

SOCIETY HILL CIVIC ASSOCIATION

THE RESIDENT NEWSLETTER

313 Pine Street

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106

*Excuse
Apologize my apologies -
we are now up the
main west. the.*

November, 1976

NEXT MEETING COMING UP. MARK YOUR CALENDERS!!!

The upcoming general meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 17th at Old Pine at 8:00 p.m. We'll be screening a 28-minute color film, "Make Way for the Past" about the joys and frustrations of restoring a colonial house. Scheduled for discussion is liquor store operations in the neighborhood and our own "10 most wanted" list of developers defaulting on rehabilitating their properties. An interesting, provocative program. Be there.

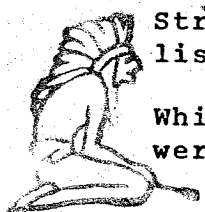
JUST WHAT WE NEED...ANOTHER RESTAURANT.

Is the cure worse than the disease? That's the question that faces Society Hill when it comes to rehabilitating the crumbling Mariner's Church building which is standing (barely) at Front and Delancey. A California-based restaurant operation has come up with an offer to restore the building but the cost to the neighborhood may be intolerably high.

But first, a history lesson. The church was erected in 1868 as a place to worship for seamen from the nearby wharves. In the 1950s the wharves were moved downriver and seamen apparently become less religious. In any event, the building was gutted by fire in 1963 and acquired by the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority. It was zoned commercial to attract a developer. In 1967 a Society Hill resident, Franklin Roberts, was part of a group which acquired the property for conversion to a movie theater. They were unable to secure financing. The property was returned to Redevelopment which sold it in 1970 to another group who proposed putting in a theater and restaurant. The new group consisted of three neighborhood residents, Carl Massara, Lou Sepe and Robert Rapp. The trio was also unable to find financing and Redevelopment declared them in default of their development contract in August, 1976. A month later, Redevelopment reported it had come up with still another developer, Mariner Realty, which proposed to rebuild the church as a restaurant and lease it for a long term to Chart House, a large West Coast-headquartered restaurant and fast-food chain.

At the SHCA meeting of October 14th, David Stevens, 114 Delancey Street, reported that he and a group of other nearby residents had listened to a presentation by the developers a week earlier.

While the restaurants Chart House ran in other areas of the country were attractive, Stevens said, this proposed venture would be com-



parable in size to the Rusty Scupper. Its owners proposed to feed 300 persons an evening, have a cocktail lounge which would seat another 75 and offer no facilities for on-site parking. (NewMarket reported that its garage under the Scupper and the new one abuilding at Second and Lombard were fully committed to its own patrons.)

Stevens reported that back in the '60s and early '70s the nearby neighbors had been sympathetic to the idea of a commercial developer acquiring the Mariner site. Since then, the neighborhood has been inundated with heavy commercial and restaurant development to the point where parking and traffic is a perennial headache. The neighbors who attended the meeting voted overwhelmingly against the proposed restaurant use. Stevens asked the Civic Association to appear before the Redevelopment Authority and urge that instead of permitting the defaulting developers to be allowed to convey their title to the new people, Redevelopment retake possession and work with the SHCA to find an appropriate alternate use for the site. The Civic Association overwhelmingly endorsed this position.

The Civic Association has already been in contact with the Cheswick Center in Boston which is undertaking a nationwide survey of uses for historically significant but redundant churches. Since it would cost over \$500,000 just to restore the facade of the badly decayed building, it will be difficult to attract anything but intensive-use commercial development. One alternative would be for Redevelopment to demolish the building, making the site attractive for residential or badly needed resident parking use.

The Redevelopment Advisory Board will meet on Monday, November 8th to decide the fate of the Mariner building on the 8th floor of 1234 Market Street. Be there to support your Civic Association.

JUST IN CASE YOU'RE HUNGRY NOW...

There already are eight places to eat and drink in NewMarket--Rusty Scupper, Churchill's, Kanpai, Folcolare, Lautrec, Borgia, Head House Tavern, Head House Bar. A new bar restaurant is due to open soon, and Once Upon a Porch Serves food but no booze.

And south of NewMarket, within three blocks of the Mariner, there's Luigi's, Champignon, Downey's, Piccadilly, Dionysos, Apolló, Knave of Hearts plus a new Italian restaurant scheduled for Second and South.

If you're still thirsty or hungry, within four blocks to the north there's the Copper Penny in the Towers mall, a McDonald's coming at Second and Walnut, Bookbinder's, City Tavern, The Olympic Gardens, Minnie's, Middle East, Winston's, Meson Don Quixote, Fortune Cookie, Maharajah II, Belle Aurore, Toute d'Suite, Sassafras, Khyber Pass, Miss Headley's Wine Room, La Famiglia, La Truffe, Parson's Table and Bunnie's, to name a few.

If only six staffers from each restaurant brought a car to work, they would take 240 parking spaces. If each restaurant only averaged 20 customers a night who came by car, they would occupy 800 parking spaces. Now do you know why you sometimes have trouble parking at night?

WE GOT THE AGREEMENT. NOW WHEN WILL WE GET MABEL MERCER?

Cafe Society opened on October 19th on the second floor of the Society Hill Club House on Fifth Street with Hildegarde as chanteuse. Your Civic Association has put the operators of the cafe on notice that it considers the place bound by a 1975 agreement entered into between the Association, Cobblestones, and the predecessor club which is now Cafe Society. This agreement makes provision for off-street parking, use of interior stairways, noise control and security.

GET OFF YOUR DUFF, MACDUFF

As long as you're in Society Hill, why not really meet your neighbors and the issues head-on. Call a board member listed below and volunteer your services.

JOE BRIGHT	WA5-6567	Hall/Mercer Zoning Appeal Task Force on Crime Prevention
BOB STEINER	WA3-5343	Redevelopment Committee
PHIL HARVEY	WA5-6059	Liaison with Wash West Parking Study
CARTER BULLER	LO3-0650	By-Laws Committee Lawyers Committee
TILLIE SPECK	WA5-1375	I-95 Cover
JAN STEPHANO	WA3-4921	Newsletter NewMarket Committee
NORMAN TISSIAN	WA3-7399	Zoning Committee
JOHN SMITH	WA5-4421	Society Hill Fund
DAN CATHERS	WA5-7528	Meeting Locations & Arrangements New Member Committee
CHRIS DAY	WA2-0684	Minutes & Distribution Membership Lists NewMarket Committee
RUTH DUGAN	WA2-3195	Finances Liquor Control Committee

LOGO A GO-GO

Enclosed with this mailing is the new logo of the civic association. it was designed and donated by the Mary Cassatt of South Street, Marge Niblock. Paste it in your window. Solidarity forever!! (Purists might note that the house pictured would never pass the city's

Design Review Board--no shutters.) Excellent designs were also submitted by Leslie Blum, Dottie Dodd and Carol Bottone; so if you want to start your own civic association, we do have some great ones left over.

MEANWHILE, JIMMIE CARTER WAS SLEEPING IN A PEW AT ST. PETER'S:

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

October 19, 1976

To the Members of the Society Hill
Civic Association:

It is always a pleasure to return to your city, and my recent stay in Society Hill was most enjoyable. You were indeed thoughtful to favor me with the very interesting book about the splendid houses built in this historic area during the period extending from 1740 to 1850. This volume is a valued addition to my library and will serve as a lasting memento of my visit.

With every good wish.

Sincerely,

Gerald R. Ford

IT'S BETTER TO LIGHT A CANDLE THAN CURSE THE MISTLETOE

The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society is sponsoring a candlelight tour of Society Hill to savor the Christmas decorations on Thursday, December 16th. Pick up a map at the PHS. An open house there starts at 5:30. Wassail!

CRAFTS, SHMAFTS

Most of the residents of the Southeast quadrant polled in recent weeks say they would like the weekend-long Crafts Fair at Head House transferred to South Street or Penn's Landing next summer. Food debris,

live rats, general litter and bumper-to-bumper traffic make the fair a nuisance for neighbors. The situation has become particularly critical because of the added crush created by vast hordes of polyester-clad NewMarket patrons and the Hell's Angels denim gang overflowing from Head House Tavern. How do you feel on the issue? Call Barbara Leff, your SHCA board member in the area, at WA5-4885 and let her know.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The Redevelopment Committee of the Civic Association has undertaken to create a plan and timetable for completing the restoration of the neighborhood. In an October meeting with the area director of the Redevelopment Authority, the committee proposed a list of priorities, including: 1) completing sidewalk brickwork and cobblestones of cartways according to the original redevelopment plan 2) encouraging single family restoration of remaining RDA properties through aggressive marketing and advertising and 3) encouraging completion of properties in default or bringing recalcitrant redevelopers into litigation and recovering properties for resale.

HALLELUJAH, A PARTY!

Reserve December 11th for a heavenly treat. Pro Musica will be having a dress rehearsal of Handel's "Messiah" at Old Pine to be followed by a SHCA pre-Christmas get-together. Specific information on time and price will be posted at Old Pine and announced at a future membership meeting.

IF I WERE A RICH MAN....

Deedledeedledee..I'd look into one of the best housing bargains in the neighborhood. Four magnificent town houses on the west side of Washington Square are up for grabs. The Redevelopment Authority has them and they'd make great single homes for people who would like to live like the Bellamy's of "Upstairs Downstairs." The price is in six figures, but if you've been shopping at the A&P lately, that won't faze you. For more information, contact Dan DiPentino at the Redevelopment Authority (854-6533).

IT'S A MAD, MAD WORLD

The Hall Mercer case will be argued on Friday, November 12, 1976 in room 904, Penn Center Plaza at 9:45 AM. This concerns the Civic Association appeal on the granting of the zoning variance for the expansion of Penna. Hospital's Hall Mercer facilities.

HELP

If you noticed all the misspelled words, typos and yellow journalism in this issue it's because we need your help to write, proofread, type or whatever for the next issue. One evening a month is all you have to supply. Call Jan Stephano at WA3-4921 or Alan Halpern at WA5-3431 and help put out the December issue.

DARTS AND LAURELS

Laurel--To Serena Skwersky who put together the SHCA party at the Athanaeum. Over 250 members showed up and nobody called a fellow member an SOB (or stole a book).

Dart--To whomever allowed the weed arboretum to grace the corner of Third and Spruce this summer.

Laurel--To the gang at Independence National Historic Park for giving the world Franklin Court--the niftiest museum in town.

Dart--To all those new carriage companies who refuse to clean up after Dobbin, or at least diaper him.

Laurel--To Sassafras, the new bistro on Second Street which makes the best quiche in the quarter.

Dart--To Joe Ottaviano and his two sidekicks for beating up on an unarmed Yellow Cab driver last month. It's hard enough to get a cab in the neighborhood as it is.

Laurel--To the Ritz Theatre for bringing quality movies to the neighborhood and for having the most comfortable movie seats in Philadelphia. Plus a gold leaf cluster for not dubbing its great European films. If you haven't been there, go.

Laurel--To Penn's Landing Corporation for running a real class operation down by the Delaware. They mow the grass, pick up litter and generally create a delightful ambience. Bob McIntyre was the man responsible. Unfortunately, he's moved to Vancouver. We hope they don't replace him with an out-of-work Bicentennial drone or ward leader.

Laurel--To the Salvation Army for completely renovating their day care center on Third Street.

--Rhadamanthus

(If you have a suggestion for next month's column, mail it to the Resident Newsletter, 313 Pine Street, Phila., PA 19106)