



SOCIETY HILL

# Reporter

March/April 2026

The Newsletter  
of the Society Hill  
Civic Association

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

## Want to Make a Difference in Your Community?

BY MARY TRACY



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

The election for the 2026-2027 Society Hill Civic Association (SHCA) board will take place this May. The ballot will include president, two vice presidents, secretary, treasurer and eight directors-at-large, all for one-year terms.

Also, new quadrant director candidates will be proposed for each of the four neighborhood quadrants for three-year terms, and there is an additional opening in the Northeast Quadrant for one year, filling a vacancy. (See below for quadrant information.)

The SHCA Nominating and Elections Committee will propose individuals for these positions. If you would like to be considered, please email [VicePresident@SocietyHillCivic.org](mailto:VicePresident@SocietyHillCivic.org) with your name, address, and a brief biography. While not required, you may submit a petition for a seat by March 13, signed by at least 10 SHCA members. The signers of a petition for Quadrant Director must be SHCA members residing in that quadrant.

Those being recommended for a position must live within the boundaries of Society Hill, be at least 21 years of age, and be an SHCA member. Quadrant directors must be member residents of the applicable quadrant. Submissions and petitions must be received at [VicePresident@SocietyHillCivic.org](mailto:VicePresident@SocietyHillCivic.org) by March 13 in order to be considered.

**Quadrants.** The neighborhood quadrants are: Northeast, Southeast, Northwest, and Southwest. The midline of Fourth Street serves as the dividing line between the east and west quadrants. The midline of Spruce Street is the dividing line between the north and south quadrants.

Visit [www.societyhillcivic.org](http://www.societyhillcivic.org) for more information about SHCA. All candidates will be listed in the May/June issue of the *Reporter*.



**Mary Tracy** is the retired president of Scenic America and founding member of SCRUB. She has lived in Society Hill for 15 years and chairs the Nominations Committee.

Wednesday,  
March  
**18**

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Society Hill Civic Association Meetings  
Wednesday, March 18, 2026

**Old Pine Community Center  
410 Lombard Street**

6:00 p.m. **Board Meeting**

6:30 - 7:30 p.m. **Please join us to Celebrate the Beginning of Spring with a Community Gathering!**



All Society Hill residents are invited to a meet and greet with your Society Hill Civic Association board members and neighbors.

We'll bring light refreshments; you'll bring your ideas and suggestions! We are excited to see everyone after this long winter!

### Group Effort to Clear the Snow

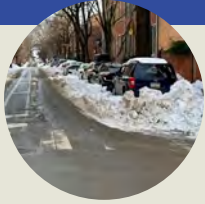


**Gaskill and Philip Street neighbors took matters into their own hands, working together to clear the streets. Thanks to everyone who participated.**

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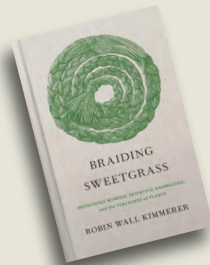


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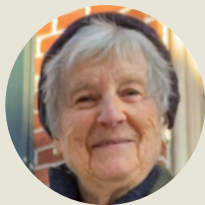


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SOCIETY HILL

# Reporter

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

**Editor in Chief**

Judy Lamirand

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Paul Boni  
Jonathan Burton  
Claudia Carabelli  
Al Cavalari  
Izzy Halloran  
Robert Kramer  
Martha Levine  
Priscilla Lo  
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**Submission Deadline**

May/June Issue: April 1

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Tel. 215-629-1288

**Website**

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**

Bob Kramer

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Mary Purcell

**2nd Vice-President**

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Brooke Marshall

**Treasurer**

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Judie Koss  
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Kathleen McAfee  
Ned Scharff  
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**Continuing Director**

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**Quadrant Directors**

Northeast: Lorna Katz Lawson,

Paul Boni, Judy Neiswander

Northwest: Bernard Gelman,

Ramona Johnson, Joe McLaughlin

Southeast: Tanya Brassie,

Nelie Shah, Debbie Zak-Chen

Southwest: Martha Levine,

Mike Fox, Larry Spector

**Condominium Representatives**

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Independence Place: Jim Lipschutz

Penn's Landing Condos: Priscilla Lo

Society Hill Towers: Jeffrey Parker

St. James Court: Ellen Geller\*

The St. James: Helen Grady\*

Bingham Court: Bernice Koplin\*

\*non-voting courtesy representatives

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**FROM THE TREASURER**


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BY NICK DEGREGORIO

## Accurate Financial Reporting

**A**s treasurer of SHCA, my major emphasis is improving our financial reporting package. The accounting firm J. Cohen CPA provides us with bookkeeping services and issues quarterly financial reports based on our fiscal year, from June 1 to May 31. The reports categorize our income and expenses. Accurate reports build a history that shows where our income is derived from and how we spend our funds. An accurate financial history allows us to predict and analyze trends and investigate new revenue streams and new programs.

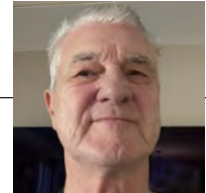
Our goal is to serve our neighborhood and work to expand and improve the services we offer. SHCA is always looking for new programs to benefit our community members, including younger and older residents. Offering new services is dependent on finding volunteers who wish to create the program, and having funds available. Strong financial reporting enables us to spend our funds wisely and direct our funds where they are needed.

Now to the opinion section of my article. We are blessed to live in this great city, and we are doubly blessed to live in Society Hill. Philadelphia has many laws and regulations, and it seems to add more daily. Laws are not effective if they are not enforced. Electric bikes, scooters, and other vehicles are prohibited from riding on sidewalks, but I have never seen these infractions ticketed. Vehicles are required to yield to pedestrians in crosswalks and required to stop at stop signs and red lights but often do not. Vehicles exceed posted speed limits and are not stopped and ticketed.

Enforcement of existing laws would greatly increase safety for all. I believe city council, the mayor, and the police commissioner should develop a plan to enforce existing traffic laws. Safety and quality of life would be significantly enhanced for all if we concentrated on enforcement.

**Nick DiGregorio** has lived in Society Hill for 10 years. He and his wife, Venice, live in Penn's Landing Square, where he is the condo board president. Nick has been on SHCA's board for about five years in different roles.

*Compliance with existing laws would greatly increase safety for all.*




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**2026 GARDENS OF SOCIETY HILL TOUR**


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## We Need Gardens!

**A**fter the great success of our 2025 Gardens of Society Hill Tour, planning is underway for the June 2026 tour. The tour is open for two days, Saturday, June 13, and Sunday, June 14, from 1 to 4 p.m. We will keep you updated about ticket purchase in our Reporter, Spotlight, and website.

### Here's what we're looking for:

- All kinds of interesting gardens, from small to large and with a variety of styles and designs. We love them all. There must be access from the street.
- Many volunteers to host the gardens. As a thank you for volunteering, we offer a free ticket to take the tour on the alternate day. Volunteers rave about how much fun it is.

This tour is SHCA's only annual fundraiser, with all proceeds benefiting SHCA. You know it takes a village to make this event a success, and that's why we need your help.

To make garden recommendations and/or volunteer, contact tour coordinators:  
Linda Skale, [lcskale@gmail.com](mailto:lcskale@gmail.com)  
Martha Levine, [marthalev6@gmail.com](mailto:marthalev6@gmail.com)



**Save the Garden Tour Dates!**  
**Saturday, June 13**  
**Sunday, June 14**  
**1-4 p.m.**

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## STREET SAFETY &amp; ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE

## What's Happening in Our Streets: A Society Hill Streets State of Mind

Welcome back to “The Society Hill Streets State of Mind” streets committee column. We hope everyone has been staying warm indoors and has been staying safe while outdoors during what has been an extremely cold winter season.

We applaud those that voice their opinions, but also encourage our neighbors and friends to be mindful of what are actual facts and what may simply be someone’s opinion. We don’t need to elucidate all of the inaccuracies in articles or opinions as we believe that the residents of our community are smart and savvy enough to do the research, and use their eyes to see the realities of our streets.

We strive to present research and facts in our column for each newsletter. Clearly, the weather has been terribly cold. As many have seen and experienced, and as you can see in the pictures below, the city had great difficulty plowing our streets. Many of the ADA ramps at the corners and crosswalks accumulated a great deal of snow and ice. This made it incredibly difficult, if not treacherous, for anyone to cross, much less those with any kind of disability. In the future, please contact 311 or online Philly311 to get these areas cleared, so everyone can be safe when traversing our streets.

During this time of year, with the large amount of snow and ice, we do wonder and must point out that if our streets were increasingly narrowed by any kind of physical barrier, how in the world would our streets get plowed when they

can’t even seem to do a good job now? Due to the lack of snow removal and the accumulation of snow throughout Society Hill (and citywide) along each side of our streets, many people who park on the street have been unable to get out of their parking spots, and pedestrians have been unable to walk from their homes to get in a car or even cross their street in several instances. Should an emergency vehicle be required or a utility company necessary for an electrical or gas emergency, access would be extraordinarily difficult at best. With that in mind, imagine if there was a barrier along these narrow streets that would further impede snow removal, utility trucks, and emergency vehicles.

If our streets were wide and had several lanes, like those in Toronto or Manhattan, which the Office of Transportation and Infrastructure Systems (OTIS) has frequently cited as comparisons, adding a barrier would be a moot point. But in our wonderful, historic city adding a barrier to a narrow street is a real issue, an issue that cannot and should not be manipulated by emotion, an issue that should not be manipulated by guilt, and must not be manipulated by political pressure. These are the things we on the Streets Committee and many in our neighborhood think about on a regular basis, and they give us immense concern.

### Study of Effective Measures to Improve Street Safety

SHCA has been on the forefront of street safety for many years. Many SHCA members and the general public

may not be aware that from October 2017 through February 2018, SHCA engaged the firm Howard Stein Hudson to conduct a general public streets study.

They evaluated crash data and best practices for mixed streets usage and focused on a complete streets approach. Their analysis noted that the city had indicated in its Vision Zero Action Plan that neither Spruce nor Pine Streets were part of the High Injury Network. They found that the most effective measures to improve safety and comfort were to “focus mainly on design features at intersections and, to a lesser extent, traffic calming along the corridors.” Among the suggestions were pedestrian and bicycle signals at all intersections, curb extensions, raised cross walks, bicycle boxes and/or corner refuge islands where appropriate, and buffered bicycle lanes through painting, sweeping, and signage. Traffic calming suggestions included curb extensions, paint, planters, and signage to inform drivers that “signal timing is optimized for 20 mph.” Strangely, OTIS and the city did not implement any of the recommendations except painted bike lanes. If you are interested in accessing the study, please do so at [www.societyhillcivic.org/blog/society-hill-complete-streets-study/](http://www.societyhillcivic.org/blog/society-hill-complete-streets-study/).

Given the current circumstances, we wonder if an updated study should be commissioned by SHCA or if there is some way common sense can prevail for our community’s shared needs.

Stay safe, stay warm and stick together as a community!



3rd and Pine looking east.



3rd and Spruce looking east.



3rd and Pine looking west.

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# LUNAR ECLIPSE

BY DONALD MARGULIES

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## WHO'S WHO IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

BY CLAUDIA CARABELLI

## Anne Ewers – A Memoir of Mentors

**M**entor: an experienced and trusted advisor. Americans have always valued rugged individualism. That self-reliant, do-it-yourself mentality is presented as a goal to strive for. In reality, very few of us have arrived at where we are without the help of others. Be it some good advice, a sharing of experience, or even a job offer, most of us have had a few pushes up the ladder of life from someone. It was no different for our

neighbor, Anne Ewers, who stepped down a few years ago after 14 years at the helm of the Kimmel Center. A good friend encouraged her to write a book, a memoir. While bouncing ideas off a trusted advisor, they realized the one continuous theme was the role of the many mentors who had guided her along the way. So was born her recently published book, *The Mentor's Gift*.

To say Anne has had an interesting career would be an understatement. From a young girl growing up in Ottawa, Illinois, to CEO of the Kimmel Center, Anne's career took some interesting turns while shattering a few glass ceilings along the way. While attending Fontbonne College, a small Catholic school in St. Louis, Missouri, Anne earned a Bachelor of Music degree in vocal performance and a Bachelor of Arts degree in theater. It soon became apparent that her heart lay in directing. During her graduate studies at The University of Texas (Austin) she approached the Opera Department head, Dr. Walter Ducloux, about changing her master's degree candidacy from vocal performance to opera stage direction. Steeped in tradition as he was, his response to Anne was "Absolutely not! Women can sing and have babies. Period." As fate would have it, several weeks after that encounter, the opera department's associate professor suffered an injury, couldn't direct, and Anne got her chance. With much preparation and hard work, she aced it and soon had her candidacy switched to Master of Music in opera production. Thus she acquired her first mentor, none other than Dr. Ducloux. The rest is history.

Anne's career took her from Boston Lyric Opera to assistant stage director for San Francisco Opera. She served as general director for Utah Opera, then merged the company with the Utah



Anne Ewers

Symphony and assumed the role of president and CEO for Utah Symphony and Opera. As such, she founded the renowned Deer Valley Music Festival. In 2007 she took on the same role for the Kimmel Center of Philadelphia. Most notable is that she entered the Kimmel burdened with a \$30 million construction debt, retired the debt in nine short months, and ran the program debt-free for 14 years.

She endeavored to make the arts accessible to everyone with new and innovative programs in addition to the traditional orchestra and opera. Having lived in all the aforementioned cities, she confided in me that Philadelphia is by far her favorite and where she plans to stay. She'll bequeath her extensive collection of scores and books to Curtis Institute of Music and has selected her burial plot in the churchyard at Old Pine. She'll be an eternal neighbor to Eugene Ormandy, no doubt.

Anne herself is warm and welcoming, with an easy laugh, and *The Mentor's Gift* is no dry read. Along with factual information about her 44-year career, including 30 years as an opera stage director, she dishes a good bit of artistic "dirt." Her 31 mentors come from a wide variety of professions: psychology, politics, the corporate world, and arts administration, just to name a few. Many are quite colorful characters. Her first three mentors hailed from other countries: Switzerland, Austria, and Iran. Her career took her to directing gigs across the U.S. and Canada as well as Israel and Iran. Throughout all this, she mastered the art of not only directing but of juggling artists, audiences, politicians, and donors. The book provides helpful guidance in choosing, using, and maintaining a mentor. Now, in her retirement, Anne herself has taken on her own mentees from all walks of life, full circle.

Anne's book is available on Amazon: *The Mentor's Gift* by Anne C. Ewers. It's an engaging and fascinating read from another of our many talented neighbors.

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



*Anne Ewers' book provides helpful guidance in choosing, using, and maintaining a mentor.*



SHCA LIST OF CONTRACTORS

BY MARTHA LEVINE

# Time for a Spring Checkup



**It's time to get your heating system checked with a spring tune up.**

March is a great time to start lining up your contractors for important work, or even smaller jobs, at your home. The one and only Society Hill List of Contractors can be a big help in getting started. All of our contractors have been highly recommended by our neighbors, making it a great reference.

### Spring Checkup

At springtime, after months of using your heating system, it is recommended to get your heating system checked with a "spring tune up" or maintenance check. If you have an HVAC system, you need to prepare your system for air conditioning. Our list has many recommended professionals to do this work, including changing air filters, cleaning condenser coils, checking refrigerant levels and electrical connections, safety checks for gas leaks, and more.

Do you need a general contractor? We have some of the best. We also have highly recommended plumbers, electricians, painters, gardeners,

HVAC contractors, masons, and so much more. So get your list, but remember, you must be a current 2026 SHCA member.

To join or renew, go to [societyhillcivic.org](http://societyhillcivic.org) and click on Membership Renew & Join. You will be emailed a link to get the list. Or email your request to [info@societyhillcivic.org](mailto:info@societyhillcivic.org).

When you join SHCA, you'll get a thank you email with a link to download the list. It's filled with SHCA updates and things to do in the area.

### Referrals

If you have a contractor with whom you are pleased, let us know, and we can add them to our list if they are interested.



**Martha Levine**, in addition to chairing the Welcome Gift Bags program, also chairs the Block Coordinators, the Fix the Brix Program and curates the List of Contractors.



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OUR SOCIETY HILL BLOG

BY GEORGINE ATACAN

# Our Historic Places of Worship

Pennsylvania is where William Penn’s vision in 1681 led to the creation of “The Holy Experiment,” a place where all individuals could worship freely without persecution. This birthplace of religious freedom served as a model for the nation’s commitment to religious tolerance as outlined in the First Amendment. Here in Philadelphia, no neighborhood is home to more Historic Places of Worship than Society Hill. Tucked throughout the community are houses of worship that have shaped the city’s spiritual, cultural, and civic life for centuries. Each one tells a story of resilience, faith, and the rich tapestry of people who have called this neighborhood home.

Here are five inspiring places to visit, where events are held year round:

**St. Peter’s Church**

Consecrated in 1761, St. Peter’s is an elegant Georgian landmark known for its distinctive box pews and peaceful churchyard. Its bells once rang as signals during the Revolutionary War, serving both spiritual and civic purposes. Today, the church continues its centuries-long tradition of community service and welcoming neighbors. [www.stpetersphila.org](http://www.stpetersphila.org).

**St. Mary’s Church**

Founded in 1763, St. Mary’s is one of Philadelphia’s oldest Catholic churches. It played a prominent role in the city’s colonial life. Its burial ground holds notable figures from the Revolutionary era, including signers of the Declaration of Independence. Walking by today, you can still feel the gentle weight of history in its quiet, leafy churchyard. [www.oldstmary.com](http://www.oldstmary.com).

**Mother Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church**

Since 1794, Mother Bethel has been a pillar of African American history. It was founded by Bishop Richard Allen and stands on the oldest parcel of continuously Black-owned land in the United States. The church became a powerful center for abolitionist organizing, education, and civil rights. Today, its presence in Society Hill is a source of deep pride and a testament to the enduring strength of the AME tradition. [www.motherbethel.org](http://www.motherbethel.org)

**Old St. Joseph’s Church**

Established in 1733, Old St. Joe’s is the oldest functioning Catholic church in Philadelphia. It became a symbol of religious freedom, operating at a time when Catholic worship was restricted in much of the British colonies. Its courtyard remains a serene haven tucked just steps from bustling city streets. A robust youth educational program is offered. [www.oldstjoseph.org](http://www.oldstjoseph.org).

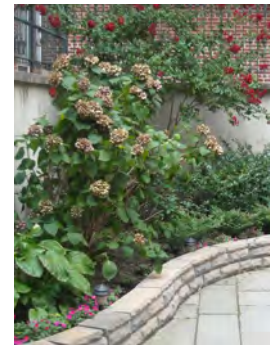
**Society Hill Synagogue**

Originally built in 1829 as a Baptist church, this building became Society Hill Synagogue in the 20th century and now thrives as a warm, inclusive Jewish community. Its architecture blends Greek Revival beauty with modern updates that reflect a living and evolving congregation. The synagogue stands as a beacon of renewal, mirroring Society Hill’s own story of preservation and rebirth. [www.societyhillsynagogue.org](http://www.societyhillsynagogue.org).

**Georgine Atacan** has lived and worked in Society Hill since 2002. She is a PA & NJ licensed Psychotherapist and Realtor.



**Founder Richard Allen’s statue stands in front of Mother Bethel AME Church.**



**Old St. Joseph’s Church courtyard remains a serene haven tucked just steps from bustling city streets.**





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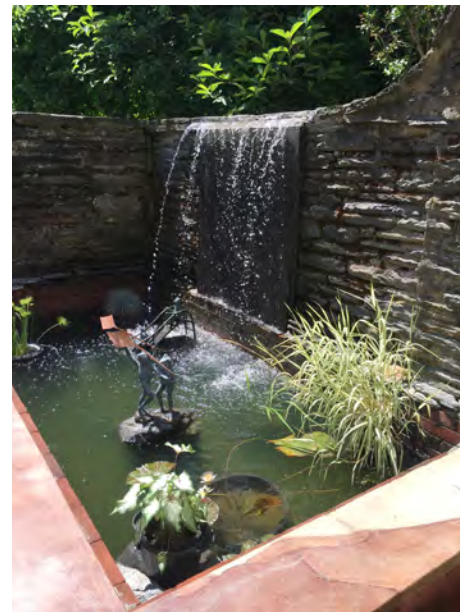


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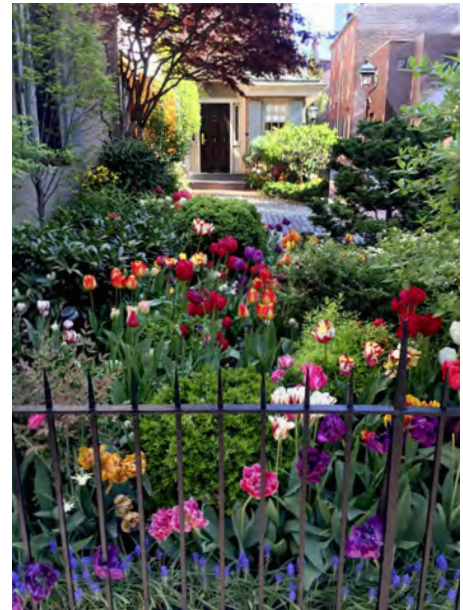
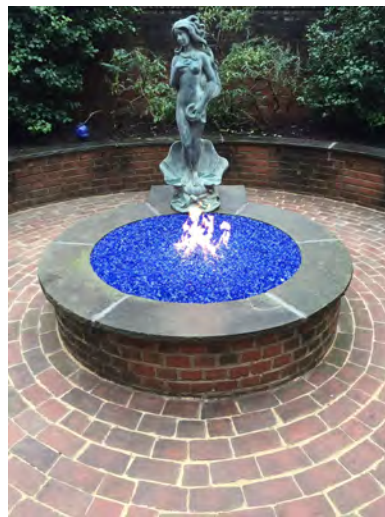
Our horticulturalist can turn your courtyard into living artwork.



Add a peaceful water feature.



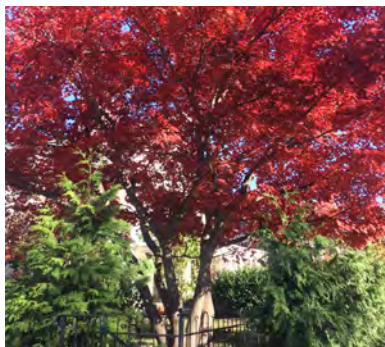
Hardscape projects include Pennsylvania bluestone walkways, decks, and patios, brick sidewalks, fire pits, and water fountains.



Plant bulbs now for annual colors throughout the year.



Fix your Bricks. Society Hill sidewalks should provide smooth, safe walking surfaces. The upheaval caused by tree roots can be corrected without removing or killing trees. Call McFarland to inquire about fixing your bricks.



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## URBAN EDEN

BY MARY STURDIVANT

## Learning From Our Oldest Teachers

Hibernating from the Arctic blasts, I have been swaddled in the comfort of a good read, Robin Wall Kimmerer's *Braiding Sweetgrass*. Her stories and lessons have caused a seismic shift in my perception of the world. As a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, Kimmerer embraces the notion that plants and animals are our oldest teachers. Here is a woman raised close to the land and schooled in indigenous ways, who pursued an academic career in hard science: ecology. The collision of two worldviews amounts to a tectonic shift in understanding how to be human, i.e. understanding the generosity of the earth and learning to give our own gifts in return. How does this relate to city dwellers like us here in Society Hill, not a rural community in upstate New York?

Dr. Kammerer lists 13 guidelines in the chapter "The Honorable Harvest." Here are three:

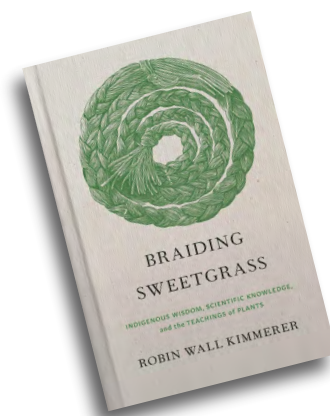
- 1 Ask permission before taking.  
Abide by the answer.
- 2 Never take the first.  
Never take the last.
- 3 Take only what you need.

Ruth Ann, my gardening buddy, and I were appalled last summer to see that the yellow flowers of our *Rudbeckia* (black-eyed Susans) in flower bed #5 in Washington Square had been decimated. The flower thief was human, probably opportunistic, as shears had not been used. When the squirrels behead tulips, their teeth leave clean cuts. The *Rudbeckia* stems were torn off raggedly. I now have empathy for the feelings of the neighbor in the 900 block of Spruce Street, who planted this sign in the outdoor container: "Please Leave the Flowers for All to Enjoy." Plants in public places and outside private residences are for all of us to appreciate. If you covet the daffodils blooming this spring, knock on the door or leave a note asking to harvest them when they are almost spent. You may get a "yes," because removing the blooms before

they wither will still leave the leaves from which the nutrients flow back to the bulbs for the next blooming season.

We don't go out to the fields to harvest our food, but we do go to the grocery store. Before a forecasted snowstorm, I headed to Honey Bee's in Hopkinson House for two half-gallons of milk. Two were left. So I bought one. Let someone else have the joy and relief of "I got the last one!" Let us both hope that Honey Bee can restock before we have used up what we needed. Lesson learned. As for the guy with the cart full of toilet paper, may he learn this lesson Kimmerer shares with us: The Heron taught Nanabozho, the first man, that taking more fish than he needed had dire consequences (the extra fish were stolen by foxes). In the case of taking more toilet paper than is needed, a burst water pipe ruining all that paper would indeed be a lesson learned.

I still have more than 100 pages left to read. But I have to pause. Kimmerer has introduced an old enemy, plantain (*Plantago major*).



For years I and hundreds of other volunteers have been weeding plantain from the lawn at Washington Square. Last year we were definitely losing the battle. Reportedly brought to the Americas by Puritan colonizers, plantain was known among Native American peoples by the common name "white man's footprint," because it thrived in the trampled and compacted dirt surrounding European settlements. Interestingly, the word *plantago* is derived from Latin for "a sort of sole of the foot" because the leaves grow out flat at ground level.

Kimmerer claims the plantain's spring leaves are edible, that the leaves can be used as first aid to heal wounds without infection as well as a poultice for cuts and even insect bites, and the seeds aid digestion. The ability of plantain to survive frequent trampling and colonize compacted soils makes the plant itself important for soil rehabilitation. Come this spring, some rethinking might have to be done. Grass does not grow under the trees at the southeast corner of Washington Square. Will plantain grow there?

Long-time neighbor **Mary Sturdivant** is a passionate gardener who helps with plot #5 in Washington Square with Ruth Ann Fenton. 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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**NEW MARKET & HEAD HOUSE CONSERVANCY**

BY JOHN PERUTO, JR.

# Restoration To Begin in March

The New Market & Head House Conservancy is proud to share an important update about its project to restore the historic Head House and Shambles on 2nd and Pine Streets — a beloved landmark that has served as a community gathering place for nearly 250 years. The first phase of the construction will begin in early March, made possible by a generous \$1.5 million grant from the City of Philadelphia, secured by Councilman Mark Squilla.

The City’s Department of Public Property contracted with John Milner Architects, Inc., a nationally respected historic preservation firm, to lead the design and planning process. Following a competitive bidding process, W.S. Cumby Construction, a family-owned business with deep expertise in restoring and renovating historic landmarks, was selected to carry out the work.



**Drawing by John Milner Architects, Inc.**

Construction will focus on the most critical preservation priorities, including repointing brickwork, windows and roof repairs, restoration of the cupola woodwork, interior office space renovations, installation of a ground floor bathroom

for special events, and restoration of the historic clock.

Beginning in early March, temporary fencing will be erected around the Head House to accommodate supplies and equipment storage during the project. The project is expected to be completed by mid-to-late summer. The Farmer’s Market will continue to operate without interruption throughout the renovation.

While this project will address urgent needs, the Conservancy will be seeking to raise an additional \$300,000 to \$400,000 to complete the full restoration. These funds will be used for further masonry repointing, repainting, a new clockface, updated informational signs, and façade lighting.

For project updates and to learn how you can help, visit [www.headhousesquare.org](http://www.headhousesquare.org).

**John Peruto, Jr.**, is president of the New Market & Head House Conservancy.



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## KEEPING POSTED

BY AL CAVALARI

## Creating a History Elephant

*I have experienced many instances of being obliged by better information, or fuller consideration, to change opinions even on important subjects, which I once thought right, but found to be otherwise."*

Thus it is with Benjamin Franklin's own words that I report on new research that has just been published about his invention of "The Pennsylvania Fire-Place," better known to us as the Franklin Stove.

Franklin's statement is from a speech he wrote to be delivered at the closing moments of the Constitutional Convention, as the delegates were about to sign the document. He pleaded for every man to sign it "in spite of its faults." All but three did. Franklin was so weak, fellow delegate James Wilson had to deliver the speech for him. The old sage was so old and ill, he had to be carried into the meetings in a sedan chair during those terribly hot summer days in 1787, when the United States was still just a twinkle in George Washington's eye. The transport duty fell to inmates from the Walnut Street Prison, who I'd guess might have been happy to walk around town for a bit. If you go to the museum at Franklin Court, you can see an 18th-century sedan chair and imagine Franklin traveling the streets of Philadelphia in it.



In the January/February 2021 issue of the *Reporter* archived on SHCA's website, you will find a column I wrote on Franklin's stove, in which I quote a writer who claimed it "never worked." Samuel T. Edgerton was the historian responsible for restoration of fireplaces and heating devices in Independence National Historical Park. His article "The Myth of the Franklin Stove," published in the June 1976 issue of *Early American Life* magazine, claims Franklin's invention was a failure that never caught on. He wrote, "The Franklin Stove is one of the most enduring myths in U.S. history." Like Franklin, I too have found some "better information."

There is research that has just been published which I learned of from attending a free author talk (it was both live and by Zoom) at the American Philosophical Society (APS), just steps from where you live. If you are not on the APS email list, you are missing a robust program of lectures, almost all of which are free. Harvard history professor Joyce E. Chaplin has published a book, *The Franklin Stove*, which busts Edgerton's myth. "Edgerton," she writes, "in declaring the stove

a failure compared the only surviving example of a Franklin stove to illustrations of the second model, when in fact the surviving device is a modification of that design, one that Franklin himself deemed inadequate, given that he subsequently produced three more." As she writes in an email, "several of Edgerton's assumptions were faulty."

The author informs us that Franklin's work was in response to a severe climate fluctuation at the time known as "the little ice age" which lasted from about 1300 to 1850. His first stove in



**Stove #1 in a version of the 1741 design.**

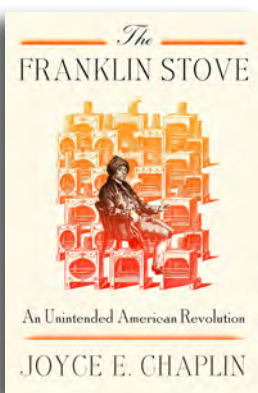
Photo by Edgerton in *Early American Life* magazine

1741 was at a time of diminishing firewood that once seemed to be in limitless supply. "Wood, our common Fewel, which within these 100 Years might be had at every Man's Door, must now be fetch'd near 100 Miles to some Towns, and makes a very considerable Article in the Expense of Families" he would write. A fuel

shortage at a time of increasingly terrible winters was a perfect storm. The simple fireplaces in use sent most of the heat up the chimney, yet only warmed the front side of those huddled before it. He invented a system that would not only heat the entire room but also save three-quarters to five-sixths of the wood they had once needed.

I was surprised to learn that Franklin did not design *a* stove. He designed *five* stoves over about 50 years. Two each were made in Philadelphia and London, while the last one was made in Paris. The two Philadelphia models were conceived in his house at 131 Market Street, where he did his experiments in developing them. They were forged in upper Chester County, the second one in Warwick Forge owned by Robert Grace, Franklin's landlord for both his printing office and his home. Grace loaned Franklin money to establish the printing business in 1728. He was also an original member of Franklin's "Junto," a combined study group, book club, and

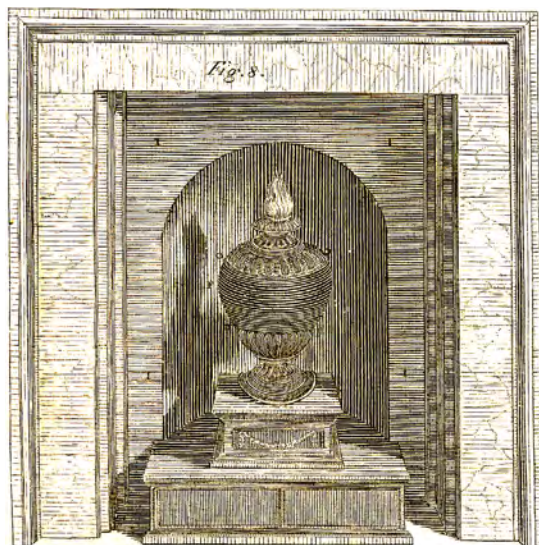
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Joyce Chaplin's book about the Franklin Stove may be purchased at Head House Books

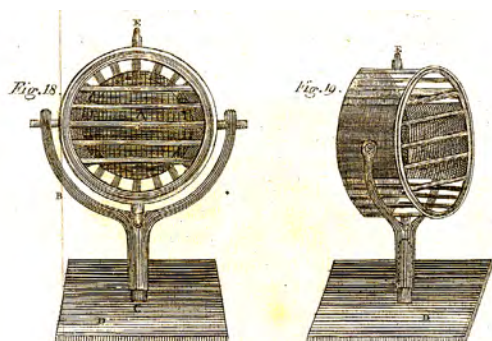
## KEEPING POSTED

continued from page 14



**Franklin's coal burning vase stove from London was "strictly a curiosity" which he did not "recommend."**

Images credit: American Philosophical Society



**The coal burning rotating stove from Paris**

self-improvement initiative that met Friday nights to take on any number of scholarly topics.

The workings of the five models are too detailed to go into here. For those who want the technical details, Chaplin's book has plenty. I had no idea how imaginative the different models were and include some images here. Stove number four, the coal burning Vase Stove, comes from his days living in London. "It demands too much attention in its operations....which is why I cannot recommend its use, although I use it for myself." He regarded it "strictly a curiosity, or a philosophical experience." Then there is the strange device created in Paris while he was serving as our ambassador during the Revolution. French authorities had declared a state of emergency in response to their own problems from the extreme cold. They were running out of firewood, and it had become impossibly expensive. Also a coal burning device, its circular cage held the fuel.

"When the embers were dying down the cage would be refilled and then flipped so that the flame would sink into the new coal to maximize fuel consumption."

Did Franklin's stoves work or not? In her APS lecture the author said Franklin probably did get more heat with less fuel. A great deal would depend on the quality of the chimney and flues, because some of his designs required unusual reconstruction of the masonry. She encourages someone to build replicas and test them to see how well they work. "The fact that Franklin kept reinventing his stoves hints that he was never really satisfied," she says. Still, his writings on heat and heating devices were reprinted in five different languages, and his devices spread to other European countries. I take him at his word when he writes that in his own house the common room "is made twice as warm as it used to be, with a quarter of the Wood I formerly consum'd there."

One doesn't get too far in reading Franklin without words like "helpful" or "useful" coming up. He made it a daily habit to ask himself, "What good can I do today?" Street lighting, street cleaning, fire fighting, caring for the sick, and serving in the militia, in every level of government, and in international diplomacy — his works were many. He signed The Declaration and The Constitution. Does it surprise us then that his other aim in the stove project was the "considerable Publick Advantage"? "By the Help of this saving Invention our Wood may grow as fast as we consume it, and our Posterity may warm themselves at a moderate Rate." He believed the Pennsylvania stoves saved future generations from having to "fetch their Fuel over the Atlantick." He was an early environmentalist interested in preventing deforestation, which he believed was good for climate control. Did you know he also led the movement to clean up Dock Creek, which had become a stinking mess of rotting waste from the five tanneries operating on its banks? The creek bed can still be seen behind Carpenters Hall and in the path our current Dock Street takes. Back then one could take a boat up Dock Creek from the Delaware all the way to Washington Square, where it joined a pond on the site of today's Hopkinson House.

I am reminded of the ancient Buddhist parable from India about the blind men who are asked

*Franklin's  
common room  
"is made twice  
as warm as it  
used to be, with  
a quarter of the  
Wood formerly  
consum'd  
there."*

continued on page 16

**KEEPING POSTED**

*continued from page 15*



**A Federal judge has ordered the panels describing slavery, which were removed from the President's House, be replaced while the court case goes forward. Without them, we are like the blind men trying to understand an elephant.**

to examine and describe an elephant. It exists in countless versions so here is one of my own making: One man wraps his arms around the elephant's thick leg and reports the elephant is a massive tree with thick bark. The next man feels the elephant's ears and insists the elephant is a bird with giant wings. The next grasps the elephant's trunk and swears the elephant is a giant thick snake. The next finds the elephant's tail and believes the elephant is not a creature at all. It is just a rope. The last man leans on the broad side



**The blind men could not truthfully describe an elephant until they had all cooperated and shared their stories.**

**So must we create history elephants if we are to truthfully understand our shared humanity.**

of the elephant and thinks it is a great stone mountain. Which of them has the correct idea of an elephant? None of them! But when they decide to cooperate and combine all their stories together, the true idea of an elephant's reality begins to emerge.

So it is with history. One does need as many of the puzzle pieces as possible. When in 2021 I had only Samuel Edgerton's observation of Franklin's stove, I had a limited idea of its reality. But when I combine the "fuller information" in Joyce Chaplin's book, I have "better information or fuller consideration." When learning history we need to build history elephants. This is why the panels torn off the President's House site at the entrance to The Liberty Bell need to be restored. Before the destruction they told stories of liberty being denied, but why do we forget that they also told stories of liberty being bravely defended?

They told the story of President Washington signing the Fugitive Slave Act but also the story of the United States Navy warship Ganges's capture of two illegal slave ships, rescuing 135 emaciated and diseased Africans, who were then brought to Philadelphia because of the city's strong anti-slavery sentiments. Philadelphians nursed those people back to health. Mass appeals for clothing and blankets to protect them against the winter weather were conducted throughout southeast Pennsylvania. Philadelphia government provided additional clothing, food, education, and housing. A court case ensued in which they were freed by a Federal judge who gave them all the family name Ganges. Descendants are said to still be in the area.

The missing panels also told about a young and likely very frightened woman named Ona Judge who took a very big risk by escaping slavery and fleeing to New Hampshire, whose state motto is "Live Free or Die." We are so proud of Nathan Hale's story, but we want to hide hers. Both stories are inspiring and, if we let them, get us closer to the greatest value we can derive by studying history, which is to ask as one great human family this question: What on earth have we been doing?



**AI Cavalari** is a certified member of the Association of Philadelphia Tour Guides. Write AI at [flagguysdn@aol.com](mailto:flagguysdn@aol.com). © 2026 AI Cavalari

THE GREATEST SOCIETY HILL CLEAN UP DAY YET

BY AL MEINSTER

# An 18th-Century Tradition Continues

While in the spring a young man's fancy may turn to love, we, here in Society Hill, turn our attention to the task of making tidy after the cold and snow of winter have gone. Yes, just as when our streets were filled with men in three-cornered hats, and women in shawls and petticoats, it's time for a spring cleaning.

The Great Society Hill Cleanup Day is scheduled for May 16. We are making a few tweaks to enhance convenience and increase participation. Made curious? Full details will appear in the next issue of the *Reporter*.

*The Great Society Hill Cleanup Day is scheduled for May 16.*

Now, don't let me go 30\* without reminding you that graffiti removal is a four-season-long cleanup effort. Spot graffiti? Just describe its location in an email sent to me, [k3eax@yahoo.com](mailto:k3eax@yahoo.com). I will then forward a request to our city's CLIP program for its removal.

\*An old telegraphy term, from an old telegrapher, -30- means "end of story."

**Al Meinster** is the Society Hill Clean Up Day coordinator.



FIGHT THE NEW TREND IN GRAFFITI

## Stickers!

Here are examples of the new trend in graffiti. Stickers! They are hard to get off.

When you see a sticker, please contact SHCA graffiti chair, Al Meinster with location. The city says they will not remove stickers, only paint. SHCA no longer has a paid graffiti removal service, so it's up to us to report it to Al as soon as we see it. Let's keep our neighborhood sticker-free! Reach Al by email at [K3eax@yahoo.com](mailto:K3eax@yahoo.com).



## Let's Make Society Hill a "No Trip Area"



### "Fix the Brix" Subsidy

Now that we are rid of dangerous sidewalk snow, we must turn our attention to those sidewalks beneath that are equally hazardous. Let's focus on this: there are still sidewalks greatly in need of repair. To those of you who own a property, your sidewalk is your responsibility. Let's do what we can to assure no one trips and falls on our sidewalks.

We are lucky that SHCA has a subsidy program that will give you money back to fix your sidewalk. It's called "Fix the Brix" (and concrete too). Take a good look at your sidewalk. Could someone trip and fall on it? If so, join our "Fix the Brix" program. Go to [societyhillcivic.org/what-we-do](http://societyhillcivic.org/what-we-do). Then click on "Fix the Brix" and fill out the form to get started. Remember to send us a before and after photo as well as proof of payment.

CLEAN & BEAUTIFUL COMMITTEE

BY MARTHA LEVINE, CHAIR

# Let's Talk Trash (and Recycling)

We have a beautiful neighborhood. Putting our trash and recyclables out to the curb is something we do every week. Thank you to all of the neighbors who do a great job.

## PICKUP SCHEDULE

Here it is, plain and simple.

### Days of the Week

- If you live WEST of 6th Street, your trash and recycling pickup day is Thursday. Your trash-only pickup day is Monday.
- If you live EAST of 6th Street, your trash and recycling pickup day is Friday. Your trash-only pickup day is Tuesday.

### Time of Day

- From April 1 to September 30, put out trash/recycling **after 7 p.m.** the night before, but before 7 a.m. on collection day.
- From October 1 to March 31, put out trash/recycling **after 5 p.m.** the night before, but before 7 a.m. on collection day.



## HOLIDAY DELAYS

Cut out this trash holiday schedule and put it on your refrigerator as a reminder. If your neighbors are not waiting to put out their trash on holidays, make a copy of this schedule and put it through their front door.

### 2026 City-Observed Holidays

New Year's Day Thursday, January 1	Labor Day Monday, September 7
Martin Luther King Jr. Day Monday, January 19	Columbus Day/ Indigenous Peoples Day Monday, October 12
Presidents' Day Monday, February 16	Veterans Day Wednesday, Nov. 11
Good Friday Friday, April 3	Thanksgiving Day Thursday, November 26
Memorial Day Monday, May 25	Day after Thanksgiving Friday, November 27
Juneteenth Friday, June 19	Christmas Day Friday, December 25
Independence Day Saturday, July 4	



## TIPS & BEST PRACTICES

### Trash

- Trash and recycling collection following holidays is delayed by one day for the rest of the week. There is only one collection day during a holiday week, which is the trash and recycling pickup day.
- Wait until after 5 p.m. or 7 p.m. the day before collection day to put your trash out. Trash that sits out for 18 or more hours is there too long, attracting trash pickers and vermin.
- Secure your trash bags tightly, so the contents, especially food waste, does not spill onto the sidewalk.
- If possible, put trash bags in a trash can with a lid. If not, use a secured tightly sturdy plastic bag or a double bag. Try to keep food waste out of your trash bags because food waste attracts four legged creatures.

### Proper Old Medication Disposal

Do not toss expired or no longer needed meds in your trashcan. Take them to Washington Square Pharmacy (6th & Washington Square), or to Pennsylvania Hospital at 8th & Spruce, where they have a special disposal unit.

### Food Waste

- There are alternatives to putting food waste in your trash. Garbage and trash are two different things. Garbage is organic material.
- Use your **garbage disposal** for small amounts of food waste. Some foods should never go down the drain, like bones, banana peels, eggshells, grease, oil, corn husks, pasta, and rice. Check with your plumber or online.
  - Try **composting**, a growing and popular way to deal with food waste, that keeps many foods out of landfills. An option is Bennett Compost: info at [www.bennettcompost.com](http://www.bennettcompost.com) or call 215-520-2406.
  - If none of the above work for you, **freeze your food waste** and put it out right before 7 a.m. on trash collection day, so it is not sitting out on the sidewalk all night long.

To report sightings of rats, call the city-run group **Vector** at **215-685-9000**, or go online to [www.health.vector@phila.gov](http://www.health.vector@phila.gov). They plug up the rat holes and do not use chemicals.

## RECYCLABLES

Please use a plastic bin, **not a blue plastic bag or cardboard box**. Blue plastic bags with recyclables in them will be collected as trash, not recycling. It is a waste of your money. To get a free recycling bin, go to a city convenience center. The closest one to us is at 3901 N. Delaware Avenue in Port Richmond. You can also purchase a recycling bin at Cohen's Hardware at 5th & Passyunk Avenue or Home Depot.

Please follow the rules for what's in and what's out.

### What's In

- Clean, dry, empty materials
- Flattened cardboard
- Glass bottles and jars
- Aluminum cans and foil
- Paper, magazines, and newspaper
- Plastic bottles and containers numbered 1, 2, or 5
- Rinsed milk, juice, and soup cartons

### What's Out

- Anything containing food
- Pizza boxes with grease
- Plastic bags/wraps, styrofoam
- Electronics, batteries and light bulbs
- Wires, hangers, hoses

*Let's work together to make our neighborhood even more clean and beautiful!*

## ON OUR SHELVES

BY IZZY HALLORAN

## Head House Books Selects

Are you looking for your next gripping read? Browse our curated selection of fiction, nonfiction, illustrated, and local author picks!

**Fiction**

*I Could Be Famous* by Sydney Rende, \$26.99

*I Could Be Famous* is an incredible debut story collection by Sydney Rende. Funny, fresh, and smart, Rende's collection contains 11 stories that highlight the absurdity of modern life. In "The Hole in Your Heart is Mine," the narrator details her relationship with an unpredictable bike tour guide in New York City named Duke. Duke is a man with an ultra-realistic tattoo of his mother on his upper thigh, an avid rollerskater, and a fitness addict. "The Hole in Your Heart is Mine" is rich with hilarious, odd details and eccentric characters who leave lasting impressions.

In another story titled "Home Videos," Rende's narrator works as an assistant for a film crew who record celebrity house tours, a fictionalized version of *Vogue Living* house tours or the Open Door series by *Architectural Digest*. The narrator's job mostly consists of supplying seltzer to the director and providing comfort to the celebrities with her normality. As the narrator assists on more sets and meets dozens of international superstars, she uses her invisibility to pocket small treasures from every shoot. This story explores our obsession with fame and celebrity and the ease with which one can lose their identity in someone else.

*I Could Be Famous* successfully identifies the oddities of life in the modern age. Rende pinpoints comical, honest human behaviors in a compelling, must-read short story collection.

**Illustrated Children's Book**

*Don't Eat Me! The Almost True Story of Belladonna* by Kate Finney & Esmé Shapiro, \$19.99

*Don't Eat Me!* is a stunningly illustrated children's book about a flower named Belladonna who struggles to protect herself from hungry forest creatures. An impressive combination of water-

color illustration and an engrossing narrative, *Don't Eat Me!* explains how plants and animals interact, coexist, and aid one other in a forest ecosystem. Belladonna comes to understand how to protect herself through evolution and ultimately learns that no plant exists alone in the forest. A smart, visually moving book, *Don't Eat Me! The Almost True Story of Belladonna* is an excellent read for any curious child.

**Nonfiction**

*The Future of Truth* by Werner Herzog, \$26

*The Future of Truth* is a thoughtful work of non-fiction by German filmmaker and writer Werner Herzog. Herzog aims to answer the impossible question: What is truth and how can we find it in an ever-changing world? In *The Future of Truth*, Herzog shares his observations on technological advances and the social landscape, specifically the growing presence of artificial intelligence and political propaganda, and how they affect our perception of reality. Herzog's extensive film career, accompanied by his diverse experiences, informs his unique perspective on the world. An intriguing, fast-paced read, *The Future of Truth* is an important work from a prolific thinker and creator of our time.

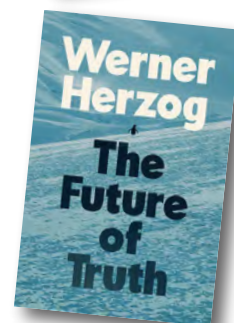
**Support Local Authors**

*Fat Swim* by Emma Copley Eisenberg, \$28

*Fat Swim*, forthcoming April 28, 2026, is a short story collection from local author Emma Copley Eisenberg. Featuring stories that confront gender, sexuality, power, and body politics, Eisenberg taps into the pulse of modern culture.

Want to hear more? Support a local author and place an order for *Fat Swim* by visiting [www.HeadHouseBooks.com](http://www.HeadHouseBooks.com) or stopping by our store!


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



**See Graffiti?** Report graffiti locations to Al Meinster at [k3eax@yahoo.com](mailto:k3eax@yahoo.com). He will submit a photograph and a request for its removal to the city's CLIP program.




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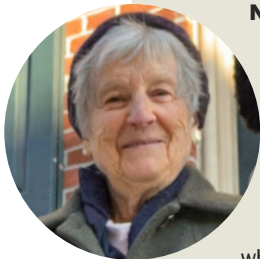
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## SHCA'S BLOCK COORDINATOR PROGRAM

BY MARTHA LEVINE, CHAIR

## Neighborhood-Wide Network

## Block Coordinators Speak

**Norma VanDyke**

"I have been a block coordinator for the north side of 100 Lombard block for more than a decade. I help forward communications from SHCA and to welcome new homeowners. These communications help foster a sense of community and provide a resource for block residents to turn to, about community matters. We are fortunate on our block to have some residents who have become significant contributors to our community."

**Martha Levine**

"Being a Block coordinator for 600 Spruce has given me a chance to connect with other people on my block and gives me a sense of community. I know everyone on this block. A few years ago, to combat package theft, I set up a system where we all had each other's emails and phone numbers so that we could communicate with each other. If we saw a package on a neighbors step, we could contact them or take in the package and contact later. During the January snowstorm, we were all in touch about who might need help with shoveling their sidewalks — people helping people. My block is age diverse with ages ranging from one year to 90 years. A block party is planned for summer."

**Marc Raspanti**

"I have worked my entire career in Philadelphia, but have lived in Society Hill for only about 10 years. When I volunteered for the block coordinator position, I must admit I did not know what it would entail. Over the several years I have volunteered for this position, I have had the privilege to really "get to know" my neighbors in the two blocks I service on Lombard and Gaskill Streets. I have enjoyed assisting my neighbors navigate the day-to-day issues that often confront residents of our area. While I can't always make a difference, I do my best. I find satisfaction when I can actually make a difference. Candidly, I'm not solving the problems of the world, just trying to make a palpable difference for the residents of my two blocks."

**David Rubin**

"I am a new block coordinator for 500 Lombard, south side. Our family is always looking for ways to give back to the good community around us in Society Hill. As a block coordinator, I feel more informed about how the city works and can help inform those around me."

**Jaime Fox**

"I have been the block coordinator for the 400 block of Spruce since we moved to the neighborhood in 2019. I have enjoyed getting to know my neighbors through this process. I want to make sure we keep the block as beautiful as possible, so I'm happy to meet new neighbors, get email addresses, and send out reminders. Through this process, my son got a job shoveling snow during the storm. Through this process, we were offered a column writing for the *Reporter* (Kids' Corner). Also, through this process, I'm able to grab packages I see left out and email neighbors to let them know I have them or put them over their back fence. I love this block and our neighborhood."

This neighborhood-wide network was set up in the early 2000s to improve communications between residents and SHCA, and between neighbors on the same block. We have about 55 volunteer block coordinators in Society Hill, with blocks extending from the south side of Walnut to Lombard Street, and from Front to the east side of 8th Street.

How does it work? Each block, and each condominium group, has one person who is the block coordinator or block captain (BC) for their block residents. Essentially, they are the "eyes and ears" of their block and our neighborhood. Their job is to create a block list and to forward by email important and timely messages from SHCA.

Here are some tasks the BCs perform:

- Forward email notices from SHCA about delays in trash and recycling collections due to holidays. Most months have one holiday.
- Forward notices from SHCA about events like the Annual Garden Tour fundraiser, the semi-annual clean up days, the December holiday party, and other special events.
- Identify new neighbors for our Welcome Gift Bag program and point out potential new members.
- Inform SHCA about any block problem issues like snow removal, vandalism, or crime.

Do you know your block coordinator? If you have not yet done so, please let your BC know you would like to be on their block list. Contact me at [marthalev6@gmail.com](mailto:marthalev6@gmail.com) if you need help identifying your BC, or wish to be a BC on one of these blocks where we have vacancies: 300 Lombard, 700 Pine, 300 S. 4th (between Spruce & Pine), 200 Locust (not Society Hill Towers), 100 Naudain.

*Many thanks to our block coordinator volunteers for their excellent service over the years.*

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WELCOME GIFT BAGS

BY MARTHA LEVINEK

# Spring Society Hill Welcome Gift Bags

Every time we run an article about Welcome Gift Bags in the *Reporter*, we get enthusiastic responses from new owners who are interested in receiving a gift bag and learning more about SHCA and the neighborhood. But we don't know you're here unless you contact us!

Let's make it simple: If you are a new owner in Society Hill as of 2025-26, we would like to present you with a Welcome Gift Bag. Each beautiful bag includes a bottle of wine, a bag of coffee, a Talula's daily pastry, and chocolates, plus gift cards to local restaurants, entertainment, retail, services, and museums.

If you are interested, please email your name and contact information to me at [marthalev6@gmail.com](mailto:marthalev6@gmail.com). We'll set up a time to meet for a visit and 45-minute presentation.

Please join me in thanking our generous new and long-standing contributors who make our Welcome Gift Bags program a success over many years. We ask you to patronize and support their businesses.



**Welcome Bag recipient  
Kay Carter**

**Martha Levine**, in addition to chairing the Welcome Gift Bags program, chairs the Block Coordinators, the Fix the Brix Program, and curates the List of Contractors.

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

*Restaurants*

- Bistro Romano**, 120 Lombard Street
- Bloomsday Cafe**, 414 S.2nd Street
- Bridget Foy's**, 200 South 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
- Las Buglambillas** (Mexican), 15 S. 3rd Street
- La Colombe Coffee Roasters** 100 S. 6th Street
- Madis Coffee Roasters**, 601 Walnut Street
- Mahalo Hawaiian BBQ**, 117 South Street
- Malbec Argentine Steakhouse**, 400 S. 2nd Street
- PJ Clarke's**, 601 Walnut 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, Retail, Services, and Museums*

- Arden Theatre**, 40 N. 2nd Street
- Ghost Tour of Philadelphia**, [ghosttour@ghosttour.com](mailto:ghosttour@ghosttour.com)
- Head House Books**, 619 S. 2nd Street
- Independence Seaport Museum**, 211 S. Columbus Boulevard
- Judy Moon & Associates Massage**, 829 Spruce Street, Suite 300
- Lantern Theatre**, 923 Ludlow Streets
- Lee's Cleaners**, 241 S. 6th Street
- Museum of the American Revolution**, 101 S. 3rd Street
- Naked Chocolate**, [www.nkdchocolate.com](http://www.nkdchocolate.com)
- National Liberty Museum**, 321 Chestnut Street
- Paper on Pine** (stationery), 1310 Sansom Street
- Phila. Chamber Ensemble** (at Old Pine Church), [www.pceconcerts.org](http://www.pceconcerts.org)
- Physick House & Powel House** (museums), 321 S. 4th Street
- Pileggi on the Square** (salon), 717 Walnut Street
- Stump Plants**, 622 S. 9th Street
- The Athenaeum of Philadelphia**, 219 S. 6th Street
- Triad Wellness**, 507 S. 4th Street

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## OUR CREATURES GREAT AND SMALL

BY CLAUDIA CARABELLI

## Tripods Times Two

Nancy Lanham, longtime Society Hill resident, has shared her home with cats during most of her 30 plus years here. Although fond of both cats and dogs, her earlier work years and travel schedule made felines the easier pet with whom to share an abode.

Nancy's first kitty roommate was a Maine Coon. If you're unfamiliar with this North American breed, google a photo; it's worth it. This gentle giant can weigh as much as 25 pounds. They're known to be friendly and sociable with a dog-like temperament. Sadly, this particular cat of Nancy's succumbed to a heart problem at just 18 months of age.

Next came two 8-week-old kitten rescues, a boy and a girl, from our local Morris Animal Refuge. They lived to the ages of 10 and 14. An older, male rescue joined the household when the first of that pair died. He subsequently passed away around the same time as the surviving female.

Fast forward to 2014, and Nancy is without a cat. Then, as frequently happens with the Cat Distribution System, she was approached by a neighbor who had been fostering a litter of five orphaned kittens after the mother cat was hit by a car. Three kittens had been adopted, but two brothers remained. She decided to adopt them both, despite a case of ringworm fungus that they had likely contracted while boarding. The brothers, Bobby and Jake, recovered quickly, made a home with Nancy, and came to be known fondly as "the boys."

Like many human brothers, they bear a strong resemblance to one another. They're both beautiful orange and white tabbies, sometimes called ginger or marmalade cats. Think Garfield with a considerably slimmer physique. Interestingly, roughly 80 percent of orange tabbies are male due to sex-linked genetics. They tend to be vocal, affectionate, and mischievous, and often sport a distinct "M" marking on their foreheads. Bobby is slim, agile, and very social. Brother Jake is big, strong, and athletic and took a long time to initially



**Bobby and Jake**

seek out human affection. True to their personalities, when I came to visit, Jake walked over for a perfunctory hello and then went about his business. Bobby sat nearby the entire time Nancy and I spoke, gradually making his way over to me for pats and scratches while climbing up my leg. Jake was quick to master the art of climbing while Bobby was more of a late bloomer. Bobby responds to catnip while Jake does not. Apparently, sensitivity to the active compound in catnip is determined by an inherited, autosomal dominant gene. Approximately 50 to 75 percent of cats have this sensitivity, but only one of the boys. They're both curious enough to make pests of themselves with overnight guests, climbing into their bed in the loft guestroom. Not a bad way to make sure no one overstates their welcome.

Nine years in and Bobby and Jake are living the good life with Nancy. They have the run of the house. They sun

themselves on the third floor deck and survey the neighborhood from their garden wall. Bobby sometimes even sits at the gate at the end of the side walkway to greet dogs he knows. All was good with the world... until. In the fall of 2024, it was time for the cats to have health check-ups and vaccinations. Two to three weeks later, Nancy noticed a hard lump at the site of one of Bobby's injections. Follow-up with the vet determined it to be a "feline injection site sarcoma" (FISS) — yes, cancer. While rare, this is an aggressive malignant tumor triggered by chronic inflammation in response to a vaccine, long-acting antibiotics, or even a microchip. Treatment is a wide resection of the tumor, which in Bobby's case meant amputation of his left hind leg in November of 2024.

Nancy was the ideal pet parent, attentively nursing him back to health. Friends came by with treats and toys to pamper him as he recovered. Three legged cats, affectionately called "tripods" typically acclimate well to the missing limb once it heals. True to form, Bobby was soon making his way around the house and even climbing things like always. He had a little hitch to his walk, but the missing limb was barely discernable when he was running. Good, right? Not quite. Unbelievably, just six months later Jake developed the same type of tumor and had to have his leg removed in June of 2025. He's a bigger, heavier cat so recovery took him a little longer. The fact that they are genetically related most likely accounts for them both developing the cancer.

The future is uncertain since this cancer can sometimes recur, but the boys are both doing well for now, living their best life while everyone hopes for the best. Nancy continues her volunteer work with PAWS (Philadelphia Animal Welfare Society), transporting cats for adoption, much like a kitty Uber driver. Meanwhile "the boys" continue blissfully on, as if nothing has changed.

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

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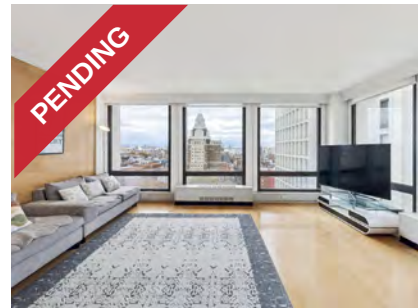
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MEMBERSHIP REPORT

BY PRISCILLA LO

# Spring Is a Great Time to Join SHCA: Join or Renew Today

**Congratulations to Ann Fahey**, our winner of the November/December Membership Drive raffle for a \$100 gift certificate to Bridget Foy's. Thank you for supporting SHCA and the work we do in our community!

Spring is a season of renewal and a perfect time to get involved with SHCA.

Home, family, and community form the foundation of a neighborhood where everyone can thrive. As your neighborhood association, strengthening community connections and caring for our shared spaces is central to what we do.

SHCA serves the Society Hill community through beautification, safety efforts, advocacy, and programs that bring neighbors together. None of it happens without the support of our members.

### 3 Easy Ways to Join or Renew Today

**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

**Important reminder:** You must be a current SHCA member by **March 31** to be eligible to vote in the **May SHCA elections**. Your membership gives you a voice in shaping the future of our community.

**Join or renew today at [societyhillcivic.org](http://societyhillcivic.org).**



**Priscilla Lo**, an advertising executive, has lived in Society Hill with her family for 17 years. She chairs the SHCA Membership Committee.



*Society Hill*  
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## 2026 Membership Form

We encourage everyone to join online by going to [www.societyhillcivic.org/join](http://www.societyhillcivic.org/join).

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