

SOCIETY HILL REPORTER

An independent newsletter published by the Society Hill Civic Association
in cooperation with the East Philadelphia Sun

VOL. 3, No. 4 • ISSUED MARCH 30, 1993



NOTES from SHCA President

Special thanks to the Society Hill Generation for hosting our March 16 general membership meeting. Curtis Thomas' proposals for changes to liquor licensing got lots of applause.

The room was packed to hear Gloria Levin talk about her plans for NewMarket as a performing arts center. This lively discussion will be continued at the April 21 meeting at Old Pine Community Center when we hope Michael DiPaolo will be able to provide additional information and more detailed plans.

Project Street Trees is still awaiting some information about funding. The survey is complete. Almost 200 empty pits and endangered trees were identified. If you would like to help or report dam-

age that has occurred after the fall survey, call chairperson Jean Bodine at 629-1288.

Saturday, May 1 Clean Up Day is just around the corner. Co-Chairs Mary Sturdivant (928-1203) and Liz Ostrander (922-6179) need volunteers to distribute the blue ribbons for neighbors, help with the ceremony at 1:00 at Head House, distribute flyers, etc. Howard Lander has the power sweepers all lined up and is looking for a few good men and women to help with the alternate street parking, distributing trash bags, etc. Special parking will be enforced that day. Captain John Collins, Commander of the 6th Police District, will be notifying you of the special parking regulations with temporary signs. Don't forget to hang those May baskets on your doors! We want



to be ready for Philadelphia's Open House.

If your May basket does not get a prize at the SHCA Clean Up Day, you have another chance on Mother's Day. Call the office (629-1288) to get an entry form for the South Street Festival's Mother Earth Day Door Decorating Contest. Good luck, everyone!

—Dick Ostrander

SIGNS OF WELCOME

May Baskets on Front Doors

By Mary Sturdivant

One mild March, my mother was enchanted by a Main Line gardener who had scripted "Welcome Spring" in crocuses on the embankment of an estate. Inspired, she went to work on her front lawn. Next spring, my sister and I and all the neighbors had to smile at the lopsided purple and yellow "HI" that cropped up in front of our home. Maybe it was not as elaborate as the Villanova original, but the thought was the same—welcome.

May baskets on doors do the same thing in the city—a welcome sign to neighbors and visitors. Planning for spring seemed the best way to enjoy the blizzard of '93. So I trudged over to the library of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society on Walnut Street to see what the experts had to say.

Any basket or container that you can attach to the door will do as a May basket. Line it with black polyethylene to keep in the moisture. This will also prevent the soil from leaking out onto your stoop when you water the plants. Some commercially available baskets even come with plastic or metal liners.

Compost and peat make the best potting soil. Be sure to soak the peat thoroughly first so it does not absorb moisture meant for the plants.

Spring's colors seem to be purple and yellow. Pansies, hyacinths, and daffodils can withstand drops of temperature at this iffy time of year. As

the days get warmer, they can be replaced with petunias, geraniums, trailing vinca and lemon grass. All seem to thrive in polluted air. Some particularly dramatic effects can be achieved with one color, like a ball of gentian-colored lobelia.

In the city, we also have a special problem with thieves and vandals. So I had to admire the wise owners who planted daffodils and white tulips in a box attached to the transom above their doorway. I remember one July 4 watching a drunk reach in and grab one of my geraniums, then careen off with hand outstretched and dripping roots and soil. That comes under the injunction "Suffer Fools Gladly." If we all have baskets out, maybe no one will take any. I am going on the principle that we do not value what is readily available and abundant.

If you don't have a May basket, stop by the Physick House plant sale from April 23 to 25. Mike Dutton says they will have beribboned baskets all ready to go or the materials to make your own.

Your efforts should not go unrewarded. The SHCA will be giving prizes for the baskets on Clean Up Day, May 1. The South Street Festival will also award prizes on Mother's Day if you enter the Mother Earth Door Decorating Contest. Even if you don't win, "Welcome Spring."

SOCIETY HILL REPORTER

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East Philadelphia Sun, 518 S. 5th St., #60,
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Bruce Anthony, Publisher. Format and concept
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SHCA STATUS REPORT: THE LIQUOR CONTROL BOARD

By Duane Perry

Our Association's Liquor Control Board Committee tracks liquor license activity in the Society Hill area. We monitor violations by license holders, work with other civic associations, negotiate agreements, and notify LCB representatives, as well as state and local officials about our concerns.

Since liquor licenses are easy to get and very difficult to control when in effect, the SHCA actively monitors area licenses to ensure that liquor-related activities do not negatively impact the neighborhood. The following businesses are currently under our scrutiny:

Theater of the Living Arts (TLA),

South Street

We opposed this license because there are already 58 liquor licenses in the area. The Liquor Control Board turned down their application for the second time, but the owners have appealed the decision.

Tijuana Yacht Club (corner, 2nd & South Streets)

The current owners want to transfer the license to new owners. We oppose the transfer because the license has been plagued by numerous noise and other liquor code violations which cannot be ameliorated by new owners. We believe this license should be revoked.

Lickety Split (corner, South & 4th Streets)

The new owners want to extend their existing liquor license to include the building next door on 4th Street. We are opposed to this, because the extension would bring the bar north on 4th Street—too close to children attending St. Peter's School and the Old Pine Community Center. Let your city and state elected officials know you are opposed to this mixing of kids and alcohol.

You can help us! If you see a bright orange Liquor Control Board Notice on any building in and around our neighborhood, please call my number 925-6672 and leave a message with the address and name of the business

where you saw the notice! Usually there is only a small window of 15 days for citizens to oppose a license after the orange LCB Notice appears at a business address. So please utilize this time by calling us and setting in motion our community's response to any liquor license request. (If you misplace my number, just remember to call the SHCA office who'll refer you to our LCB Committee.)

Let your City and State elected officials know that with 58 existing area liquor licenses you are opposed to additional licenses on South Street and indicate the three businesses above. A list of suggested elected officials you can call or write to include

Continued next page

LEARNING, MOVING AHEAD

Three Bears Park Update

... as we know it, is result of years of thoughtful careful implementation neighborhood consensus consideration for people of ... Recently a series of actions ... set in motion a local con- ... But this article is not ... out finger-pointing or scape- ... There's been too much ... by all involved parties, ... since last May when new play- ... and equipment at the park ... without consult- ... Society Hill neighbors about ... scale or style of the equip- ... in relation to its setting. ... This article is about the need ... communication and compro- ... about caring for the ... ing of children and also ... about maintaining the ... of the park, which ... mford cited in a book ... urban planning as a model ... It's about how to move ... happy conclusion

tion was demolished and the Delancey Street park, an integral part of this Greenway concept, was created on the site. The installation of play equipment on the grounds of this small urban park was an added attraction designed to make people of all ages happy! Three Bears has since always held a special place in the hearts of residents and visitors alike, young and old. Parents enjoyed the restful sounds from the fountain as their children laughed and played. Older folks enjoyed reading on benches or watching the joyful action of children being swung or sliding down the slide.

TROUBLE IN PARADISE

By 1989 after 25 years of use, however, the playground equipment required major repairs and refurbishment. In fact, some of the equipment was downright unsafe by today's standards. Also the park had a serious trash problem, requiring an efficient removal program. The appearance of vagrants in recent years made matters worse, as the fountain became a lavatory for some.

But the park's problems did not rate high on the City's priority list. There was a budget crunch and a lame-duck mayor. Something had to be done! Thus was born the Friends of Three Bears Park—organized exactly groups anxiety about the safety of the old playground equipment was verified by a professional consultant. The Friends decided to focus on persuading the Recreation Department to replace completely the old playground equipment, while they began raising funds themselves for less costly improvements, such as pruning the trees and

transforming the fountain into an area of boxed plantings.

WHAT WENT WRONG?

The trouble began literally overnight when it seemed to many Society Hill neighbors that the park had suddenly sprouted McDonald's type arches in this much-loved park. According to 80+ neighbors and petitioners whose properties are close to the park, the desire to improve the safety of children resulted unfortunately in transforming a unique urban sanctuary into a playground out of scale with its immediate surroundings.

Whereas for the Friends of Three Bears—an ad-hoc group who lobbied long and hard for improvements—this modern playground, outfitted with state-of-the-art equipment, is a dream come true—spoiled only by the nightmare of some crabby old neighbors! The Friends are frequent park users (some from within Society Hill, some from other nearby neighborhoods).

Most neighbors and the Society Hill Civic Association were very supportive of the Friends' objectives of rehabilitation or replacement of worn and unsafe playground equipment—until the new equipment was installed without having been consulted about its design. The two sides of this controversy admit that there is a difference between rehabilitation of old equipment and the installation and expansion of equipment such that a new facility, essentially just a playground, was created. The Friends' position, on the other hand, is that after much volunteer work they are satisfied with the playground as it exists today and would

oppose any structural changes to the new equipment.

The lack of early and efficient communication and consensus between the park's immediate neighbors vs. the Friends group is probably the most serious initial mistake. The Recreation Department assumed that there was full neighborhood support for their choice of equipment and plans for expansion. Although one wonders why the Department's landscape architects, who did review the design plans, failed to realize that high-tech materials would clash in this historic district. Nor was the plan ever shared with neighbors or shown to the Civic Association, which could have provided insight and feedback.

Last summer an SHCA officer was asked to be a liaison person between these two groups so as to open up a fruitful dialogue. There was a hearing before the Art Commission. Meetings. Many ups and many downs, too numerous to report. Neighbors and the Civic Association commend the group's effort to improve the park. But today's challenge is to work together constructively for the common good of all. Meanwhile, the current leadership of the Friends group will soon be retiring, as is SHCA's representative. So it may fall upon the shoulders of nearby neighbors and residents to continue cleaning the stubborn graffiti that the new plastic equipment regularly attracts. But now some good news: the jarring orange portions of the equipment will be replaced with tacturer, at no cost to the City or to the Friends.

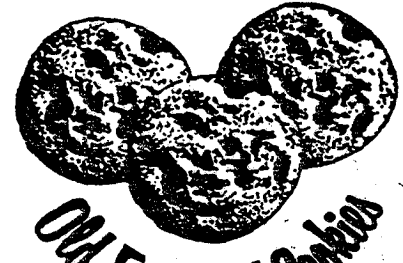
Perhaps—and in the best of all possible worlds—the equipment could be exchanged by the manufacturer to be replaced with their equipment of the same excellent quality, design and standards of safety. The play structures would complement its surroundings, not compete with it, as it could be constructed of the same strong metals to which are bonded natural wooden veneers. (The manufacturer has such a line and there are other quality companies who build play systems of child-friendly, pressure-preserved timbers.)

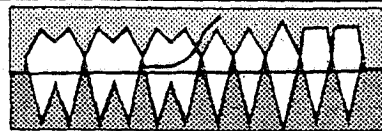
But since this is not the best of all possible worlds, we must agree to more humble objectives and hope that we can learn how to get all these good people together to resolve the issue. The Art Commission does expect that a consensus will be reached. Surely our neighborhood, abundant with people of talent and wisdom, can work toward accomplishing this goal. —Bernice Hamel

LIQUOR CONTROL BOARD (continued)

District Attorney Lynn Abraham (686-8700) 1421 Arch St., 19102
City Councilman Joseph Vignola (686-3458) City Hall, Room 404;
State Senator Vincent Fumo (468-3866) 1201 Tasker St., 19148;
State Representative W. Curtis Thomas (232-1210) 1348 W. Girard Ave., 19123.

GOOD NEWS! State Representative W. Curtis Thomas attended the March 16 General Meeting of the SHCA and spoke about his desire to be responsive to issues that affect our community. His special interest just happens to be the abuses of liquor licenses. Last year he helped establish in the House a "Nuisance Bar Task Force" to help improve the liquor code laws. He is fully committed to developing a comprehensive package that will address such issues as increased jurisdiction over the LCB from the Common Pleas Court; expand the number of days for posting requests from 15 days to 30; better follow-up on liquor license violations, etc. He's definitely on our side on this subject, as well as other concerns close to our hearts, such as tax reform. He welcomes your feedback. Hooray for Mr. Thomas!

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PHYSICK HOUSE DIRECTORS SERIES

Lorna Katz Lawson

"...we need to consider..." so she is quiet but determined. Lorna Katz Lawson, diligent chair of the Zoning Committee. Lorna, a practicing architect, provides insight into the third dimension that the third dimension comes from a two dimensional plan of a proposed renovation. Architecture was a natural choice for Lorna after graduation from Drexel College with a degree in Fine Arts. "Architecture provides a social purpose. It married social values and art." So after completing her graduate work at the

University of Pennsylvania, she started her own business. Several years later, she expanded the definition of partnership by joining her husband in John Lawson Architects of Center City, specialists in residential and institutional design. The handicap access at the Merchant Exchange Building is a nearby example of their work.

Despite her career, her work to get accord from the seven major civic associations fronting the river almost became a full time job this past summer. Basically, the groups had agreed that it would be better

if the city had a vision to guide and promote development of the riverfront. Instead, officials seemed to want to pick and choose ideas presented as they arose from developers, and hope that everything would work out for the best. Lorna

ing problems. Thoughtful planning prevents creating situations that must be "dealt with" and are often impossible to correct once done.

Even with twenty-five members on her committee, Lorna would like to see more active participation by neighbors when zoning changes are proposed. Often neighbors are unhappy but don't want to complain because "we still have to live next door." While the SHCA's position has always been to support the opinion of the most affected (nearest) neighbors, Lorna feels that this has not always served the best interests of the community. She cites the example of

tlement is less desirable to everyone.

Probably as an escape from work and these matters, Lorna lives with John and two cats in a Society Hill high rise. In fact, since 1973, she has moved three times in the same complex! When asked why, she cited "empty closets" as the allure. Then, of course, there are the spectacular views. Once again, social values and art are combined.



Lorna Katz Lawson, John Lawson

rightfully frets that this has led to disconnected pedestrian walkways, a dangerous lack of turnoff lanes from the highway into new malls, plus major traffic and park-

the original plans for office space and the current ones for a rehabilitation center for Pennsylvania Hospital at 7th and Pine Streets as showing where a negotiated set-

SHCA Calendar

(clip & save)

Wednesday April 21
7:30 PM to 9:30 PM
Board of Directors Meeting
Old Pine Community Center
NW Corner 4th and Lombard
Members Welcomed
NewMarket Development Plans

Friday, Saturday, Sunday
April 23 to 25
Physick House Plant Sale
Garden Entrance between 3rd & 4th Streets on Cypress Street

Saturday May 1
Clean Up Day
Morning - Alternate Street
Parking
Afternoon - Trash Pick Up
1:00 PM Ceremony at Head
House

Wednesday May 19
7:30 PM to 9:30 PM
General Membership Meeting
Pennsylvania Hospital

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Carol Feuerborn
Prudential Preferred Properties

Carol Feuerborn, Director of Premier Properties for Prudential Preferred Properties, was named top realtor of the year in both sales and listing at the sixteenth annual awards dinner sponsored by the Philadelphia Board of Realtors.

Ms. Feuerborn is a ten-year veteran in real estate, and a ten-year recipient of the Million Dollar Club Award.

A 22 year resident of Society Hill, Ms. Feuerborn is actively involved in both real estate related projects as well as community efforts, notably historic preservation. Since 1976 she has been an active member of the Landmark Society and has served in numerous capacities at the Hill Physick Keith House, including chair person, fund raiser and guide.

Ms. Feuerborn is the mother of two sons, Christian and Chip Feuerborn, who are both Society Hill residents; and she is the co-owner of Travel Unlimited, a Society Hill based travel firm.

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Physick House Plant Sale



321 South 4th Street
Friday, April 23 - 3:00-6:00 pm
Saturday, April 24 and Sunday April 25
10:00 am - 6:00 pm

THE SOCIETY HILL CIVIC ASSOCIATION

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Tear off and mail to:
Society Hill Civic Association
P.O. Box 3, Philadelphia, PA 19105

Attention: Treasurer

- New Member
- Household \$25
- Membership Renewal
- Business/Corporate \$50
- Mail Sun/Reporter \$5
- Corporate Sponsor \$100

Name _____
Address _____
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I(We) would be interested in working with the following committees:

- Membership
- Liquor Control
- Neighborhood Maintenance
- Town Watch
- Recycling
- Reporter/Sun newspaper
- Zoning
- Legislative
- Preservation
- Other (please specify)

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