and Barbara Hendelson, and the New Hampshire Historical Society through a gift of Edward Tuck. In exchange for their loan to the museum, some donors will receive their flags back in better condition than they arrived.

I toured the impressive subterranean conservation facilities with James Taub, an enthusiastic and highly knowledgeable associate curator. Meticulous conservation efforts to these ancient relics were underway during my visit. Some flags were being carefully cleaned or gently re-stitched. Other flags were remounted from worn or crumbling frames that had been in place for countless years.

My first misconception was that most of the flags would resemble the familiar stars and stripes known to every American. I was wrong. Indeed, the beginnings of the familiar "Stars and Stripes," 13 stripes and a blue field with 13 stars, did not appear until somewhere around 1777, pursuant to an act of Congress. Moreover, the flag that is purported to have been sewn by Betsy Ross remains steeped in legend, myth, or has morphed into treasured Philadelphia folklore. The Betsy Ross flag does not resemble the flags currently on display.



These doors are open now!



James Taub, Associate Curator



The Museum's conservation facilities

My second misconception was that many flags from the Revolution still exist. I was wrong again. Apparently, only about 30 Revolutionary flags from the Revolutionary period are known to still exist. Of course, there may be more hidden away in private collections or in the attics or basements of known or unknown collectors. There appear to be a number of reasons why more Revolutionary-era flags did not survive. Fine silk cloth was often scarce, expensive, and fragile, and professional flag makers were non-existent. Many flags were left behind or repurposed into other items by thrifty colonials.

I started to think more about flags as I was granted an up-close glimpse of these ancient artifacts being readied for this historic display. Some of these flags have never or rarely been seen in public. Of course, due to the fragility of these artifacts, I was not permitted to touch or in any way disturb them. However, I did come close enough to appreciate their intimate and varied designs.

Flags are a non-verbal expression of the hopes, dreams, and political ideals of their carriers. Flags served as a rallying point for a loose confederation of continental territories which had not yet forged into a cohesive nation. I'm not sure all the symbols on the flags are fully understood even to this day. The continental states were slowly readying for war against a mighty power with a well-known and distinctive flag. Flags could be held, they could be displayed, and they could be carried into battle or attached to ships. This collection has samples of many of these types of flags.

Artifacts on Display

Flags played a key role on the battlefield, on the parade ground, and even in our fledgling Navy. They were tools of motivation and identification for new

armies mostly made up of regional militias. They often featured a design in their canton (upper corner) as well as designs, a motto, a unit designation, or a figure at the center of the flag. Mottos in Latin or English referenced their justification and determination to fight to create an independent nation.

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BEFORE THE STARS AND STRIPES

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Now a bit more about some of the flags I found most interesting:



The **Commander in Chief's Standard**, is the silk standard used by General George Washington to mark his headquarters and his presence on the battlefield, according to stories passed down through the Washington family. This item is in the museum's permanent collection, and the impressive standard will be on display for only the second time since the museum's opening.



The **Delaware Militia Flag**, also known as the "Dansey Flag," was captured by British Army officer Captain William Dansey in September 1777 and brought back to England as a war trophy. It remained in his family's possession until it was sold to the Delaware Historical Society in 1927 and is on loan from the Delaware Historical Society.



The **Massachusetts Militia Flag**, called the "Forster Flag," due to its undeniable Forster family of Massachusetts provenance, was likely brandished by a company of long-gone soldiers from Manchester, Massachusetts. It also likely had a British Union in its canton when it was created. Its design was altered to include six short white stripes (seven more on the reverse) to represent the original 13 states. This flag may go back to the 1775 time period.



The **Light Horse of the City of Philadelphia Flag** was carried by a unit of distinguished members of Philadelphia society formed in 1774. Today it is one of the oldest active military organizations in the nation, now known as the First Troop Philadelphia City Cavalry. This flag saw action at the battles of Trenton and Princeton, some of Washington's most famous engagements. Originally designed with the British Union in its upper corner, the flag was later repainted with 13 stripes, following the adoption of the Declaration of Independence, to represent the new United States of America. If you look very carefully, some of the original British Union is still visible through the paint. At the center of the flag, 13 ribbons knotted together also articulated the hope of national unity.



The **2nd Spartan Regiment of Militia Flag**, a rare surviving artifact from the war in the South, represents a unit that reflected the diverse society of the South Carolina backcountry it came from. John Biddle, a free man of African descent originally from Virginia, and Aquila Hollingsworth, a Quaker from Delaware, both volunteered to join the regiment and served in a unit at the Battle of Cowpens in 1781, where Hollingsworth was killed in battle. The exact origin and meaning of the dog and snake painted on the flag remains unknown, though snakes were often used by Revolutionaries to represent American liberties. The dog and snake are intriguing to view.



The **2nd New Hampshire Regiment Flags**, were purchased by the regiment in 1777. One, a buff-colored flag, is painted with the "Chain of States" and the motto "WE ARE ONE" to represent unity among the states. The other, a blue flag, features the motto "The Glory not the Prey." Each flag has a British Union stitched in its canton. Captured by the British 30 miles away from where the regiment fought at the Battle of Hubbardton in 1777, these flags were sent to England as war trophies, and then donated to the New Hampshire Historical Society in 1913. While female flag makers like Rebecca Flower Young and Elizabeth "Betsy" Ross were working in the same neighborhood as this exhibit and were possibly tasked with creating some of the banners set for display, their individual contributions cannot be confirmed. But the 2nd New Hampshire flags are known to be sewn by Boston-based milliner Fanny Johonnot Williams.

STARS AND STRIPES

continued from page 16



The **Pennsylvania Militia Flag** is the earliest surviving flag bearing a precursor of the stars and stripes representing the new United States of America. It is known today as the “Brandywine Flag.” This red silk banner is said to have witnessed the Battle of Brandywine on September 11, 1777. Pennsylvania, having recently formed its own state militia, called out its citizens to support the Continental Army’s defense of the state from a British invasion in the late summer of 1777. Robert Wilson, an officer in the Chester County Militia, and the men he commanded, served under this flag during the fight to defend Pennsylvania. The resulting Battle of Brandywine raged only a few miles from the homes of Wilson and his fellow Chester County militiamen.



I have done my best to highlight some of the features that impressed me. This display is a visual homage to our nation’s early beginnings. In other words, they must be seen to be fully appreciated as formative symbols of our early republic. When you gaze upon these old cloths, you may find yourself reflecting, as I did, on the long-deceased men and women who stitched these prideful symbols of their hopeful future freedoms.

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.



Born After the Revolution

**Flag of the United States of America
Unidentified Maker
1800-1825**

Made over 20 years after the conclusion of the Revolutionary War, this flag is one of the earliest examples of the “Stars and Stripes” known to exist.

The flag features 13 stars in a five-pointed variation of what is known as the “Great Star” pattern (a star made out of stars). Until 1912, there was no official star pattern for the American national flag. Up until then, the main design specifications for the flag of the United States were laid down by the Continental Congress on June 14, 1777:

“Resolved, that the flag of the United States be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field representing a new constellation.”

This rare flag formerly belonged to Boleslaw and Marie D’Orange Mastai, the first major collectors of early American flags. Flown extensively, the flag has many repairs, all of which appear to have been made during the era in which the flag was constructed. On loan from Jeff R. Bridgman Antiques, Inc.



**Treaty of Greenville Flag ca. 1795
Unidentified Maker, Possibly Pennsylvania**

This flag was presented to the Miami chief She-Moc-E-Nish by General Anthony Wayne at the Treaty of Greenville in Ohio in 1795. The flag was handed down through two granddaughters of the chief. With 15 stripes, this flag dates to the time when the United States had 15 states. The white linen field contains, in place of stars, the inscription, “A. Wayne, Commander in Chief.” Courtesy of the Indiana State Library.



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URBAN EDEN

BY MARY STURDIVANT

What's in a Weed?

"Wherefore art thou Romeo?" laments the tragic Juliet in Shakespeare's tale of doomed lovers. Yes, what is in a name? For gardeners, any plants we don't like, we label "weeds." Like 007, we have a license to kill and do so with gusto. Unfortunately, as in the Roundup case, our weapon of choice may harm us. That is why every year SHCA makes sure you have the recipe for a non-toxic weed killer.

Weeding is work. It can also spark disagreement among friends, helpers, and other volunteers. My Dutch friend Joke, who decamped to Bozeman, Montana, refused to help us weed the lawn in front of flower bed five in Washington Square. Her reasoning? "If it is green, let it be." I, on the other hand, was raised by a man whose proudest moment was when Mr. Murphy strolled by and called out, "Frank, that is the greenest lawn I have seen since I left Ireland." That was achieved by having the Haverford Township Sanitation Department dump a truckload of treated human waste on the yard. The treatment process couldn't kill tomato seeds. So it did take a season to remove all the volunteer tomato plants. Then there was the corner neighbor who complained for nearly a year about an unpleasant whiff when the wind blew her way. The neighbors' walls and fences that hem in most backyards in Society Hill actually serve as peacemakers. Plus our plots are so small that we just need buckets, not dump trucks, of rich soil.

Fairmount Park Organic Recycling Center offers **free** leaf screened compost, mulch and wood chips. Wood chips make great ground cover for tree pits. Tucked away on the MLK Drive side of Fairmount Park at 3850 Ford Road (zip 19131 for GPS locators), the center opened April 1 and stays open through October 31, from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. on Saturdays, and from 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Monday to Friday. Limit is 30 gallons a trip, one trip a day, two trips per week. Bring your own container, gloves, and shovel. Compost is too rich to pile on a garden bed by itself; mix it with something else like sand if you need drainage.

There can be other points of disagreement in weeding. I delight in filling a paper bag with plantain, that broadleaf grass-destroying **weed!** But when I was at the PHS Philadelphia Flower Show, buying clover seed to cover bare spots, the vendor suggested harvesting the plantain. I stopped her, explaining the lawn was a public space where residents enjoy walking their dogs.

I offer my sincerest kudos to everyone picking up the solid waste, but I have yet to see anyone carrying a water jug to dilute the urine. No way am I foraging from Washington Square, not plantain, wild strawberries, violets, or mushrooms. Nothing!

Meanwhile, I filled in the bare spots with white clover. It tickled me to see the dogs rollicking in fields of it. Then I found out my gardening buddy Ruth Ann hates clover in the lawn. In gardening as in life, it is wisest to defer to the one who is doing most of the work.

Dandelions have practically been eradicated in the Square. Sherley Young recalls her dad giving her a nickel for every one she pulled as a child. Back in the day, five nickels would buy a matinee ticket at the movies. Those who miss making bright yellow wreaths with the flowers, or blowing the seedheads to make a wish come true, can usually find some in the traffic triangle at 7th & Walnut Streets. Their seeds will eventually make it back to the Square or your own little patch of paradise. Weeding is an endless process, not a project with a beginning, middle, and end.

A very conscious decision was made by the Washington Square Potting Shed Committee volunteers to plant only native perennials. Planting annuals every year is costly and time consuming for volunteers. So the hellebores that bloom from December through April, the Christmas and Lenten roses, will not be replaced when they die off. They are not weeds, but they are not native. The thought is that natives have had millennia to evolve and survive in this climate, including through droughts. I recall a vacant lot between school and home that was filled with non-native Queen Anne's Lace and native Yarrow. Ever see the fields of wild irises outside Boulder, Colorado, or hillsides of bluebells near Dallas, Texas? What's a weed? I am less sure now than ever. Today, a weed is a green thing growing where I don't want it to be.

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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- 1 gallon of vinegar
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ON OUR SHELF

BY IZZY HALLORAN

Summer Reading at Head House Books

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Fiction

Good Girl by Aria Aber, \$29

Good Girl is the debut novel of Aria Aber about a 19-year-old woman named Nila, whose parents immigrated to Berlin, Germany, as Afghan refugees. Immersed in the underground club scene in Berlin, Nila uses drugs and alcohol to numb herself from her daytime reality. During the day, Nila reads in her room, studies photography, and avoids her recently widowed father. When Nila becomes romantically involved with an older American writer named Marlowe, she must confront her secret cultural identity and ultimately decide who she wants to be.

Nonfiction

Candida Royalle & the Sexual Revolution by Jane Kamensky, \$21.99

Candida Royalle & the Sexual Revolution is a fascinating portrait of Candice Vadala (1950–2015) or “Candida Royalle,” an actress, producer, and pioneer of female-directed adult films. Kamensky tells the story of Vadala’s life and work through an extensive archive of uncovered diary entries, photographs, and films. *Candida Royalle & the Sexual Revolution* details the extraordinary life of a lesser-known trailblazer in women’s liberation, whose life was dedicated to changing public opinion on adult content, improving industry standards, and producing work made by women, for women.

Illustrated Children’s Book

Snail Trail

by Ziggy Hanaor & Christos Kourtoglou, \$16.99

Written by Ziggy Hanaor and illustrated by Christos Kourtoglou, *Snail Trail* is a touching tale about a snail named Marjorie who seeks a place of her own to spend some quiet time. Frustratingly, Marjorie’s family and friends can easily locate her by following her trail of slime. When she weaves a particularly winding path, her newfound liberation quickly turns to fear as she becomes lost, far from home. How will she find her way back, and what will she learn along the way?

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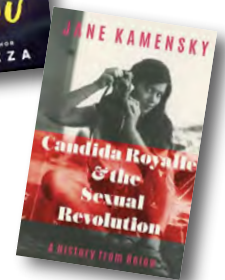
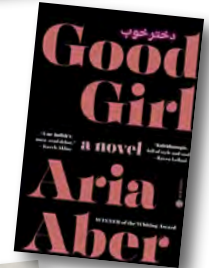
Everyone Is Lying to You

by Jo Piazza, \$19, coming July 15, 2025

The #tradwife murder mystery we’ve all been waiting for. From the bestselling author of *The Sicilian Inheritance* and the creator of the *Under the Influence* podcast comes an explosive thriller about two estranged friends, a grisly murder, a sudden disappearance, and the truly shocking revelation that everyone is lying to you about something...

Pre-order your signed copy of *Everyone Is Lying to You* today at Head House Books! Place an order in-store, visit our website at www.headhousebooks.com, or call us at 215-923-9525.

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

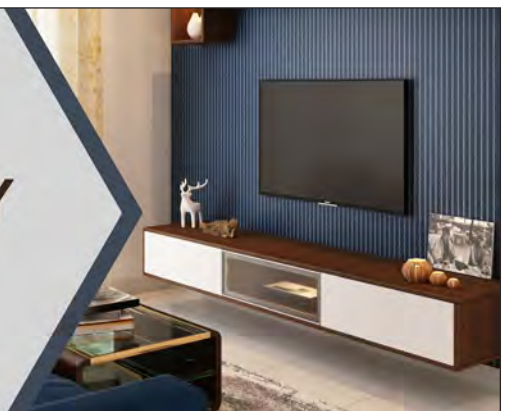


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CLEAN AND BEAUTIFUL COMMITTEE

BY MARTHA LEVINE, CHAIR

Who Keeps Society Hill Clean, Safe & Beautiful?

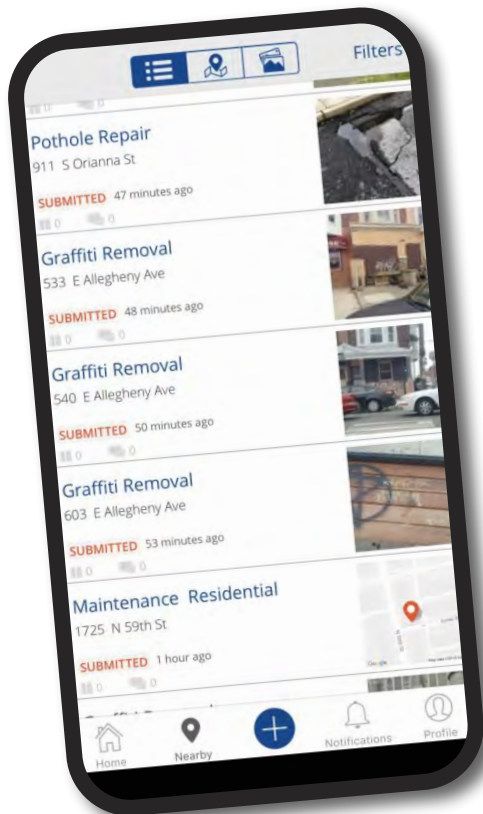
You Do, and Here's How to Help!

Call it neighborliness or stewardship, we need residents to help keep Society Hill clean, safe, and beautiful. We cannot do it without you. Here are ways you can help.

SHCA has organized several of our programs under the umbrella of the **Clean and Beautiful Committee**. This includes the following programs: graffiti removal, Fix the Brix, Tree Tenders, Franklin Lights, and Center City District (CCD) sidewalk cleaning. All of these efforts need your help in troubleshooting problems that need to be addressed. Your membership dollars help pay for these services. But you can help too.

Graffiti Removal

Did you know that SHCA has a contract for weekly graffiti removal with Urbanscape Specialists to provide a representative on site who will remove graffiti ASAP? When you see graffiti on a public object like a mailbox, controller box, or light pole, email the exact address to our graffiti removal company representative, ashley.hutchinson@urbanscapespecialists.com so that she can remove it within days. For graffiti removal on private property, call 311 or go online to **Philly311**.



'Fix the Brix'

Although the "Fix the Brix" program has subsidized over 300 private sidewalk repairs with a generous contribution, we still have trip-worthy sidewalks here. No one needs an injury due to a trip and fall. If you see a sidewalk that looks unsafe and/or uneven, please contact us with the address at info@societyhillcivic.org. We will follow up with and notify the owner to offer them our generous subsidy. Current SHCA members get 40% of the invoice up to a \$500 subsidy; non-members get up to a \$400 subsidy. It pays to be a member. To participate, go to our website, societyhillcivic.org/what-we-do/fix-the-bricks-trees. Fill out and send the application form.

Tree Tenders

Trees that have been struck by a careless truck driver, and suffered limb damage or were knocked down, need to be reported to the city. Use the same 311 service by phone or online. We need to take care of our trees because they make our community a calmer, healthier, more beautiful place to be. SHCA offers a subsidy to plant a new tree, or prune or remove an existing tree. Contact us at societyhillcivic.org/what-we-do/fix-the-bricks-trees/.

Franklin Lights

I have said it a hundred times, and I'll say it again: Good lighting keeps a neighborhood safer. If a light goes out on our streets, we need it to be back on right away. We depend on our community to alert the city when a Franklin light goes out, is damaged, or is knocked down. It's easy.

Call 311 or go online to www.phila.gov/departments/philly311/ and fill out a short complaint form. Provide the exact location, and you will get a reference number to follow up on its progress.

CCD Sidewalk Cleaning Program

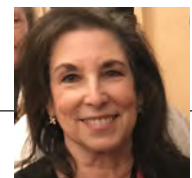
SHCA has a contract with CCD to send a crew to Society Hill every Friday after trash collection to sweep our sidewalk debris. We pay for an additional day, every Monday, from April to November, to deal with the increased litter that comes with increased foot traffic during the warmer months. If you see one of the crew, **stop and say thank you for keeping us clean.**

Martha Levine is a longtime active SHCA board member and committee chair.

Ask not what your neighborhood association can do for you; Ask what you can do for your neighborhood.



Keep our Franklin lamps burning bright. Report any outage or damage to 311.



SAFETY TIPS

BY CLAUDIA CARABELLI

Eluding a Silent Killer



If you don't already have CO monitors or detectors, go online or to your local hardware or big box store and purchase them NOW. Don't put it off!

In the United States alone, more than 400 people die from carbon monoxide poisoning every year.

Early on February 28, I was awakened by the sound of helicopters hovering overhead. A closer look outside showed multiple police, emergency, and utility vehicles on the 500 block of Delancey Street. An underground fire from a “PECO burnout” had caused a power surge followed by a strong odor. Residents heard their carbon monoxide (CO) detectors go off and the fire department was notified. They responded quickly and evacuated several households where high levels of CO were detected. The levels dissipated within a few hours, people were allowed back in their homes, and no one was injured. PECO made the necessary repairs, and a crisis was averted. We were very fortunate that day in February, but, unfortunately, not everyone is so lucky when CO is released.

In the United States alone over 400 people die from carbon monoxide poisoning every year. Just recently, three young American women visiting Belize perished when the heater in their hotel room emitted the deadly gas. How does this happen?

CO is colorless and odorless. When inhaled, it binds to the hemoglobin in red blood cells, interfering with the body's ability to carry oxygen throughout your body. This leads to oxygen deprivation and subsequent death. If awake, there are symptoms to be aware of: headache, dizziness, nausea, confusion, seizures, weakness, and coma. Of course, these symptoms are often attributed to other causes, and people don't typically think of CO poisoning first. If someone is drunk or asleep, they can die before consciously experiencing any symptoms at all.

My own family had a close call years ago in the suburbs. When my older son complained of a headache and nausea, I kept him home from school. Later that day, our CO monitor went off, and I called the local fire department. They found high levels of carbon monoxide emanating from our furnace. We had to evacuate for several hours while they vented the house with large fans. It turned out a less-than-ethical furnace repairman had bypassed the safety shut-off valve rather than make the more time-consuming repair that was required. I don't think I'm being overly dramatic when I say that if we'd been asleep for the night without a CO monitor, he could have killed us all.

Luckily, there are steps you can take to protect yourself. **First and foremost, install carbon monoxide detectors.** Place them on every floor of the home, including the basement and near sleeping areas. An online search will yield a wide variety of devices. The least expensive are battery powered. Hardwired versions cost a bit more, as do smoke alarm/CO detector combinations. Some have only an audible alarm while others also have digital readouts of the actual CO level. At costs ranging from \$18 to \$60, they are well worth the money. Inspect them every six months; spring and fall time changes are easy to remember. Batteries should be replaced, and all types should be checked to see that they are in good working order. If your young adult child is living in their first apartment, make sure they also have detectors. Cheap rentals aren't always safe ones.

Be sure to maintain and regularly inspect gas burning appliances. Your home heating system should be inspected annually by a professional. Any smell of gas should be called in promptly to the gas company (PGW). They will respond immediately to investigate any concerns. Don't take chances with older appliances that are not functioning properly.

Never run a car or generator indoors.

CO emissions from a running automobile in a closed garage can be deadly.

If you suspect **someone is suffering from carbon monoxide poisoning, you need to act quickly.** Move them outside to fresh air. If you're unable to move them, open all windows and doors.

Call 911. Try to give the 911 operators as much information as you can about the source of the CO, the person's symptoms, and when they started. Do not try to treat at home. This constitutes a medical emergency and requires immediate professional help.

If you already have CO monitors or detectors, well done. If not, please don't just read this and plan to install CO detectors “later.” Go online or to your local hardware or big box store **now** to purchase them. It may be the best investment you'll ever make.

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

WELCOME GIFT BAGS

 BY MARTHA LEVINE, COORDINATOR

The One and Only Society Hill Welcome Gift

For more than 20 years, SHCA has presented over 1,000 welcome gifts to new first-time house and condo owners. Today's Welcome Gift Bags contain a bottle of wine, a bag of La Colombe coffee, and a box of artisan chocolates. In addition you will receive many gift cards to area restaurants, entertainment, retail, services, and museums, as well important information about the neighborhood and SHCA.

We owe many thanks to our dedicated sponsors who donate the gifts inside the bags, Some have been with us for years. Without them, we would not have such a program. We encourage you to give them your business. See the list below.

The Welcome Gift Bags are presented in the recipient's home during a 45-minute visit. Let us know if you are interested in receiving a gift bag by contacting me at marthalev6@gmail.com.

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



Barbara & Steven



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
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
Lantern Theatre, 10th & Ludlow Streets
Phila. Chamber Ensemble (at Old Pine Church), 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
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 Tretery (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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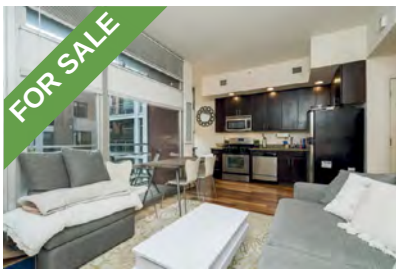


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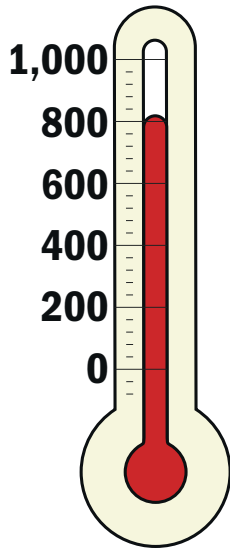
IN COMMUNITY

BY SAMANTHA BROWN

Your Membership Counts

Thank you to everyone who renewed their membership during March. The winner of the March drawing for a \$50 gift certificate to Sam Shaw's Treatory is Joanne Z. Cohen. Congratulations to Joanne and thanks to all the other March contributors for their continued support. Whether you mailed in a check or registered online, your membership counts. As of mid-April, we have over 800 active members in the database, but we need 200 more households to sign up for membership to reach our goal.

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

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.

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

Name _____

Address _____ Apt. # _____

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Email (print clearly) _____

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- \$ 500 Washington Benefactor
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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.

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\$ _____ Cleaning and Graffiti Removal

\$ _____ "Fix the Brix" and Tree Tending

\$ _____ Head House & Shambles Fund

\$ _____ McCall School

\$ _____ Starr Garden Playground Renovation

Total Donations \$ _____

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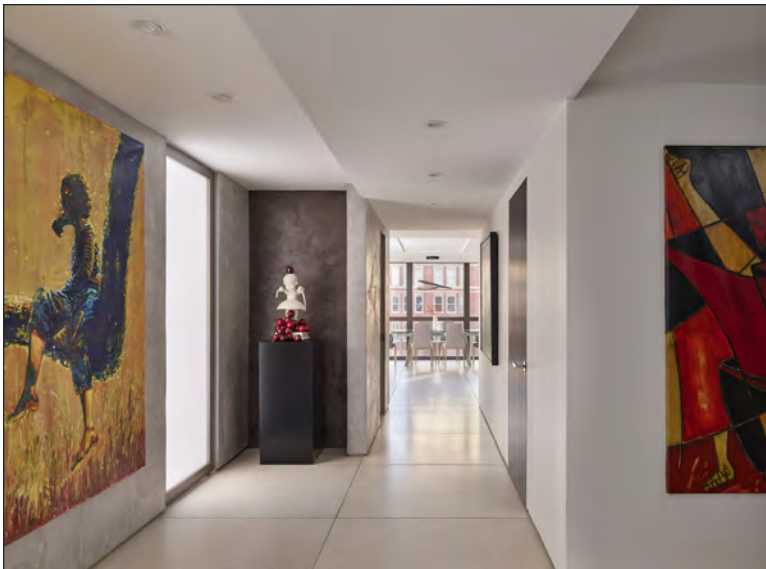
Society Hill Note Cards for Sale!

Can't get enough of our beautiful Society Hill? We offer a collection of cards featuring photos of some of our favorite spots in the neighborhood: the Head House, Delancey Street houses, Washington Square, Pennsylvania Hospital, Drinker's Court, Independence Hall, and the Physick House. The cards are blank inside, so they can be used for a variety of occasions, like birthdays, holidays, Mother's Day, or announcements.

Priced at \$24 per box, each box contains 12 different full-color photos of Society Hill. More than 92 boxes of cards have been sold to date. All sale proceeds benefit SHCA. To view the collection and purchase cards, go to our website, www.societyhillcivic.org, and click on "What's Happening."



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



Independence Place Condo images © Jeffrey Totaro

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The Liberty Bell

Independence National Park

In our most recent article, we kept a secret from you, dear readers. But as George Washington said (or maybe not), “I cannot tell a lie.” So here it is... On the same day we went to Money in Motion, we also went to the Liberty Bell. It was open, there was no wait, and we literally were walking right past it. Feels good to get this off our chests! This was our umpteenth time visiting this long-standing Philadelphian, and we enjoy every visit. While there, we reviewed its history, took an awesome photo (see above), and basked in the knowledge that we live just down the street from the iconic symbol of American independence and freedom.

Insomnia Cookie Lab

833 Wharton Street

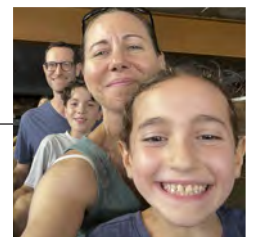
Speaking of secrets, we learned from a friend that Insomnia Cookies has a secret cookie lab. Of course we needed to check it out. When we arrived, we learned that in order to enter the lab, you must go through a bookcase with a password that you can get from Instagram. Fortunately for us, the people before us shared the password, and we were in! Once inside, you can choose a cookie, ice cream, or a milkshake, and you can design your own cookie and ice cream with toppings, a drizzle, etc. Owen’s ice cream sundae consisted of cookie dough ice cream, cookie dough pieces, cheesecake pieces, and white chocolate chips. This crazy concoction did not include gummy bears only because the staff forgot to put them on, perhaps for the better. Jaime made her own cookie with cookie dough, icing, and drizzle. The cookie was the perfect size for Jaime, while Owen took down his sundae like Drago took down Apollo in *Rocky IV*. Too soon?



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Is it a place to shop? Is it a restaurant? Can you leave the children in the play area and feel like you are on an afternoon date? If your answer is “yes” to all of these questions, you know you are at IKEA. If we come for a vanilla frozen yogurt, we will likely leave with a pair of CHIAFRÖN planters and some RÖDFLIK floor lamps. If we come for a KIVIK couch, we will likely leave with the couch, a LILLNAGGEN shower squeegee, and a belly full of Swedish meatballs and lingonberry jam. With \$1 hotdogs and ice cream, it is a very inexpensive outing, as long as you don’t decide to redo your kitchen when you are there. Though close enough to walk, jog or bike, we recommend driving, or else you will not be able to get your POÄNG chair home!



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

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- 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



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The Willings



The Ayer



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Independence Place



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