



SOCIETY HILL

Reporter

September/October 2026

The Newsletter
of the Society Hill
Civic Association

www.societyhillcivic.org



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

Learn About Initiatives to Improve South Street

BY ROBERT KRAMER, SHCA PRESIDENT

Dear Society Hill Residents,
We have an exciting community meeting arranged for **Wednesday, September 16, 2026**. South Street from Front to 7th Streets has a large impact on our community both as a venue for dining and shopping, and as an area whose problems affect our quality of life from a safety and noise perspective. The September 16

Community Meeting will focus on initiatives to improve South Street and a presentation of the challenges to improving the corridor. We will have two speakers, **Eleanor Ingersoll**, the Executive Director of the South Street Headhouse District (SSHD) and **Brandon Engelhardt**, a director of SHCA elected for the June 1, 2026, to May 31, 2027, term.

Eleanor will present the programs and initiatives that SSHD has been working on to support a safe and inviting atmosphere along South Street. SSHD is a municipal authority established by Philadelphia City Council in 1993. As a municipal authority, SSHD has the authority to assess South Street District business with the purpose of improving public safety, sanitation, and other services to supplement services provided by the City of Philadelphia. You can read more about SSHD at its website, www.southstreet.com.

Brandon Engelhardt, as part of obtaining his Master's in Urban Planning from Drexel University, studied the history and challenges of South Street and how it can be improved. Brandon conducted more than three months of fieldwork and research in preparing his thesis. The thesis is online and very worthwhile reading. It can be viewed at www.savingsouthstreet.org. Brandon will present the findings and conclusions of his thesis.

The community meeting will take place at the Zubrow Auditorium at Pennsylvania Hospital, on the first floor at 800 Spruce Street at 7:30 p.m. Please come out and attend the meeting.



Robert Kramer is a retired attorney who has served as an SHCA Board Member since 2015. He has acted as chair of the Legal Committee, Nominations Committee, and 5th Street Committee, and has been a member of the Finance, ZHP, I-95, Parking, Master Plan and Foglietta Plaza Committees. He and his wife have lived in Society Hill since 2012.

Wednesday,
September
16

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Society Hill Civic Association Meetings
Wednesday, September 16, 2026

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

5:45 p.m. Board Meeting

7:30 p.m. Community Meeting

Speakers: Eleanor Ingersoll and Brandon Engelhardt

Topic: South Street Improvement Initiatives

Saturday,
October
31

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

At last year's inaugural for **Halloween at Headhouse**, volunteers hauled pumpkins and hay bales, dressed strawmen, and set up a photo booth just in time to welcome hundreds of eager princesses, dinosaurs, and superheroes (and their parents). This year, residents can again set up and decorate a table under the historic Head House Shambles as if it were their own front door.

There is plenty of work to do between now and October. Whether you'd like to host and decorate a table, help coordinate the event or simply share an idea for making the event better, we'd love to hear from you. Please reach out to Tanya Brassie and Tara Anantharam at halloween.at.headhouse@gmail.com. We look forward to seeing you and your best costume this Halloween!



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SOCIETY HILL

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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

South Street: The Emptyest It Has Been in 30 Years

BY BRANDON ENGELHARDT

An urbanist's look at what is actually driving the vacancy, and four ideas for fixing it.

When I moved back to Philadelphia in 2022, South Street felt noticeably less lively than I remembered it as a kid and in college. The explanations I typically heard were familiar: Amazon, COVID, and an economy that made running a small business harder. Surely those forces played a role. But the more I traveled, the less they seemed to explain the whole story.

I spent almost 11 years in technology, much of it studying labor market trends for city, state, and federal partners. The work put me on the road constantly, and I made a habit of visiting the oldest neighborhoods and commercial corridors in each city. Historic places became a personal passion too. I now run a walking tour in Philadelphia, and my family lives in a house built in 1743.

What I kept noticing was that many historic commercial corridors were not fading. They were thriving: Fells Point in Baltimore, Portland's Old Port, Charleston, Williamsburg, Edinburgh's Old Town. In city after city, historic corridors were among the busiest places in town. So why does Philadelphia, the nation's first capital, carry persistent vacancy along some of its most historic commercial streets?

Then I watched *The Whole South Street Story*, a locally produced WHYY documentary made more than 20 years ago. The complaints were nearly word for word what I hear from neighbors today. If the South Street conversation has been the same for two decades, the cause is probably older and deeper than the challenges of the last five years.

That question became a capstone project for my master's in urban planning at Drexel. In 2026, I surveyed every storefront on South Street from Front to 12th Streets and did the same on East Passyunk Avenue. I pulled ownership and violation records on all 519 parcels and interviewed 17 people working in commercial corridor management.

South Street was 70 percent occupied. East Passyunk was 89 percent. Both streets have similar buildings, density, transit, and economic pressures, but very different outcomes. Three structural problems help explain the gap. I'll dig into each at September's community meeting.

Governance Gridlock

South Street has four zoning classes and five community organizations across 11 blocks. East Passyunk has one zoning class and two community organizations.

Operators told me they increasingly seek "by-right" addresses, where zoning already permits their use. Otherwise, opening can mean months of hearings, added costs, and no guarantee of approval.

On South Street, the same business can be permitted at one address and require a variance three doors down. That narrows the pool before a tenant even negotiates a lease, leaving some storefronts effectively off the market.

Dormant Ownership

Three in five parcels are held by dormant owners, meaning they have not sold in more than 20 years or changed hands through a true market sale. Many were bought cheaply during the Crosstown Expressway era, when the highway threat crushed values and lending.

Today, many are paid off, with upstairs apartments covering taxes and carrying costs. An empty storefront may cost the owner very little. Reopening one, however, can cost a tenant \$75,000 to \$150,000, while the city grant designed to help caps at \$10,000.

The owner has little incentive to invest. The tenant cannot absorb the cost. The storefront stays dark.

Declining Demand

The median age around South Street rose from 30 to 39 over 50 years, while East Passyunk's grew younger. One major difference is housing: South Street's rental supply has barely grown since 1970, limiting the number of younger residents who can live nearby.



A corridor without enough neighbors has to import its customers, and that shapes what opens. Two out of three South Street restaurants are takeout-first. East Passyunk is nearly the reverse, with 25 sit-down restaurants and just six quick-service.

Each problem makes the next one worse. The damage lands hardest on the 300 block of South Street, once home to the TLA, JC Dobbs, and the Laff House. Today, it is 59% vacant.

South Street has reinvented itself before, after the Crosstown Expressway fight and again in the 1980s. Both recoveries required an outside push. I do not think the next one will happen on its own.

In September, I'll lay out four changes that could help start that recovery, built around the arts and music identity that made South Street famous. I'd like to hear what you think.

Come hear the findings on September 16 at 7:30 p.m. at Zubrow Auditorium, Pennsylvania Hospital. The full study, maps, and block-by-block data are at www.savingsouthstreet.org.



Brandon Engelhardt is an SHCA board member and has been a neighbor in Society Hill since 2021. He holds an M.S. in Urban Planning from Drexel University.

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A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A PHAMBASSADOR

BY CLAUDIA CARABELLI

Seeing the City with Fresh Eyes

The summer of 2026, our nation's Semiquincentennial brought an enormous number of tourists into our already tourist-friendly city. Coinciding with the FIFA World Cup soccer (football) games, with Philadelphia one of the host stadiums, everyone anticipated even more international visitors arriving in our city. It sounded like a fun time, so I heeded the call put out by Woody Rosenbach in the January 2026 issue of *The Reporter* and joined the team.

What exactly is a **Phambassador**? It's pretty much what the word sounds like: a **Philadelphia ambassador**. A Phambassador is a friendly face to greet people, make them feel welcome, and help with any information they may need. It's often directions, suggestions for sites to see or places to eat and, of course, the location of the nearest bathroom. Much of the information is at our fingertips. If not, we look it up or refer them to the more knowledgeable visitor center staff. We provide maps and tour bus schedules along with helpful hints that only a local can offer.

Have you ever had the experience of someone visiting your home for the first time and gushing over a work of art or even a piece of furniture? These familiar things are seen so regularly that you don't even notice them anymore. It makes you take a second look and realize, "Wow. That really is pretty cool!" That's sort of what it's like to see Philadelphia through the fresh eyes of a newcomer. "Your architecture is

amazing! It reminds me of Paris." So when you're out in the city, you take your time and look up more. It actually is quite impressive. "People are so friendly here." You know, despite our reputation for throwing snowballs at Santa, we truly are. Philadelphians may tell it like it is, but they're there for you in a pinch. "I love this city. We're definitely coming back." Some of our own suburbanites may disparage Philly, but it really is a pretty great place to be. The atmosphere at soccer matches was consistently friendly and welcoming. No need for detaining folks like the Eagles did in their short-lived football jail. People got along, were generous to their opponents and thanked the Americans for hosting them.

The Phambassadors were primarily stationed at three visitor centers: Independence Visitor Center at 6th and Market, Love Park at 16th and JFK, and the bottom of the Art Museum steps.

Sixth and Market, right near Independence Hall, typically had a steady flow of people. It's close to many historical sites and offers nice amenities and tons of information along with a gift shop, food offerings, an informational video, and access to a parking garage. July 4 was a mob scene. There was a seven-hour wait to get into Independence Hall! Yet people waited, in the sweltering heat, and were nice to each other. The giant American flag made of red, white and blue cupcakes was quite a treat.



On July 2, 250 Phambassadors formed the Human Liberty Bell. It made the front page of both the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Inquirer*.

Love Park had scores of visitors stop to take photos in front of Robert Indiana's statue. My favorite was Ben Franklin posing with a Philly police officer. Ben was all in, enjoying the crowds, even if a few kids mistook him for a pirate. Lots of our time there was spent getting people on the correct bus. Even with long lines, everyone was polite. The FIFA Fan Fest at Lemon Hill was a big hit too. Filled with big screen TVs, vendors, and food, it could hold 15,000 people and reached capacity several times.

The Philadelphia Museum of Art location, affectionately known as "The Rocky Steps," was quite the popular destination. Everyone wanted to run the steps to the Rocky theme. Even the "Rocky Shop" had banner sales.

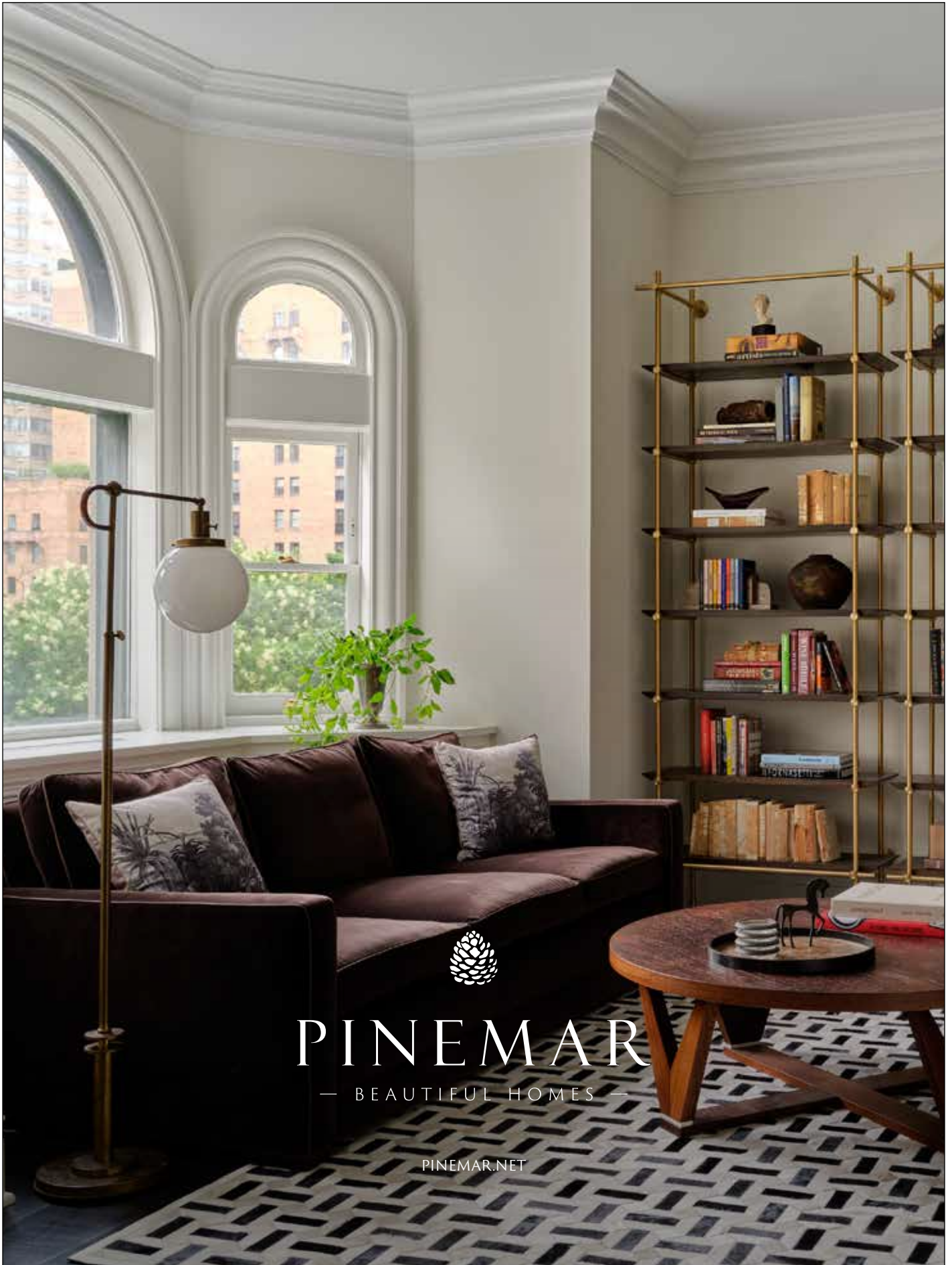
Despite all the weather challenges, Philly threw a great party, and everyone came.

So, what did I learn from the experience? A few things. My fellow Phambassadors were a super nice group. It's quite easy to become blind to the familiar without even realizing it. People are more alike than not. Most are kind, and wherever someone is from, whatever language they speak, they all have one thing in common: a love for Rocky!

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



A pep rally-style event at LOVE Park was held to announce the launch of the Phambassadors.



OUR SOCIETY HILL BLOG

BY GEORGINE ATACAN

Renovating in Society Hill: Contractors, Commissions, Contributing Character, Oh My!

Every year, a handful of Society Hill homeowners spend real money on a renovation that never gets built. It's not because of budget nor because of a contractor issue, but because nobody told them the plan was going to be denied before the first nail hits the wood.

If you are a Society Hill homeowner, the Philadelphia Historical Commission is a permanent stakeholder in your property. Understanding how the Commission thinks is key, as is using a contractor familiar with Society Hill!

Hire a Society Hill savvy contractor

SHCA compiles an annual List of Contractors used and approved by members. This is not a generic list that contractors pay to be on, like Angi's List. No, this is a gem of personal recommendations and many of the arborists, painters, woodworkers, roofers, etc. are often surprised to learn they are even on it. I call it Martha's List because of the SHCA volunteer who compiles this insider information. You must be an SHCA member to access it! The updated list has been emailed to current members, and all new members will get the list automatically. **See the HUGE table of contents of Martha's List below!**

Know exactly what you own

Society Hill was added to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places in 1999. That local designation is the one that carries teeth. The National Register listing from 1971 gets the plaques and the tourism, but local designation is what triggers mandatory review.

Inside the district, not every building is treated the same. In 1999 properties were classified as either significant, contributing or non-contributing to the district's historic character. A restored 1790s Federal rowhome on Delancey is significant or contributing, and review will be strict, as will a Pei townhouse built during urban renewal, while a recent home may be non-contributing and you may have more latitude. Confirm your classification before you plan anything. It changes the entire conversation.

Also consider the Society Hill Neighborhood Plan, accepted by the Philadelphia City Planning Commission. This Plan provides design guidance and was the basis for zoning ordinances for Society Hill passed in 2020. And know what your property's zoning classification is.

Know what the Commission controls, and what it does not

The Historic Commission's jurisdiction is the exterior. Its stated priority is protecting public views of historic properties, which means the front façade, roofs, and anything visible from the street or an alley.

Your interior is almost always yours. Unless the interior itself is separately designated, you can gut the kitchen, move walls, redo the bath, and add a wine room without any preservation review at all. That surprises some owners who think historic designation means living in a museum.

What does trigger review:

- Windows, doors, transoms, and storefronts
- Roof changes visible from a public way, including dormers, decks, and new materials
- Rear or rooftop additions visible from a public way
- Masonry, cornices, stoops, and porches
- Any demolition or removal of historic fabric

What generally does not:

- Interior-only work with no exterior effect
- Repainting a surface that was already painted
- Routine maintenance and in-kind repair

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MARTHA'S LIST CONTENTS

Antique (Wood and Marble)
Mantels, Doors, Salvage

Brick and Masonry Work—
Construction, Repairs,
Pointing, and Cleaning

Cabinetry and Fine Woodworking

Chimney Work & Fireplaces

Construction Management

Electrical

Flat Roofs

Garage/Overhead Doors

Gardeners

General Contractors

Handyman

Heating/Air Conditioning

Home Technology

HVAC Duct Cleaning

Interior Design

Ironwork

Landscape Design

Lighting – Antique and

Reproduction
(Interior and Exterior)

Locksmith

Marble and Tile Work

Painters – Interior and Exterior

Plaster Work

Plumbing

Replacement Original and
Reproduction Hardware
(Shutters)

Restoration Services – Fire and
Water Damage, Specialty
Cleaning

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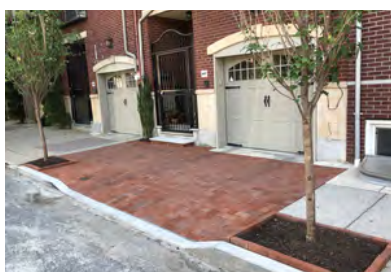
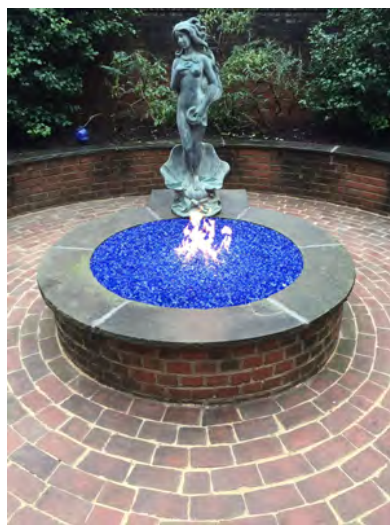
Create gorgeous outdoor living spaces with free-flowing form and functionality.



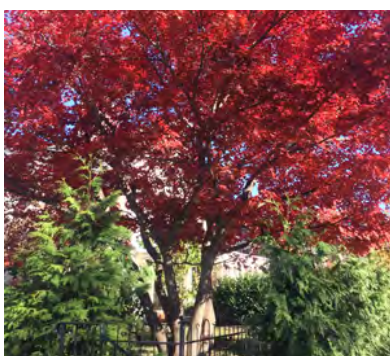
Our horticulturalist can turn your courtyard into living artwork.



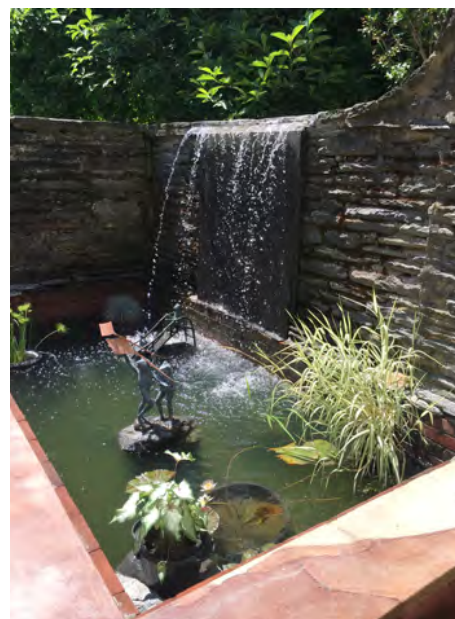
Hardscape projects include Pennsylvania bluestone walkways, decks, and patios, brick sidewalks, fire pits, and water fountains.



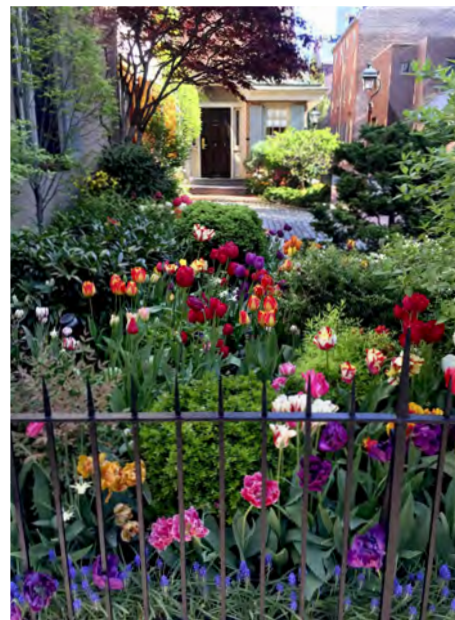
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OUR SOCIETY HILL BLOG

continued from page 7

The Historical Commission isn't as bad as you think

The staff approves more than 90% of building permit applications without ever referring them to a committee, and many of those are turned around within days. There is no fee for a project review. Staff will also consult with you during the planning stage, before you commit money to drawings. That last point is the whole game. The owners who have miserable experiences almost always designed in isolation and submitted a finished plan. The owners who breeze through talked to preservation staff early and shaped the design around what they heard.

If your project does get referred, it goes to the Architectural Committee and then to the full Commission, which meets monthly. Budget roughly six to twelve weeks from submission to decision for major work, longer if your application is continued for more information or sent back as incomplete. Then add

time for the Licenses & Inspections permit after the Commission decision.

Build that time into your construction schedule from day one. A summer renovation that starts its approvals in April is a fall renovation.

Summary

Confirm whether your property is significant, contributing or non contributing. **Contact Historical Commission staff during design, not after.** Hire an architect and a contractor (perhaps after consulting Martha's List) who know Society Hill and ask them for the addresses of previous clients.

Two Society Hill homes on the same block, same square footage, same finishes, can trade at meaningfully different numbers. One reason is documentation. Approved, permitted, compliant work is an asset at closing. Unpermitted exterior work is a liability that a buyer's attorney will find, and it

becomes a credit request or a broken deal at the worst possible moment. If you have work on your home that predates you and you are not sure it was ever approved, that is worth resolving on your timeline rather than during a 10-day inspection period.

Remember, living in the most historic and charming neighborhood in the U.S.A. requires policies that keep it looking beautiful. Ultimately, everyone benefits from regulations that preserve our Society Hill for us and future generations.

Questions, Comments, Concerns?

E-mail me at georgine@atacangroup.com.

I promise to reply as soon as possible!

Georgine Atacan

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



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KEEPING POSTED

BY AL CAVALARI

These Truths

Last issue I informed you about two temporary exhibits in our neighborhood that you should not miss. We looked at *The Declaration's Journey*, at the Museum of the American Revolution to mark the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Now we have *These Truths: The Declarations of Independence* at the American Philosophical Society (APS), founded in 1743 by Benjamin Franklin. Both exhibits run through the end of this year, but we know how time slips away. I hope you won't miss your opportunity. Admission is **free** but, in the spirit of Franklin who seems to have donated to everything, donations are appreciated.

I would like you to understand how utterly remarkable it is that this resource is in your neighborhood for you to use. If you are not on the APS email list of lectures, author talks, conferences, concerts, seminars, and other programs, most of them free, you are missing a connection to this world-renowned institution located on Independence Square. Don't let the word "philosophical" scare you. The roots of the word "philosophy" are *filosofo*, which means *love of knowledge*. APS programs include the "breadth of scientific and humanistic inquiry across disciplines." They are not all strictly academic. For example, Neighborhood Fun Day on October 10th has hands-on activities, games, and snacks appropriate for guests of all ages. Or visit an evening session of Quizzo, a trivia game, with snacks and beverages. Both events are free.

Founded for the purpose of "promoting useful knowledge," APS is still fulfilling Franklin's mission and sharing its collection of over fourteen million pages of manuscripts, rare books, and other artifacts used by researchers around the world. There are only about 1,000 members, and one can not apply for membership. Members are nominated from notables around the world in a variety of fields. Since its founding there have only been 5,890 members

of which more than 260 have received the Nobel Prize. Past and current members include George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Neil Armstrong, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, John Lithgow, Martin Scorsese, and Barack Obama.

The best kept secret in Philadelphia tourism is APS's foyer in Library Hall where you will see a rotating display. You never know what you might find! Just walk in. On my first visit, I had the feeling of striking gold. Before me was one of the journal volumes from Lewis and Clark's 1803 expedition which the APS has had since President Jefferson deposited them there with, I imagine, instructions something like "Here, why don't you hang on to these for us." It was open to the page announcing that the explorers at last had the Pacific Ocean in sight. Make it a point to stop by every few months to see if anything is new.

Patrick Spero, CEO, writes in the catalog that the exhibition contains "perhaps the largest assemblage of early printings and seminal reproductions of the Declaration ever mounted." This brings us to the reason why its title uses the plural "declarations." There was indeed only one declaration adopted by the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776. Before that date, however, there was a different document turned in by Thomas Jefferson. Five copies of the original draft in Jefferson's handwriting, which he sent to friends, survive. You will stand before the one he sent to Richard Henry Lee of Virginia, which Lee's brother Arthur marked up to highlight the eighty-some revisions and deletions (about a quarter of the text was removed) made by Congress over three days of debate before it was adopted.

Through this exhibit we discover that the Declaration was not just a document; it was a process as it became "repurposed in time as news, a political tool, and a national symbol." The next step was for its news to spread throughout the new independent states and around the world. After adopting

the document, Congress immediately ordered that the final revised text be taken to the printing office of John Dunlap at 2nd and Market for perhaps 200 printed copies to be run off. A plaque marks the spot today near The Continental Diner. On July 5 the prints were ready to be distributed. A copy was sent to each state governor, to George Washington in New York City so it could be read to the army, and to King George III. These Dunlap "broad-sides" were the first Declaration seen by anyone outside of Congress. The iconic engrossed parchment version took some time to prepare. You will stand before two different Dunlap examples.

Most of us are familiar with the beautiful hand-written version on display in Washington D.C. with its 56 interesting signatures. Clear copies of it are available in souvenir shops because in 1820 Secretary of State John Quincy Adams noticed the engrossed copy's deterioration. To preserve a good image for posterity he commissioned engraver William J. Stone to create accurate copies. Stone took three years to complete a copper plate and 201 copies (200 for Congress and one for himself!) printed on parchment. About ten years later what seems to have been a smaller number were printed on paper. A rare paper example is on display. Stone's copies are the closest we have to how the Declaration appeared when it was signed.

The next step in the Declaration's process is in the realm of celebration and memory. You will see original pamphlets of early July 4 orations and an array of graphically stunning commemorative printings decorated with images of flags, state seals, floral designs, and other artwork. My favorite was published in 1819 by "radical journalist and printer" John Binns. The catalog describes it as riding the wave of nationalism after the war of 1812 and "featuring bold calligraphy, striking images, and facsimile signatures of the Signers." Binns has an interesting business story;



The Declaration's 150th birthday card. Published by John D. Cardinell the exposition's official publisher. From the collection of Philadelphia collector Dr. Gus Spector.

he and his project wound up in court as he tried to shut down competitors who were also racing to market.

The Binns display speaks to the depth of the APS collection. Right there side by side is a Binns print in great condition, Binns' engraving plate from which the print was made, and as the guides will say, "the original painting of George Washington by Gilbert Stuart (the image on the dollar bill) that we loaned Binns when he made his plate." I like how the people who work there take ownership of the institution. It creates a connection to Franklin's work and emphasizes the continuity almost as if you'd expect him to come walking in the door. I'd like you also to know that, especially for an institution of such status, it is a nice surprise that if you go there often enough, they start to know your name.

The number of artifacts in the room is too great to give you summaries of them all, but I must tell you about the Popple map. The map is a thing of beauty, lovely golden beige, striking colorful accents, and what must be thousands of tiny drawn details. It is big. At eight by eight feet, it takes over the room as you walk in, and that is just how Franklin wanted it. He personally ordered this "Map of the British Empire in America" from London in 1746 to hang on the wall in the assembly room of the Pennsylvania State House, now Independence Hall. It was to be a working tool, not just a decoration. The colonial legislature

would absolutely have found it invaluable in their administration of the colony. It was shipped to him. Franklin received it. Created by cartographer Henry Popple in 1733, it was on the wall and witness to the heart ache, the fears, the debates, and all the stressful events of 1776.

There are two things I think you should do when you visit. First, stay a while. Spend an hour. I have visited many times and often see people stay five minutes. The idea of museums is to use artifacts to transport visitors back to someone else's world. Study the works, let them sink in. Read the descriptive labels, the text of the documents on display, and the pages of the books that are open. Read the receipt that John Hancock received for payment he made when he purchased a two-year-old child and the letter he wrote to the Iroquois Confederacy hoping to convince them to remain neutral in the coming war. Pick what you think are the most beautiful images and ponder the workmanship. Every item in the room is a piece of a puzzle. Secondly, *talk to the guides*. There are always two or three in the room. Go up to them and ask them to show you their favorite item and tell you about it. Why is it their favorite? They love questions, and you will get more out of your visit if you engage them.

All these artifacts are pieces of evidence from the past, some beautiful, some reprehensible, some hopeful, some perplexing. They combine to help



Binns post card. Published by the American Philosophical Society and sold at the exhibition.



**The APS Museum in Philosophical Hall
104 S. Fifth Street, Philadelphia, PA 19106
Open April through December on
Thursday-Sunday, 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.
www.amphilsoc.org/visit-museum**

Image courtesy the American Philosophical Society
us understand what happened then. More importantly, they can prompt us to imagine how we can use them going forward to create the history we want our grandchildren to tell on the 300th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. On the way out, spend some time reading the thoughts that other visitors have written on the message board. A ten year old wrote in a child's handwriting that the visit inspired her to become the "first girl president." Then come up with some words of your own to say what the Declaration, these Declarations, mean to you.

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





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INDEPENDENCE HISTORICAL TRUST

BY JONATHAN BURTON

The Park Was Ready

Independence National Historical Park and Independence Historical Trust spent years preparing for America's 250th. This summer, Philadelphia saw what that preparation made possible.

For years, Philadelphia talked about what it would mean to host the nation's 250th birthday. We talked about the crowds that would come, the international attention we would receive, and the extraordinary responsibility of commemorating July 4, 1776, in the city where the Declaration of Independence was adopted.

Then the moment arrived. Hundreds of thousands of visitors walked across Independence Mall. They stood beneath the Liberty Bell. They toured Independence Hall. They filled the surrounding streets, parks, and public spaces. They came for the Semiquincentennial, the FIFA World Cup, the MLB All-Star Game, and a summer unlike any Philadelphia had experienced before.

Independence National Historical Park was ready. This was not happenstance. It was the result of years of planning, preservation, fundraising, and construction led by Independence National Historical Park and supported by its nonprofit philanthropic partner, Independence Historical Trust. Together, the Park and Trust completed or helped advance approximately \$82 million in capital improvements and visitor-focused projects in preparation for America's 250th anniversary.

The most visible example is the First Bank of the United States. After being closed to regular public visitation for decades, the magnificent 1797 landmark reopened on July 1 following a \$43 million rehabilitation. The project repaired the marble and brick exterior, replaced a leaking roof, addressed long-standing moisture problems, and installed modern electrical, heating, cooling, and fire-protection systems. A new addition provided accessible entry, restrooms, an elevator, and the infrastructure necessary to return the building to public use.

The federal government, primarily through the Great American Outdoors Act, provided \$39.3 million. The Trust raised another \$4.5 million for rehabilitation, planning, and exhibits.

But the First Bank was only part of the transformation. Inside Independence Hall, Congress Hall and Old City Hall, highly skilled National Park Service (NPS) preservation specialists repaired plaster, woodwork, masonry, and metal finishes. Historically accurate paint returned these rooms to their intended appearance. New ramps improved accessibility while respecting buildings that have stood for centuries.

Across the Park, aging and inefficient heating systems were replaced through a major energy-savings project designed to reduce utility expenses and lower carbon emissions by approximately 1,700 tons annually. The Liberty Bell Center received a new photovoltaic array. The West Wing exhibits were redesigned. The Benjamin Rush Garden was renewed and reopened as an inviting green space anchored by the Bicentennial Bell. Eighteen new trees were planted, interpretive signage was installed, and Washington Square received preservation and horticultural attention.

Some of these improvements are dramatic. Others are nearly invisible to visitors. New roofs, mechanical systems, masonry repairs, electrical upgrades, and conservation work rarely produce the most glamorous photographs. But they are what allow historic places to remain open, accessible, and meaningful. That is the work of stewardship.

The Trust also invested in the experience surrounding the historic buildings. Donors supported free public programming, costumed interpreters, storytelling benches, security equipment, new tools for Park law enforcement, and improvements that made the Park safer, greener, and more welcoming.

The success of this summer offers Philadelphia an important lesson. Public investment and private philanthropy are not competing forces. At their

best, they strengthen one another. NPS brings professional expertise and responsibility for protecting nationally significant resources. The Trust brings donors, civic partners, flexibility, and a local community committed to the Park's future. Together, they accomplish what neither could accomplish alone.

America's 250th anniversary gave Philadelphia a deadline. More importantly, it gave us an opportunity to reinvest in the places where the nation's founding ideals were debated, declared, and tested.

But stewardship cannot end because the anniversary has passed. Historic buildings will continue to require care. Gardens and public spaces will need sustained investment. Exhibits must evolve to help visitors understand the fuller, more complicated American story. The Park must remain safe, accessible and welcoming to the millions of people who come here every year, not only during milestone anniversaries.

That should be the lasting legacy of 2026: not simply that the Park looked its best for one extraordinary summer, but that Philadelphia recommitted itself to caring for its national park for generations to come.

The world came to Philadelphia to see where America began. Thanks to Independence National Historical Park, Independence Historical Trust, and the people who stood behind them, what visitors found was a place ready to welcome them, inspire them, and remind them that the work of building a nation is never finished.

Job well done! Now, on to the next chapter and the next big thing, the 250th anniversary of the Constitution in 2037.

Jonathan Burton

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



OUT AND ABOUT

BY MARTHA LEVINE

Steamy But Sensational 2026 Gardens of Society Hill Tour

Two days of 92-degree weather failed to deter close to 450 garden-loving visitors who attended our 2026 Gardens of Society Hill Tour on June 13 and 14. A fresh group of 16 beautiful gardens was showcased for the tour. The garden owners are the essential part of the tour, and we thank them for their community spirit and loving care in preparing their gardens this year.

A highlight of SHCA's calendar of events, the tour not only attracts garden lovers, but also showcases our beautiful, historic neighborhood to a larger audience. Our garden tour visitors hail from many Philadelphia neighborhoods, Philly suburbs, New Jersey, New York, and beyond. Many have been loyal tourgoers for years.

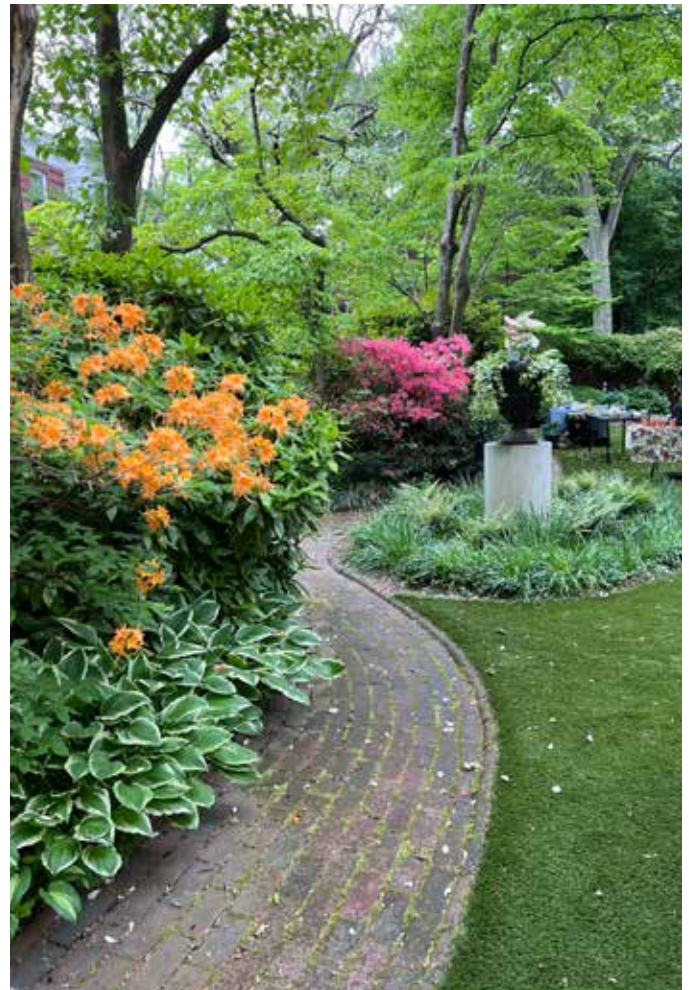
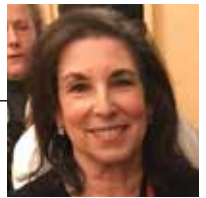
Our 75 excellent volunteers are critical for the tour. We could not have a tour without them to welcome visitors, check tickets, and answer questions about the gardens.

Thank you to our tour coordinators, Linda Skale and Martha Levine, who work diligently for many months to create this delightful tour, including: getting approval from neighbors to show their gardens, coordinating the many volunteers to host the gardens, managing all publicity and marketing, creating the important tour program needed to take the tour, and so much more. Let us not forget to thank our administrative team, Samantha Brown and Carolyn Hanrahan for website updates, advance ticket processing

and at the tour day sales as well as our seven sponsors for their financial support. All promotional material was designed by our graphic designer, Judy Lamirand of Parallel Design, with all printing by Media Copy. Thanks again to all of this year's tour-goers, whose ticket purchases benefit SHCA.

Please enjoy these photos of the gardens taken by Martha Levine and Linda Skale. We hope to see you next year!

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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A PHILADELPHIAN ABROAD

BY MARC S. RASPANTI, ESQ.

In Search of Trees

This summer, I was fortunate enough to travel to various parts of France. While I enjoyed the great variety of exquisite wines and world class French cuisine, I was struck by something perhaps more subtle, but equally profound to me: the widespread proliferation of high-quality trees in that country. I should be even more specific; I was also struck by the obvious care that the French give to tree planting, tending, and maintenance. No matter where I visited in France, cities, countryside, seashore, and places in between, the French are devoted to the care, feeding, and propagation of trees throughout their lovely country. Let me be transparent: I love trees.

Suffice it to say, the French are very proud of their trees, and they should be. Many knew the exact species of trees that had not held up during changes in climate or attacks by pests or disease. They knew the names of new species that had been planted and seem to be thriving in today's climate. All with whom I spoke shared how important the French found their trees to be for a variety of reasons. Obviously, beauty and the symmetry of trees are important to the French, but it doesn't stop there. Much of France is getting warmer, like the rest of Europe, and air conditioning is not prevalent. Therefore, good, healthy trees, with large full leafy canopies, provide needed shade to citizens and visitors alike. I tested that premise myself. France was extremely hot this summer. On more than one occasion, I took advantage of the considerable shade of mature, well-tended French trees.

Moreover, older trees were efficiently flanked with rows and rows of larger sapling trees, ready to replace older specimens when they expire or are damaged by weather or disease. There is no question in my mind, the French "Tree Plan" is a well-thought out and well-funded social endeavor. The pride the French have for their trees is pleasant to experience. I decided to do some research when I returned to



Trees growing in the shadows of the Eiffel Tower.

Philadelphia. My hunch was correct that the reforestation of France is a longstanding national project. There is nothing random about it. Indeed, the protection and propagation of trees goes back to decrees by King Louis XIV in 1669. These ancient French decrees have been codified into numerous modern laws which cover everything from planting, maintenance, and the unauthorized removal of trees. Violations of French tree laws can result in sizeable fines. In a word, trees are valued and highly protected all over France.

Upon my return to Philadelphia, the contrast was both stark and palpable. While there have been some efforts in certain parts of the city, such as Society Hill, to repopulate our aging tree population, our collective civic devotion to trees is a far cry from France. Ironically, William Penn carefully laid out our city and named our wide streets after native trees like walnut, pine, and cherry. Pollution, pests, dwindling resources, damage, and the lack of an effective citywide shade tree commission, leaves our tree population



Trees growing in a typical car park in Paris.

with much to be improved. Many of our trees are long past their prime or have been damaged by buses, delivery vans, pestilence, and even lightning. The removal and replanting of a new tree can be an expensive endeavor with little assistance from the government.

Not only can a more concerted tree effort in Philadelphia enhance an already beautiful city, but trees can provide many other health, beauty, psychological, and environmental benefits. However, trees require citywide and statewide expenditures, devotion of long-term resources, and most importantly, a citizenry willing to take the time and spend the money to care for these natural resources and to ensure that they will live on for generations.

Marc S. Raspanti Esq.,

an active Center City trial lawyer, resides with his wife in Society Hill. In addition to the law, he considers himself an amateur historian and is now a Certified Philadelphia Tour Guide.





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TREE TENDERS

BY CLAUDIA CARABELLI

Behind the Scenes of Filling a Tree Pit

If you've passed by an empty street tree pit for many months only to see it suddenly filled with a young sapling, you may wonder how that came to be. Grem-lins? Nope. The Tree Fairy? Nuh-uh. Not even an act of God. Humans no doubt had a part in making it happen. If we're lucky, the homeowner took the initiative and had it planted. If it appeared in late November or April, chances are the Society Hill Tree Tenders were responsible. There's a lot that has to happen for us to fill an empty pit with a young tree.

First, we **find an appropriate location**. The Tree Tenders can only plant **street** trees, those in curbside pits. No back gardens or courtyards.

Next, we work with the property owner to **complete an online application**. It always surprises me that while many neighbors welcome a free tree, several are adamant that they don't want one. Unfortunately, the city can't require someone to plant. Too bad because those empty pits make for a real eyesore.

Now the application, submitted to The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS), needs to be processed and approved. PHS sends out their arborists to inspect every site. Applications can be denied for several reasons: the site is too close to a street sign or an intersection,

electrical or gas lines are nearby, the tree would block the entrance to a home or cellar door, etc. Some have even been denied despite the fact that a tree had previously been planted there. Go figure.

If you would like a tree planted in your empty tree pit, it's easy to apply at the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society website: phsonline.org/programs/tree-programs. Read on for everything our volunteers do to help you with your tree!

Once approved **the trees are picked up in Manayunk** and transported to Society Hill. Unfortunately, we no longer have anyone with a truck so that means I, knee replacements and all, head out with another volunteer and our too small SUVs. It's always a crapshoot to see if we can fit the trees into our vehicles. Then we cross our fingers that they survive the drive home on I76 East. The Physick House generously allows us to store the trees in their yard until planting day.

Prior to pick-up, I've rounded up any **Tree Tenders volunteers** who are **available to plant**. It's physical work. We carry trees to each planting site and dig their holes. Sometimes it's a straightforward process, but other times we're stymied by assorted debris in the pit: cement, old tree roots, even metal cages that were used in

the past to hold root balls. No hidden treasures yet, but I'm still hoping.

Once the process is complete, the property owner takes over, hopefully **watering and mulching** to give the tree its best chance at survival. That's not always the case, so I may need to send out reminders or just do it myself. Right now, my kind neighbor is caring for a tree planted across the street from her that was being neglected.

Finally, there's **data that has to be entered** about the planting sites and volunteers along with follow-up tree checking each summer.

Like many things, there's more involved than one might think. **Want to get involved?** We can always use more volunteers, especially some younger people and those with IT skills. Anyone with a pick-up truck or large vehicle is a plus. You can reach me at ccarabelli@comcast.net.



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

BACK TO SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE

On August 5, our generous neighbors again contributed supplies for another successful donation event in Society Hill! Old Pine Community Center, Puentes de Salud, PAWS, Morris Animal Refuge and Kisses for Kyle extend their thanks to Society Hill, and especially event host Society Hill Towers and organizers Mary O'Neill, Dorothy Stiles, Terry Conn and Harriette Mishkin, for the bounty.

Photo: Dorothy Stiles





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BY IZZY HALLORAN

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Hardcover Fiction

Kin by Tayari Jones, \$32

Kin by Tayari Jones follows two lifelong friends, Annie and Vernice, from childhood into adulthood in the American South during the Jim Crow Era. Both orphaned as babies in Hon-eyuckle, Louisiana, Vernice is taken in by her aunt and Annie by her grandmother. Although their shared origin and love for one another bonds the girls, adulthood sends them down vastly different paths. Weeks before Vernice sets out for Spelman College, a historically Black women's college in Atlanta, Georgia, Annie runs away to Tennessee in search of her birth mother.



The novel alternates between Vernice and Annie's respective journeys as they attempt to fill the missing aspects of their lives as motherless women. They each soon face the danger and restriction inflicted upon Black women in the American South. As the years pass, Annie and Vernice remain close, ultimately reuniting for one life-altering event. *Kin* by Tayari Jones is an astonishing achievement, rich with complex characters, a compelling narrative, and a crucial message.

International Paperback Fiction

Nesting by Roisín O'Donnell, \$19.99

Set in contemporary Ireland, *Nesting* by Roisín O'Donnell follows a woman named Ciara Fay as she attempts to flee an abusive marriage with her young children. Ciara and Ryan have a seemingly perfect relationship. What began as a passionate, whirlwind romance led to a lovely home with two happy, healthy children who fill it with life. But soon after settling



down in Ireland, Ciara notices changes in Ryan's personality and behavior. As a husband, Ryan is extremely critical, controlling, and volatile, and Ciara fears for the safety of herself and her children.

One spring afternoon while Ryan is at work, she makes the snap decision to grab what she can and leave with her daughters. With the odds stacked against her and another baby on the way, Ciara fights to carve out a life independent from her masterfully manipulative husband. Ryan has ensured Ciara's dependence on him, forcing her to give up her career to raise their children, solely controlling their finances, and isolating her from her family in England. With the little money she has saved, Ciara employs every available resource and finds herself at the mercy of a broken government housing system. Although she has left their home, Ryan's grip on her life remains strong, and she is riddled with self-doubt and insecurity. Has she inflated the abuse in her head? Is leaving the right decision for her daughters?

Nesting is ultimately a story of one woman's resilience, fortitude, and self-determination. An inspiring narrative for anyone struggling with a significant change in their lives, *Nesting* is a remarkably honest portrait of emotional abuse, and the lengths a mother will go for family.

Nonfiction

Too L.A.: Letters Never Sent (But Some Were) by Eve Babitz, edited by Lili Anolik, \$18.95

Too L.A. is a collection of mostly unsent letters composed by the late writer and artist Eve Babitz. Edited and organized by writer and Babitz superfan, Lili Anolik, these left behind correspondences were found in Eve's home after her passing in 2021. Similar to *Letters to John*, a 2025 posthumous work by Joan Didion composed of deeply personal entries to her husband, John Gregory Dunne, the publication of *Too L.A.* poses ethical ques-



tions of consent and privacy. Is it wrong to publish an intimate work by someone who is not alive to grant permission?

Eve lived a very public life, often detailing her exploits in the writing she produced during her lifetime. Perhaps that is why *Too L.A.* feels like another book of stories, a seamless addition to her collection. Eve's letters served as a diary, packed with personal musings and filled with the characters in her life, family, friends, and lovers alike. The charm of *Too L.A.: Letters Never Sent (But Some Were)* can be attributed to Eve's unabashed liveliness and perspective. Her singular presence permeates the art and culture of the 1960s and 1970s, and her output continues to inform our understanding of the late 20th century.

Illustrated

Chirri & Chirra, written and illustrated by Kaya Doi, translated from Japanese by Yuki Kaneko, \$16.99

Chirri & Chirra is a strikingly illustrated children's book by Kaya Doi. Originally written in Japanese and translated into English by Yuki Kaneko, *Chirri & Chirra* is the first of the series, which follows the twin sisters on many eventful bike rides. In this book, Chirri and Chirra pedal through a vast forest, making stops along the way to eat jam, play in a pond, nap under a tree, attend a forest concert, and spend the night at a cozy hotel. Kaya Doi's colored pencil style provides each illustration with a dream-like, glowing quality. The lush forest is alive around them, from the vibrant yellow-green grass, to the vocal animals they encounter. *Chirri & Chirra* is an ideal read for anyone who enjoys the wonders of the natural world and lively illustration.



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



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OLD PINE COMMUNITY CENTER

BY MARK ATWOOD

Out with the Old, Welcome to *The NeighborHub*!

Old Pine Community Center is now **The NeighborHub**. We've changed our name. Here's why we did it, and how you can help.

As we approached our 50th anniversary, due to arrive in 2027, we knew it was the right time for a name that better aligned with the identity of our organization.

The NeighborHub reflects our reputation in the community, the spirit of our programs and partnerships, and the energy you feel when you walk through our doors. We've always been a central place of activity, service, and connection. We've always been a neighbor hub. Now, our name matches the role we've played for nearly half a century.

Recently, a parent stopped by to pick up their son. On their way out the door, they smiled and said, "That's our favorite babysitter!" They were pointing to the person working at our front desk, a recent high school graduate they've known for years. Until then, neither of them realized they both had a connection to us. Another parent fondly shared that they celebrated their daughter's baby shower in the same space that she was now playing. One of our volunteers reminisced that she had taken gymnastics classes as a child in the room where, years later, she was packing grocery bags for her neighbors.

Eventually I realized that these were more than coincidences; they were and are our mission. These connections are what make *The NeighborHub* unique, and why it continues to grow and matter to people after all these years.

Twenty-five different community organizations and small businesses call us home. We worked with 123 local families in our afterschool program last year, and with 137 during this year's summer camp. More than 200 people volunteer in our programs. We prepared over 25,000 meals in 2025, and will surpass that number this year. People vote, play sports, make friends, attend classes, and celebrate milestones here. People learn and teach, laugh and cry, get help, and help one another at *The NeighborHub*.

I'm fortunate to stay in touch with Reverend Bill Pindar, who was the pastor of Old Pine Church when the 401 Lombard Street building opened in 1977. He and many other community members shared a vision about what this could be, and worked hard to bring it to life. Reverend Pindar was also the only person outside of our organization who learned about the new name before it became public. Despite his close connection to our history and previous identity, he immediately understood why this change was necessary. In fact, he was certain that the people who invested so much to create this space many years ago would feel the same way.

Change is inevitable. When it is centered around purpose, it is necessary.

What's next and how can you get involved?

You can join us on **Saturday, September 26, for our 49th Anniversary Celebration.**

This event will be a fun, festive outdoor party for all ages.



This fall, we're launching *Third on 4th*, a series of original educational and social programs designed to bring people together and build on our model as a "third space." We'll also be introducing new and expanded volunteer opportunities to support our growing programs, including those developed for family participation.

While this is an exciting time for *The NeighborHub*, we are aware of the obstacles and significant work ahead of us. Some of these challenges are shared by all nonprofits; others are unique to our situation and future. We will need your help to meet these challenges and successfully move forward.

If what we do is important to you and people you care about, we are asking you to join us. You can learn more about all our events, programs, and ways you can get involved on our new website. Check out www.theneighborhubphilly.org!



Mark Atwood is the Executive Director of Old Pine Community Center/Neighborhub.



WELCOME GIFT BAGS

BY MARTHA LEVINE

Guaranteed to Put a Smile on Your Face

Receiving a Welcome Gift Bag from SHCA is guaranteed to put a smile on your face. Imagine having a gift bag presented to you for just being a new homeowner in Society Hill, whether it is in a house or a condo. As one gift bag recipient said recently, "It feels like Christmas!"

Each gift bag includes a bottle of wine, a bag of coffee, a chocolate sampler, valuable neighborhood information, and many, gift cards to area restaurants, entertainment, retail, services, and museums. SHCA really knows how to welcome new neighbors!

If you are a new owner, and are interested in having the Welcome Gift Bag presented to you, we want to hear from you. The presentation is a visit by appointment at your home and takes about 45 minutes. For more information and/or to request a gift bag, contact me at marthalev6@gmail.com. SHCA is a Registered Community Organization (RCO) in the City of Philadelphia, and we work on

behalf of our residents. We encourage all neighbors to join SHCA to support the many programs and services we offer. Your membership helps us to provide these to you. For more information on SHCA, check out our website at www.societyhillcivic.org.

SHCA is happy to help promote our local businesses and organizations through this program.

Please see the list on page 25 for our many generous and long-time Welcome Gift Bag donors.

Thank you new donors!

We welcome **Lore's Chocolates** at 34 S. 7th Street as a new contributor to our Welcome Gift Bags program. Lore's is a family owned, longstanding Philadelphia tradition, a chocolate shop known for handcrafted chocolates with a wide selection to suit all tastes. They specialize in seasonal offerings like "Irish potatoes," holiday events, and birthday gifts.



Sue's Deli Market is a family owned and community business here in Society Hill since 2018. They are committed to freshly made orders. Some of their specials are Korean Style cheesecake and a new fusion hoagie with a Korean kick.



Owned by Society Hill resident Dr. Ericka Carroll, **Philly Cat Vet** provides convenient, cat-exclusive veterinary care in the comfort of your home. Visit www.phillycatvet.com to learn more!

**Tusaret****Lynn and Philippe****Jeanne-Michel****Sidney****Susan****Jennifer**

WELCOME GIFT BAGS

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
The Bread Room, 834 Chestnut Street
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
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
Lore's Chocolates, 34 S. 7th Street
Museum of the American Revolution, 101 S. 3rd Street
Naked Chocolate, 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
Philly Cat Vet, www.phillycatvet.com
Physick House & Powel House (museums), 321 S. 4th Street
Sue's Deli Market, 275 St. James Place
Stump Plants, 622 S. 9th Street
The Athenaeum of Philadelphia, 219 S. 6th Street
Triad Wellness, 507 S. 4th Street

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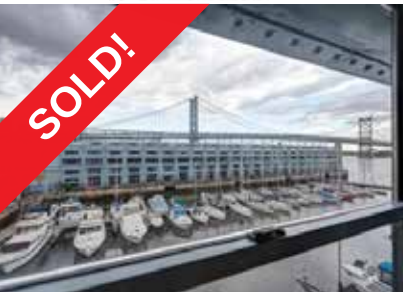
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**UPDATED 1 BEDROOM
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**CORNER 1 BEDROOM
750 SF | \$319,900**

**2 BEDROOM, 1 BATH
1131 SF | \$499,900**

PIER 3


**2 BEDROOM, 2 BATH
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500 PINE STREET


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MEMBERSHIP REPORT

BY PRISCILLA LO

A Season to Look Around

Fall has always been my favorite time to walk around Society Hill. As the leaves begin to turn and the air gets a little cooler, I find myself noticing all over again the details that make our neighborhood special: the historic houses, tree-lined streets, familiar faces, and the little moments of connection that are easy to overlook in the busyness of everyday life.

It's also a good time to think about what makes a neighborhood feel like home, and the many people who help make that happen.

That's what SHCA is here for: to connect neighbors, strengthen our community, and advocate for the neighborhood we all share.

Our 2026 membership year is winding down, and as we look toward 2027, we hope you will think about being a part of it. Keep an eye out this fall for SHCA's membership materials.

Whether you have been a member for years or have never joined, we hope you will consider adding your voice to the conversation.

After all, a great neighborhood doesn't happen by accident. It happens because neighbors care.

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

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

Join or renew today at
www.societyhillcivic.org/join

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



Society Hill

CIVIC ASSOCIATION

2026 Membership Form

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

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

Name _____

Address _____ Apt. # _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____
(print clearly)

Residential Memberships

- ☐ \$ 50 Basic Household Membership
- ☐ \$ 40 Senior/Student/Single
- ☐ \$ 150 Georgian Grantor
- ☐ \$ 300 Jefferson Benefactor
- ☐ \$ 500 Washington Benefactor
- ☐ \$1,000 Benjamin Franklin Benefactor

Business Memberships

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

Total Membership \$ _____

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

Donations to Society Hill Preservation Foundation

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

\$ _____ Unrestricted – Where Most Needed

\$ _____ Cleaning

\$ _____ "Fix the Brix" and Tree Tending

\$ _____ McCall School

\$ _____ Starr Garden Playground Renovation

Total Donations \$ _____

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

Mail this form and your check(s) to:

Society Hill Civic Association, P.O. Box 63503, Philadelphia, PA 19147

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

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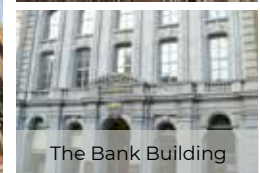
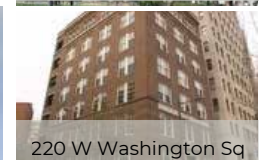
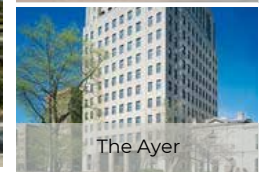
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