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CENTER CITY RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

1600 Market Street, Suite 2500
Philadelphia, PA 19103
215-546-6719
centercity@centercityresidents.org
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Out & About

Schuylkill River Acclaimed 2014 River of the Year

By Bonnie Eisenfeld

Walkers, runners, bikers, dog owners, gardeners, kids, sunbathers, artists, rowers, canoeists, kayakers – just about everyone in our neighborhood – enjoy the Schuylkill River. Apparently so do other Pennsylvanians. More than 5,500 members of the public voted online last fall, from November 25 to December 27, in the **Pennsylvania River of the Year** contest, sponsored by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources – and the Schuylkill won!

A \$10,000 Leadership Grant to help fund the River's activities will be awarded to the winning applicant, the Schuylkill River Greenway Association, which manages the Schuylkill River National and State Heritage Area. The Association sponsors the **Annual Schuylkill River Sojourn**, a 112-mile, seven-day, guided canoe/kayak trip from Schuylkill Haven, just south of Pottsville in Schuylkill County, to Philadelphia's Boathouse Row.

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The Center City skyline, as seen from the Schuylkill River and Boathouse Row, glows at sunset.

Bonnie Eisenfeld

For three seasons each year, rowers, canoeists and kayakers ply the waters of the Schuylkill River along Boathouse Row. And as long as the river is not frozen or too windy, rowers are actually on the water all four seasons of the year. The 10 rowing clubs of Boathouse Row comprise the **Schuylkill Navy**, the oldest amateur athletic governing body in the U.S. Last year, Margaret Meigs was elected Commodore, only the second woman Commodore since the Navy was founded in 1858. Meigs and her husband, Paul Laskow, are rowers and members of the University Barge Club.

Regattas are held on the Schuylkill River from February to November. (Go to www.boathouserow.org/ for schedules.) Most follow the style of more traditional athletic competitions. Some races bear their own stamp of originality, such as the *Walnut2Walnut* and the *Philadelphia International Dragon Boat Festival*.

Conducted by the Independence Seaport Museum and co-sponsored by the Schuylkill Navy, **Walnut2Walnut**, on May 31 this year, consists of a 15-mile, two-river regatta; a river-to-river scavenger hunt; and a Saturday stroll along Walnut Street (www.phillyseaport.org/walnut2walnut). Funds raised support the museum's SAILOR (Science and Arts Innovative Learning On the River) education program, which provides a hands-on approach to boat building (www.phillyseaport.org/sailorprogram).

Following in the fall is the ever-popular annual **Philadelphia International Dragon Boat Festival** on Saturday, October 4, starting at 8 a.m. (www.philadragonboatfestival.com/).

Schuylkill River Tours offers a new attraction this year – wine-education tours. Boat tours, between Schuylkill Banks and Bartram's Gardens, are run by Patriot Harbor Lines each spring and summer. (www.phillybyboat.com/)

For people who prefer to stay on land, a variety of outdoor recreational activities are available along the river's banks. The **Schuylkill River Trail** (www.schuylkillrivertrail.com/), popular with runners, walkers, and bikers, stretches for 26 miles from Center City Philadelphia to Phoenixville in Chester County. The Trail will be almost 130 miles long



An artist at work during the Art in the Open festival along the Schuylkill Banks.

when completed. The **Schuylkill Banks Boardwalk** provides runners, pedestrians, bikers and others on wheels with connections to the Schuylkill River Trail between Locust Street and the South Street Bridge.

Friends in the City's regular walking club of seniors, **Schuylkill Walkers**, meets daily for three-mile walks on the River Trail from Locust Street to the Art Museum and back. The club meets Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 8:25 a.m., and Tuesday and Thursday at 2 p.m. (www.friendscentercity.org/default/events-and-activities).

Each May, one weekend is set aside for the **Art in the Open Plein-Air Festival**, wherein artists set up easels outdoors along the banks of the river while the public is free to stroll by and observe them at work (www.artintheopenphila.org). To learn about other events along the **Schuylkill Banks** go to (www.schuylkillbanks.org/events).

Members of CCRA may sign up for access to one of 70 gardening plots in the **Schuylkill River Park Community Garden** (www.srpcg.org/). The Community Garden is a National Wildlife Certified Wildlife Habitat and a member of Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's City Harvest Program, which donates surplus produce to local food cupboards. Schuylkill River Park also maintains a dog park, a playground, and basketball courts. **Friends of Schuylkill River Park** holds an annual **Fall Festival** one Saturday in October (www.fsrp.org/).



The pedestrian footbridge linking Center City and University City, as seen from Schuylkill River Park.

Diners at the restaurant **Bistro St. Tropez**, on the fourth floor of the Marketplace Design Center at 23rd and Market, can enjoy a singular view of the Schuylkill River, which is especially beautiful at night. With a glass of wine and some succulent *escargots*, one could almost sense the romance of an evening in Paris overlooking the Seine. And when the City of Philadelphia sets off fireworks over the Art Museum on the night of July 4th, many people gather in Schuylkill River Park to get a prime vantage point for marking Independence Day.

Day or night, on water or land, Center City residents have dozens of reasons to celebrate the Schuylkill!

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President's Report

Activities, Beautification, and Lolly LaGreca



Jeffrey L. Braff, CCRA President

Enhancing CCRA's visibility can pay many dividends in supporting membership recruitment, obtaining financial sponsorships, and increasing our political clout. One means of doing this is through the delivery of public programs and activities, as well as promoting those programs and activities. And this route has the added virtue of supporting our mission: the preservation, enhancement, and celebration of urban living. In this fiscal year (07/01/13-06/30/14), our programs/activities have included:

- September: Release of "AVI Appeal Guide," co-authored by CCRA Treasurer Walt Spencer and member Ed Shay
- September 25: School Fair at the Franklin Institute, showcasing 21 area public, private, and charter schools, with special guest, School District Supt. Dr. William Hite
- October 3: Mix & Mingle cocktail party at Enoteca
- October 20: 55th Annual House Tour
- February 1: Meet & Greet for families with young children at Serafina, with Judy Tudy the Clown
- February 12: "Public Safety, the Police, and You," with new Police Capt. Raymond Convery, Lt. Marty Best, and Officer Steve Kieffer (at Trinity Center for Urban Life)
- March 13: Celebration of Center City Living/Mardi Gras Party at the Academy of Vocal Arts, honoring John Randolph, founder and past president of Schuylkill River Development Council and Chair of Community OutReach Partnership
- April 2: "School Daze: How to Choose an Elementary School for Your Center City Child," panel discussion with psychologist Marlyn Vogel, Ed. D., retired school principal Eileen Dwell, and Greenfield School outreach coordinator Luise Moskowitz (at Trinity Center for Urban Life)
- April 7: "The Future of Philadelphia's Middle Class," panel discussion with Susan Warner (Pew Charitable Trusts), Stephen Mullin (Econsult Solutions), and

Steve Wray (Economy League of Greater Philadelphia) about Pew Charitable Trusts' February 2014 monograph: "Philadelphia's Changing Middle Class: After Decades of Decline, Prospects for Growth" (at Trinity Center for Urban Life)

- May 7-8: Herb Booth at Rittenhouse Square Flower Market for Children's Charities
- May 21: Annual Meeting at the Curtis Institute of Music, featuring a presentation by Deputy Mayor of Transportation and Utilities Rina Cutler and the bestowing of our Bobbye Burke Preservation Award to the Rittenhouse Square Centennial Restoration Project, with a post-meeting wine-and-cheese reception in the offices of Berger and Montague
- May 30: Annual Ladybug Release Party at the Schuylkill River Park Community Garden

* * * *

After paying for our Executive Director/office support, CCRA's largest expense by far is our \$29,000 contract to pay for sidewalk- and ginkgo-berry clean-ups after weekly trash collections. By now you should have received a solicitation for the 2014 Neighborhood Beautification Campaign, CCRA's annual-giving program to help pay for this and other beautification measures. Please make your tax-deductible contribution today by mailing a check to the CCRA office or clicking on "Membership and Support" from the home page of our website at www.centercityresidents.org. And be sure to let your friends know that this service is provided by CCRA. (Many in the neighborhood think that this is a City service. We are hoping that the bright yellow vests now being worn by the sweepers, emblazoned with the phrase "CCRA Funded Cleaning," will help to correct this misconception.)

Thanks for your support.

* * * *

Finally, with great sadness I report the passing of our 26th President, Dolores "Lolly" La Greca, on May 30. Lolly started her professional life as a dancer with the Pennsylvania Ballet. In 1982, she and Joanne Davidow formed Midtown Realty. Lolly remained active in CCRA well after her 1997-99 term; it was her suggestion that led to this year's launch of our Street Scene Competition (see Back Page). She will be missed.

Recalling a Calamity: 20th Anniversary of the Trinity Inferno

By Nancy Stinson

The evening of July 27, 1994, was a typical summer night in Philadelphia: temperatures in the 80s and humidity close to 100 percent. Around 9 pm a line of thunderstorms started rolling in. If you lived in the Fidler Square area at that time, you probably heard a heart-stopping crash of thunder, just after midnight.

Kaki Kriebel, of the 2100 block of Spruce Street, heard it. Asleep in bed, she and her husband “just levitated,” because the thunderclap was so loud. Several minutes later the phone rang. It was the burglar alarm company for Trinity Memorial Church (TMC) at 22nd and Spruce.

“We dressed and went over right away,” said Ms. Kriebel, a member of the church vestry. “We weren’t supposed to go in, but the police didn’t show up, so we went in and found the alarm panel going haywire. It didn’t respond to our attempts to turn it off, but finally went off on its own. We looked around the church and it was dead quiet, everything was in order, so we went home and went back to bed.”

Shortly after 4, Ms. Kriebel awakened again, this time smelling smoke.

“I knew immediately what had happened.” She called 911 and was told the fire department was on its way. Dashing across the intersection, Ms. Kriebel arrived on the scene at the same time as the fire trucks. Horrified, she saw flames shooting from the roof. Apparently, the church had been struck by lightning – perhaps accompanied by that loud clap of thunder that had awakened her earlier – shorting out the security system in the process, and a fire had been smoldering undetected in the rafters for several hours.

A gathering crowd watched as water from the fire hoses blasted through the large stained-glass rose window above the main entrance on Spruce Street. Attempting to enter, a fireman struck one of the heavy wood doors with his ax, and was about to hit it again when Ms. Kriebel ran up and shouted, “Wait, I have a key.” Amazingly, she had had the presence of mind to grab it before racing to the church. That door still stands.

Meanwhile, at 25th and Manning Streets, John and Missy Randolph, also members of

TMC, had been awakened by the flickering flames. They quickly dressed and headed toward the fire. As they rounded the corner onto Spruce, John Randolph said the sight “literally took our breath away.”

At one point, the fire melted the nails holding the slate tiles on the roof, and in one “really awful” moment, Ms. Kriebel said, a mass of slate slid off the roof at once, eliciting a loud groan from some 200 onlookers. Soon after, she heard an anguished voice behind her lament, “They do so much for the community.”

For decades preceding the disaster, the TMC congregation had been guided by a mission to reach out to the surrounding community to address the needs of the elderly, poor, and disadvantaged. The parish-house basement housed a shelter for homeless men. Trinity Playgroup for preschoolers had been organized by church members and operated in the church since the late 1960s. A Girl Scout troop was formed for neighborhood kids, and the first 12-step program in Philadelphia for gay individuals met inside church walls.

The legacy of this longstanding community outreach was a neighborhood that stepped up after the crisis to keep the church alive, and to bring it back stronger and better than ever.

By late in the day of July 28, the fire had been extinguished, and parishioners were permitted to look inside. What they saw left them sickened, heartbroken. The roof was gone; the basement floor was submerged in several feet of black, sooty water. Burned rafters cluttered the courtyard.

But miraculously, the beloved painting of angels that was mounted above the altar was unharmed. (The 1907 painting was copied from tiny angels in the frame of a tabernacle of the Madonna by Fra Angelico in the Convento San Marco in Florence.) Members of the congregation were amazed and gladdened by what they saw as a very hopeful sign – that their angels had survived the conflagration.

Although an official of the Episcopal diocese suggested that TMC members could attend



The morning after: charred beams are all that remain of the church roof.

one of the many other Episcopal churches in the area, there was no doubt in the minds of its members that the church should and would be restored. For The Reverend Louis Temme, TMC’s longtime rector, it was not simply a matter of where members could go, but also “what about the children of Trinity Play Group? And what about the homeless men who are served a meal and sleep in the undercroft each night during the winter months? Where would they go?”

Within 24 hours, restoration planning was underway. Fortunately, TMC’s small congregation included three architects, a building contractor and a financial whiz on the faculty of the Wharton School. A work chart was displayed and responsibilities were assigned: stabilizing the building and having a temporary roof constructed (masterfully handled by the late Steven Gatschet); architect selection; sanctuary design; fundraising; communication; bookkeeping, and more.

Bookkeeping? Even as the fire burned, checks began pouring in from members of the surrounding community.

“Two individuals, former members of the church, each handed me checks for \$1,000 that very day,” said Ms. Kriebel. Another neighbor offered \$20,000 if the church could raise a matching amount, which was quickly accomplished.

Sensing this broad involvement, just six months earlier, church members and 40 community leaders had convened a “Future Search Conference” to plan a 10-year vision for expanding TMC’s role and reach as a center of community life. Out of this conference *Friends of Trinity Memorial Church* was born, with participants pledging to raise \$20,000 a year to offset the church’s operating deficit.

“This generous act demonstrated that the community was highly supportive of the church’s community focus,” according to Rev. Temme, “and wanted to increase the level of activity in the buildings.”

Immediately after the fire, the *Friends* kicked into high gear, ultimately garnering \$350,000 in contributions from 700 individual supporters. Along with insurance payments, foundation grants, contributions from other churches and members of TMC, nearly \$3 million was raised to rebuild.

Meanwhile, church members searched the site to reclaim anything that was usable. The rose window on Spruce Street and the clerestory windows on both sides of the building had been shattered. Once the church was free of water, Abbie Kinzler of Panama Street and Sallie Van Merkensteijn, then of Lombard Street, and others scoured the floors for pieces of glass from the windows.

They filled dozens of boxes with glass shards of all sizes, thicknesses and colors, which were used by stained-glass restoration experts at Willet Hauser of Germantown to recreate the windows. Photos taken by scholars studying the windows before the fire provided a reference for the artisans. Church member John Kohlhas of Lombard Street estimates that 30 to 40 percent of the current

windows contain pieces of the old windows.

The most critical decision facing the congregation was how to design the sanctuary. Some members had for years dreamed of removing the stationary pews to create a flexible space to be used not only for worship but also for myriad other church and community activities they envisioned. Members visited other local churches, and Rev. Temme researched modern European church architecture. As it turned out, other congregations looking to use their sanctuary for additional activities had begun adopting a design involving fan-shaped seating around a movable altar and communion rail.

The concept worked perfectly at TMC, in part because the original 1874 construction employed innovative hammer-beam trusses to create an internal space free of columns. Removing the pews created a large, airy, open room. Coats of creamy-colored paint brightened the space further. Original carpeting was replaced by a hardwood floor, which transformed the sound quality in the space so much that it became a sought-after concert venue.

This year, the members of Trinity Memorial Church are celebrating the 20th anniversary of the fire. It may seem odd to celebrate a tragedy, yet the fire sparked a rebirth at the corner of 22nd and Spruce, for the congregation and the surrounding community. Lou Temme and John Randolph both cite the event as one of the most important in their lives. Abbie Kinzler likens it to the aftermath of a forest fire, in which dead wood and tangled undergrowth are cleared away to allow new growth to take hold.

Trinity Playgroup is still going strong after more than 40 years, and WinterShelter



The Rev. Louis Temme and parishioner Anne Hall survey the wreckage of the church interior, while contractors work in the background.

continues to provide dinner and a safe place to sleep for homeless men during the cold months of the year. The beautiful sanctuary now hosts well-attended concerts by Astral Artists, Al-Bustan Seeds of Culture, Trinity’s Four Seasons Concert Series, and dance performances, drawing people to the neighborhood from all over the city.

The Boy’s Choir of Philadelphia rehearses in the church. It’s a venue for weddings and funerals of non-members, as well as meetings and conferences. The local police district holds citizen meetings in the church, and it is a polling place during elections. An AA group meets there regularly, and there are book groups, puppet shows for kids and daytime concerts for seniors. Meals are prepared in the church kitchen for the homebound, and the church has been a collection site for *Toys for Tots*, proper recycling of electrical and electronic items, and the Drug Enforcement Agency’s program for safe disposal of expired medications.

On the day of the fire, Rev. Temme prayed for understanding of why it happened. While he has not received an answer, one thing he is sure of is that the church is still here because of what it was *before* lightning struck.

Town Square

Sudden House Explosion in Fidler Square Neighborhood Prompts Alarm — and Gratitude

Editor’s Note: As most of our members surely have learned by now – whether via news reports or their own proximity to the incident – a sudden explosion and ensuing fire devastated a house on the 2300 block of Naudain Street, and left adjoining properties severely damaged. In the predawn hours of

May 1, as residents slept, one family was awakened by the sound of their carbon monoxide alarm emitting its high-pitched shriek. Others reported smelling gas. They alerted the fire department, whose quick response and courageous dedication

Continued on p. 7



Utility workers observe the scene, while water is sprayed on the site of the explosion.

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pounding on each and every door (including a multi-family condominium building) to roust the occupants from their beds, ensured that all got out of harm's way. Only a short time after the evacuation was completed, the massive explosion occurred. Thankfully, there were no human casualties, but a number of the survivors are nonetheless left homeless and bereft of possessions.

One of our CCRA Board Members, Donna Strug (who as Staff Photographer produces an abundance of the lively and skillful work that graces the pages of Center City Quarterly), felt moved to circulate the



Remains of the destroyed house are visible behind backhoe being used to remove debris.

following letter among her immediate neighbors in the vicinity of the fire. Her message is worthy of a wider audience, so we decided to share it with all our members, along with Donna's photographs of the aftermath of the explosion.

Hello Neighbors,

I feel compelled to make a public-service announcement in light of the explosion this morning of the home, and extensive damage to the adjoining apartments and structures on either side, on Naudain Street between 23rd and 24th Streets.

A resident of one of the destroyed apartments told me that a **carbon monoxide detector** (this one is for both natural gas and carbon monoxide: <http://www.kidde.com/Documents/900-0113.pdf>); went off in one of the other apartments, and that the resident immediately contacted the authorities. By the time that PGW arrived on the scene, they were getting readings at levels of 2,000. Everyone was immediately evacuated. The home connected to the apartment complex experienced

the explosion no more than ten minutes after the evacuation. The home and several adjacent properties appear to be totally destroyed. The pictures attached were taken early this afternoon.

While the cause is under investigation, **it is clear that the carbon monoxide detector saved many lives this morning**, since the explosion occurred while residents were asleep. One woman was already experiencing symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning.

We currently have detectors on each level of our house, and would like to encourage all of our neighbors to do likewise. It is difficult to imagine this type of devastation in our community, but clearly it can happen. Please forward this to any other friends or neighbors who may benefit.

Wishing all of you a safe day.

Donna

http://www.philly.com/philly/news/Explosion_3-alarm_blaze_overnight_in_South_Philadelphia.html

Town Square

CCRA Testifies In Favor of Anti-SLAPP Legislation

By Jeffrey Braff, President

Approximately one year ago, Old City Civic Association, a fellow civic and active member of the Crosstown Coalition, disbanded. It did so because it was unable to purchase affordable and comprehensive Directors and Officers insurance coverage. Such coverage is essential to attract and retain board members and officers. Old City Civic had always been able to obtain such insurance, but after being the object of two frivolous lawsuits (each of which was voluntarily dismissed, but only after OCCA's insurance carrier had retained an attorney, filed an answer to the suits, and commenced the discovery process), its carrier advised the Association that it would not renew their policy. More than 15 attempts to get D&O coverage through other carriers either went nowhere, or yielded proposed coverage that was unaffordable or contained exclusions and deductibles that made the coverage virtually worthless.

The demise of OCCA sent shivers through other area civics. Strategic lawsuits against public participation, or "SLAPP" suits, are aimed not at remedying claims asserted, but to tie up defendants in time-consuming and expensive litigation for the purpose of stifling criticism and deterring actions – such as opposing the granting of a liquor license or zoning variance – that would be harmful to the plaintiff. And independent of the financial costs and emotional energy sapped by a SLAPP that is actually filed, to have the fear of such a lawsuit influence a civic's decision-making and communications would be a terrible result.

To help address these concerns, State Senator Larry Farnese has introduced Senate Bill No. 1095, which has been described as anti-SLAPP legislation. On April 24, the PA Senate Judiciary Committee held hearings on the Bill in



Among those testifying are CCRA Pres. Jeffrey Braff, center, and Exec. Dir. Steve Huntington, far left, representing the Crosstown Coalition. (Photo provided by the Office of State Sen. Larry Farnese)

Philadelphia. Following testimony by a law professor and two attorneys, in my role as CCRA President I spoke in favor of the concept of the legislation, while offering a number of suggested revisions. Joining me was Joe Schiavo of the former Old City Civic, along with representatives of three other civics, and Steve Huntington, on behalf of the Crosstown Coalition. CCRA will continue monitoring this important piece of legislation.



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Philly Foodworks, the Flexible CSA that Works for Everyone

By Fran Levi

Dylan Baird, Jamal Bell and Ryan Witmer, the co-founders of Philly Foodworks, a new Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), met while working at the Urban Tree Connection, a nonprofit organization that engages children and adults from some of Philadelphia’s most disadvantaged neighborhoods in community-based, urban greening projects.

While at Urban Tree Connection, they founded Neighborhood Foods, which was described in the article “‘Eating Local’ with Neighborhood Foods,” in the June 2013 *Center City Quarterly* as a self-sustaining urban farming business that was built as a marketplace around food in low-income neighborhoods.

As the men developed their system for urban farming and local food distribution, they found there were a number of small-scale food producers who had amazing products – jams, breads, chocolates, cheeses, and the like – but who could not figure out how to bring them to market. “As a producer and small-business owner, getting products to the consumer can be the most daunting part of the job,” Mr. Baird says.

To accomplish this, the partners created Philly Foodworks, a flexible CSA, linking these producers to their customers, while enabling them to improve their cash flow without having to function as their



Along with husband Dave, Powelton Village’s Carly Dougherty, above, began Food & Ferments in 2012. Utilizing local produce, they specialize in small-batch sauerkraut, kimchi, kombucha, beet kvass, and other seasonal ferments.

own sales representatives. Members (customers) commit to purchase food from producers through the length of the growing season, May 27 to October 23, and to pay for the whole season in full or in multiple installments.

Philly Foodworks then advances the producers 50 percent of their projected income for the season, based upon anticipated yields and jointly established prices. According to Mr. Baird, “... members are guaranteeing a market for our producers, and decreasing the risk, which is essential for supporting and empowering small producers.”

Who are the producers? The Philly Foodworks network includes, but is not limited to, farmers in Honey Brook, New Tripoli, Richfield and Philadelphia. In fact, their selection of urban-farmed produce is one of the largest in the city for any retailer. Producers also include a chocolate factory in North Philly, a coffee roaster in Point Breeze, bakeries in West Philadelphia and Center City, an organic barbecue-sauce producer in Glenside, a producer of probiotic-rich ferments in Chestnut Hill, and many small businesses. Philly Foodworks guarantees that 25 percent of their CSA products are grown or made in Philadelphia.

Philly Foodworks members select from three CSA share types: Your Choice, Mix Share or Farmer’s Choice. There are also optional shares available. Members have three delivery options: home delivery for an additional charge, via Wash Cycle Laundry; community pick-up sites; and group-delivery sites for groups of 10 or more people. The CCRA neighborhood hosts two community pick-up sites: Gavin’s Café at 2536 Pine Street; and the OCF Café at 1745 South Street.

Philly Foodworks uses the same distribution system to supply four low-income farmers’ markets with locally produced, good food so they can sell it to members at an affordable rate.

Members have responded positively to the concept. In the words of one satisfied



Ryan Witmer, Jamal Bell, and Dylan Baird, founders of Philly Foodworks, pictured left to right.



Troy and Adrian work at Heritage Farm, a year-round organic farm on three acres of transformed land within the Methodist Home for Children’s Philadelphia campus. Produce is divided between feeding the residents, and selling to Philly Foodworks and the larger community.

customer, “I chose Philly Foodworks because its mission benefits small farmers in my community, including urban farmers, who nurture growth in the most unlikely of places.”

Flexibility is something that differentiates Philly Foodworks from other CSAs. Members can select the foods they want each week from an online farmers’ market, or sign up for a standard share based on farmers’ available supply. When members go out of town or cannot pick up their share, they can put their account on hold. Those deliveries will be withheld, and the value of the box will be added to their account so they can spend it at the online market.

By continuing to develop additional options, Baird, Bell and Witmer plan to expand their network of small producers to Philly Foodworks members, by offering a greater array of healthy, locally produced foods. Information on Philly Foodworks, their producers, and products is online at <http://phillyfoodworks.com/>

School Daze Panel Helps Parents Navigate the School Maze

By Judy Heller, Vice President for Education and Family Programs

As with any diverse urban population, it's clear there is no one-size-fits-all solution for where to send your child to elementary school. But there are many parents* and education professionals ready and available to engage in meaningful dialogue that helps reduce the stress and isolation parents often feel when faced with such a momentous decision.

For that reason, CCRA repeated their successful 2012 School Daze program, a panel discussion on what to look for in an elementary school, which was held on the evening of April 3 at Trinity Memorial Church. Short presentations by panelists Marlyn Vogel, Ed.D., a licensed psychologist and school neuropsychologist; Eileen Dwell, a retired Philadelphia and suburban principal; and Luise Moskowitz, outreach committee chair of Greenfield Home and School Association; and a discussion, which I moderated, were followed by a question-and-answer period with the audience.

Dr. Vogel started off the program with an observation regarding the heightened anxiety that today's parents must grapple with when choosing a school, as compared with previous generations. As an example, she pointed out that in New York City, parents' anxieties, coupled with a competitive enrollment environment, have spawned a new industry that tutors 3-year-olds in order to raise their IQ scores. Audience members laughed with recognition. Dr. Vogel urged parents to keep their stress in check, and laid out a plan that empowered them to do so.

She emphasized that parents first must observe their child to better understand his or her needs and temperament, in order to find the school that is the best fit. What are their strengths? What is their learning style? Are they outgoing? Shy? What is their activity level? Can they sit still for periods of time or do they have to move around? What is their initial reaction to new situations? Are they cautious? Do they overreact? Are they calm? Adaptable? Distracted? What is their attention span? Do they persist in trying to figure things out for themselves or are they quick to ask for help? If your child has any learning differences, what is the best way for him/her to learn? Based on your answers, some learning environments



Left to right, panelists Marlyn Vogel, Eileen Dwell and Luise Moskowitz.

might be better suited than others for your child. Dr. Vogel stressed the importance of discussing these variables with schools you are considering, to see if they are a good fit.

Our next panelist, Eileen Dwell, offered a principal's perspective on what to look for on a school visit. The personality of the school, she said, is much more than the building: it's what's inside that counts. She emphasized the importance of trusting your gut when you choose a school, as well as the importance of separating your needs from your child's. Ms. Dwell provided a wealth of tips for getting the most out of a school visit, which you will find in the accompanying sidebar.

Our final panelist was Luise Moskowitz, who offered a fresh perspective on what is often viewed as the chaotic process of choosing an elementary school. She noted that Philadelphia offers great educational opportunities for families, as there are a lot of quality options to choose from among public, private, charter and parochial schools.

Ms. Moskowitz stressed that the nuts and bolts of school selection need to be given as much importance as the quality of education. For example, if you are considering a school that is far from your home, be sure you have a solid commuting plan in mind. Be honest with yourself: can you actually get your child to school on time? If you're miserable in the morning and have a long commute, is 180

days of anxiety over recurring tardiness and absence – which are noted on a child's record and can have an impact on future educational options – worth it? How you start your child's morning sets the tone for the rest of the day, she observed.

Ms. Moskowitz also suggested parents evaluate how involved they want to be at their child's school, and evaluate whether their needs match the parental involvement the school offers. Are the parental roles spelled out?

To find out about the schools you are interested in, Ms. Moskowitz offered these suggestions. Check out the Home and School Association websites of each school, which often are more current than the schools' website. Go to open-house tours. Check out the school at dismissal time. What is the impression you get of the kids and their families? Is it chaotic? Online resources include: www.greatcityschools.org; www.kidsincentercity.com; and Philadelphia.speaks.com.

The Q and A portion of the program generated an array of questions for the panelists, and provided a forum for audience members to share their concerns, experiences, resources, and updates on such information as application and enrollment deadlines. An atmosphere of community support prevailed, and while often there were no definitive

answers, those in attendance expressed a sense of lessened anxiety and uncertainty after hearing the presentations and discussion. At the conclusion of the program, everyone continued the dialogue over goodies provided by neighborhood merchants Trader Joe's and Nuts to You. CCRA wishes to thank Penn Medicine at Rittenhouse for their generous sponsorship of our program.

Looking ahead

Please mark your calendars for our upcoming School Fair on October 22. If you'd like to help out at the Fair or learn more about our committee, I'd be delighted to fill you in. As always, please contact me with any program suggestions you have.

On a personal note... My children attended elementary school in the 1980s and are now parents themselves. I am always struck by how the guiding principle I used for educational decisions affecting them is still relevant today for my grandchildren. I believe there's no automatic pilot to parenting. Continued involvement and assessment of whether the school and teachers are meeting your child's learning needs are an ongoing job. Change is a given. It's our responsibility to pay attention. If you do, I believe your children will have the best chance to receive the education that enables them to thrive. Parenting is the hardest job I've ever done, but trumps any professional success I've had. I wish you the same.



Parents sign in for the School Daze program.

**For the purpose of simplicity, we use the term parents to mean any adult with legal responsibility for a child, including parents, grandparents, guardians, etc.*

School Daze: A Time of Decisions

By Eileen Dwell

When the time comes to decide what kindergarten program to choose for your child you have many options and ways to look at possible school programs.

First and foremost, know your child. Understand their personality and in what settings or situations they are most comfortable. Typical 6-year-olds enjoy explaining things. This sharing helps develop language skills. They love jokes and guessing games but also tend to complain frequently. Sometimes their language is boisterous and enthusiastic.

Socially a 6-year-old cares about friends and often has a best friend. They thrive on encouragement and want to do well. Competitive, bossy, or wanting to be first are all characteristic behavioral traits. Children learn best at this age through discovery, and are highly motivated to learn, but may pick projects that are too hard. In the classroom, they will copy from the board, but find it difficult, and many teachers use personal white boards. Six-year-olds can track from left to right, a precursor to reading. When writing, they find that spacing and staying in lines can be challenging.

Six-year-olds love to color and paint, and begin to engage in cooperative play. At this age children can work in a busy, noisy, yet organized environment. They can produce large quantities of work when encouraged, but are not concerned about quality. With

this framework in mind, think about your child and your family.

As a principal, I believe a happy school experience for your child makes a happy family. Here are some things to consider when visiting a school. How are you greeted when you enter the building? Is the office staff welcoming, interested in helping you? Is the registration process well organized? Is the principal accessible? Even having an entire school to be concerned with, is she willing to meet with you if your child has specific needs to be addressed? As you walk through the hallways what do you see? Are there displays of student work? Is there relaxed but orderly movement of students between classrooms? Are they greeted warmly or by name? Do students know each other by name? Do classrooms have learning centers/areas? Are there visible resources to support learning? Perhaps items in the room are labeled or there is a word wall (an alphabetical list of commonly used words). How does the teacher interact with students, and how do students interact with each other? Is the environment one of mutual respect and caring? How do other school staff interact with children? Is there evidence of routines and procedures for daily tasks and overall operation of the classroom?

Choosing a kindergarten program can raise anxiety. Be confident in yourself as a parent and in the knowledge you have

about your child. You can help your child by talking about taking turns. This may be a first experience of having to take turns with 29 other children and meshing with many different personalities. Remember, bricks a school does not make, it is the people that make the school.

Have fun with your child in these precious days before they enter kindergarten. Read predictable pattern, rhyming books to your child. Stop at intervals during reading a book aloud and ask what they think is going to happen. Play games where your child tells you the first and/or last sound of a word, and associates that sound to the appropriate letter name. Do lots of measuring using all sorts of objects as the unit of measure. Make up fun ways to measure objects around the house. How many of daddy's shoes does it take to walk the length of the kitchen? Let them measure the ingredients when you cook.

Do what you think is best for your child and your family. If a school you like is too far from home, consider the commuting time and ease of making play dates. Trust your instincts. When all is said and done it is all about the relationship between your child and their teacher. If you feel confused, ask the principal to let you to provide a letter describing your child's personality so she can be better able to make a good match to a teacher. Just remember nothing is perfect and children are more resilient than we are.

Urbanists to Cities: C'mon, Get Happy

By Virginia K. Nalencz

Here we are on Easter Island, pondering the question: What were they thinking when they carved the last of the standing Heads? The island was stripped of its resources in the service of a belief, whatever belief system the Heads served. Will extraterrestrial anthropologists of the future wonder the same about us? What were they thinking, those earthlings, when they destroyed their habitat?

The doomsday scenario has been unrolling for some time. Now comes a more optimistic viewpoint from, of all places, “the gloomy science” of economics. Charles Montgomery’s *Happy City*, published in 2013, stands at an intersection that sees heavy scholarly traffic nowadays, at the corner where behavioral economics meets urban studies. Neither rationality nor the wish to be virtuous may save us from becoming Easter Island, says Montgomery. It is rather the pursuit of happiness that will lead us to construct a more sustainable way of life. Sustainability will depend upon cities, where most people now live. And city life will make us happy, says Montgomery, if we do it right.

The “evolutionary happiness function” states that happiness keeps moving the goalposts. The things we buy—baubles and bangles and big shiny houses and cars—are subject to the laws of diminishing returns of happiness. There are a few exceptions, among them great public spaces, which continue to make us happy, over and over again. Casual



A green urban oasis: Fitler Square embodies the *Happy City* criteria of spontaneous neighborly encounters, gardening opportunities, foot traffic, and accessible park-like respite from urban overcrowding.

encounters on the street in the course of civic activities, digging in the garden, or playing sports can lift us up, and studies show that city people are less likely to be “bowling alone” than suburbanites. Contrariwise, what makes us most unhappy is a long, difficult commute, because (to paraphrase Tolstoy) it creates unhappiness in its own slightly different way with each repetition.

The problem of the commute goes to the question of how to plan, manage and sustain the city and its streets. The advent of the

automobile altered the concept of the street. It was no longer a route from here to there at a pace that allowed the rest of street-life to continue – as a market, a gathering place, a space safe for the very young and old. Automobile manufacturers, dealers and owners changed the dynamic, successfully pushing for laws that would allow for the primacy of speed. The car, not the person, became the king of the road.

Happy City suggests ways to take back the streets. If we rethink how to use roads

In the Zone of the Happy City

As dirt and overcrowding plagued the cities of the Industrial Revolution, zoning provided a solution. Separation of uses would prevent a tannery from operating next to an apartment house. The gritty phase of industrialization is mostly past in the First World, yet zoning targeted at smoky factories endures. Like its smaller, younger sibling, the homeowners’ association, zoning exerts a level of control that freedom-loving Americans paradoxically embrace.

Zoning became a kind of freeze-tag: This is the way we will build our country and there will be no other way. There will be cities of towers, abandoned at night, encircled by detached houses that are abandoned by working people in daytime. Freeze frame. Zoning prohibits greater density in near suburbs, so development is

pushed farther and farther out.

The great neighborhoods in the U.S. are code-breakers; what is illegal in most cities and towns is what creates the kind of place Americans like to visit on vacations. Main Street in Disney World is the classic example, along with the old, walkable cities of the South, like Savannah and Charleston, and – we note with the modesty inherited from Quaker founders – Center City Philadelphia.

A second code, akin to zoning, is the Federal traffic bible, the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, awesomely abbreviated MUTCD, which favors travelers passing through a town over people who live in the place where the road goes. From zoning laws

in 1920s to downloadable municipal codes, these embedded entities illustrate *autopoiesis*, self-replication. Like the Sorcerer’s Apprentice, they keep on bringing water long after a flood is threatening to sweep us away.

Yet zoning can be turned to advantage, Charles Montgomery writes in *Happy City*, as, for example, when it is brought up to date and used to retrofit close-in suburbs. Vast mall parking lots can be reconfigured as walkable neighborhoods with smaller blocks, parks, a mixture of residences, offices, and retail, and wrapped parking, yielding a critical mass for public transit. If this sounds like a city-in-the-making, that too is a serendipitous offshoot of zoning, version 2.

– VKN

we might ask, “Why should we privilege cars over walkers and cyclists?” In 1962 Jan Gehl began to study how people used public spaces, beginning with Siena’s medieval square, the Piazza del Campo. He measured foot traffic, people sitting in outdoor cafés, on benches or on rims of fountains, and concluded that what people like to watch most is other people.

Meanwhile back in his native Copenhagen, the traffic in the city center was barely moving, especially along a string of market streets known as the Strøget. Gehl persuaded the transit authorities to try



This triptych illustrates the relative numbers of vehicles—and the road space they occupy—needed to transport the same number of individuals, using bicycles, cars, and a bus, respectively.

Continued on p. 14

Happy City by the Numbers

The following bullet points add up to Happy City by the Numbers:

- Montgomery’s reports about urban happiness find support in hard data. In 2011 he joined a team examining the “neuroscience of moving through cities.” The study demonstrated the differences in human physiological reactions to streets, depending on the degrees of crowding, noise, and presence or absence of long-dead façades. Other studies establish links between design and healing (hospital patients with views get better faster), design and civility (on lively streets with mom-and-pop stores, people forgive pushing easily and return lost wallets readily; in the exurbs where everyone drives everywhere, people predict that a lost wallet will be gone forever); and design and longevity (people who live in walkable neighborhoods remain healthy longer).
- A study of three near-identical streets in San Francisco showed that with 2,000 cars passing through every day, there was active street life. Children played on sidewalks, people knew their neighbors, sat on front steps and socialized. At 8,000 cars per day, social life declined measurably. At 16,000 cars per day, there was no public life. The study also indicated that people were less likely to help strangers, the noisier and faster the street where help was needed.
- In the year after Charlotte, N.C., installed the LYNX light rail, people who lived near the commuter line walked 1.2 miles per day more than they had before, and lost an average of 6.5 lbs. On the other hand, people refused to walk in a vast mall-parking lot, preferring to move their cars three times in one shopping trip. “They just hated trudging across the asphalt desert. It felt ugly, uncomfortable, and unsafe,” Montgomery writes, of the opposite effects of smart growth and sprawl.
- Ample, easy parking leads to a dead neighborhood, because people drive in and out without being *in* it. The Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles was constructed above a huge underground parking structure for more than 6,000 cars. The splashy, Frank Gehry-designed building never fulfilled the planners’ intention to enliven the neighborhood. No cafés appeared, nor did street life. People come and go to concerts by car, because they can. Of the effect of in-house parking in general, Montgomery writes, “If all the people in your neighborhood have room for their cars inside their homes or under their apartments, you are much less likely to see them on the sidewalk.”
- During the renaissance of Asheville, N.C., which began in the 1990s, the city refurbished a grand old six-story former J.C. Penney’s department store in the heart of downtown into a classic mixed-use building of offices, condos, and shops. One study compared the Penney’s building to a Walmart on the edge of town, using the metric employed by farmers: What is the yield per acre? Penney’s occupies one-quarter acre; Walmart, 34 acres, including parking. Against the Walmart’s six jobs per acre, the Penney building generated 34. Property and sales taxes collected from Walmart totaled \$50,800, while the Penney building produced \$330,000 in property taxes alone. In general, even buildings of two or three stories bring in 10 times the revenue per acre of big boxes. In addition, money spent in local businesses stays in town; big-chain profits leave the community.
- Almost half of all 18-year-olds in America today would choose Internet access over owning a car. In the century just past, people tended to think of their cars as extensions of themselves; now, it’s the phone or the tablet that is the extra appendage. Phones are more in sync with riding on public transit or walking than with driving (although it’s *always* good to watch where you’re going). The problem of texting while driving looks different when considered from the point of view of the person who sees texting as the more important activity. The solution becomes more “take away the car” than “take away the gadget.” Public transit is more attractive than car ownership to one who wishes to be able to text at will.
- Neuroscience indicates that the more generous people are, the happier they are. Co-operative, trusting people have higher levels of the hormone oxytocin than their suspicion-prone cohorts. Being grumpy makes us grumpier.
- “For every mile traveled, riding a bus is ten times safer than driving a car,” according to U.S. government health-care cost analyses.
- On the widening gap between rich and poor: 30 years ago, a CEO made four times as much as the lowest-level employee in the company; now, *four hundred* times as much. *Happy City* places income inequality in the context of neighborhood renewal. To prevent gentrification from pushing out longtime residents when rents and property taxes rise, towns and cities need laws that require developers to include a percentage of affordable housing.
- Gardening is good for people. “Bacteria found naturally in soil boosts serotonin and reduces anxiety,” according to one study. In cities, gardening is social. In East Berlin, in one of the grim Soviet-era apartment complexes, a group of women decided to reclaim the grudging “open space” between the block-y buildings. And neighbors who had never before spoken to one another became friends.
- Finally, studies show that people value a transition between home and work, pegging the ideal time of that transition at 16 minutes, one way, which happens to be the approximate duration of a walk between Center City West and many workplaces in Philadelphia.

— I/KN

closing sections of the Strøget to motor traffic, one by one, always in a way that allowed for adjustments, based on the ways people used the streets. And gradually, year by year, along the reclaimed streets in winter in Copenhagen, people came to the Strøget. Wrapped in wool blankets, they sat drinking coffee, faces upturned to catch the northern light.

Around the world, cities have been taking back their streets in various ways. The Ciclovía in Bogotá brings thousands out every Sunday, when the streets become part of the park system, filled with walkers, dancers, and cyclists. Paris Plage reclaimed the expressway along the Seine as a summertime beach (as did Philadelphia’s Eakins Oval for a time last summer). London charges congestion fees. Guangzhou instituted a lottery for

license plates. Bike-share programs in many cities reduce the number of autos on the street. (See Dec. 2013 CCQ for story on Philadelphia’s upcoming Bike Share program.) On Memorial Day weekend in 2009, New York City closed Times Square to traffic, and there was much rejoicing. As the experiment was repeated over longer periods, it became evident that benefits accrued to drivers as well. A study one year later showed that Midtown traffic moved faster after the Times Square bottleneck was banished.

The city is ideally a place of options, where driving a car is possible without losing one’s mental or physical health in the process, where taking public transit is reliable and efficient, where riding and walking can be sources of pleasure. Montgomery quotes the mayor of Bogotá, the self-proclaimed

Mayor of Happy City, on the components of happiness: to feel safe and equal to others, to walk, to be around others, to have contact with nature, to be surrounded by beauty. In the spirit of happiness studies, we can only say, “Why not?”



No cars: urban density encourages walking, better health, and more human interaction. (Courtesy Fidler Square Improvement Association)

Town Square

Grays Ferry Triangle Offers Pedestrians a Pop-up Plaza

By Robin Kohles

The much-anticipated Grays Ferry Triangle’s pop-up plaza, located at the intersection of Grays Ferry Avenue and South Street across from the South Square Market, is finally here. Starting May 3, a portion of Grays Ferry Avenue was closed to vehicular traffic and transformed into a pedestrian plaza. The plaza is an expansion of the current park space, which is basically a traffic triangle – albeit a pretty one – ornamented with two flowering cherry trees, lush plantings, and the Catherine Thorn fountain, installed in the late 19th century as a watering trough for horses.

This park expansion is a result of the efforts of the Grays Ferry Triangles Committee, a group dedicated to the improvement of the triangular intersections along Grays Ferry Avenue, jointly organized by the CCRA, South of South Neighborhood Association (SOSNA), and the South Street West Business Association (SSWBA). Due to South Street’s eastbound direction and 23rd Street’s southbound direction, this section of Grays Ferry Avenue sees relatively little car traffic. Thus, with minimal impact to traffic flows or congestion, and no loss of parking,

it has long been identified as an opportune site for creating a dynamic gathering place.

Just a few months ago, the committee obtained permission to configure the space as a temporary park for a six-month pilot.

Through a sponsorship program, in short order the committee has raised funds to buy furniture, install planters, restripe the parking spots, and hang twinkle lights. Plantings were generously donated by Pure Design. Street parking has been rearranged



Donna Strug

Improvements to the Triangle make for an inviting urban retreat.

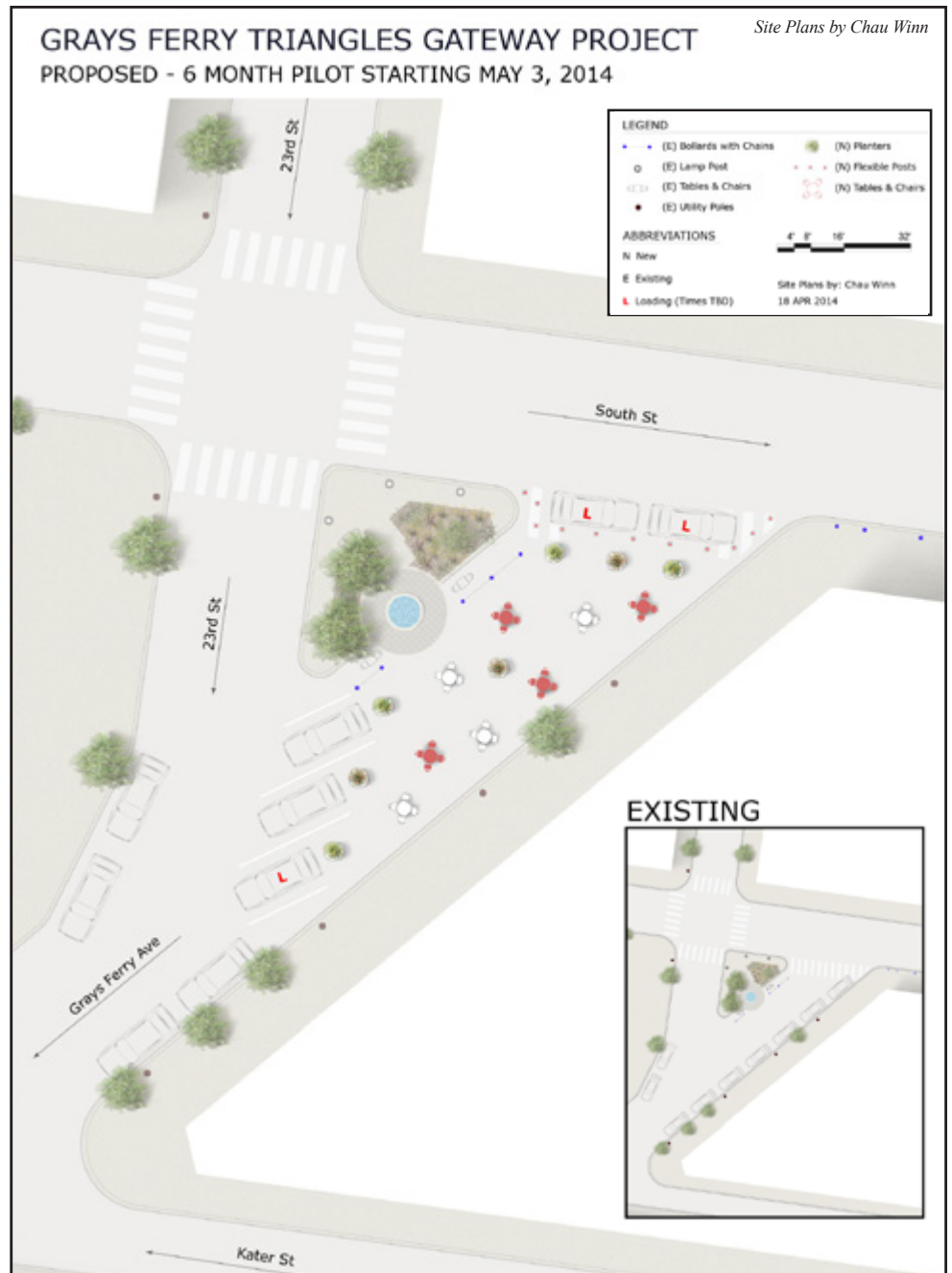
around the plaza without losing a single parking space. Programming to activate the plaza is planned in the next six months to ensure the space's success. SOSNA's annual Plaza Palooza celebration marked the opening of the plaza.

The goals of the Grays Ferry Triangle plaza are to increase the intersection's safety and create a green, vibrant community space that will attract new business to the neighborhood while also serving local residents. It is separated from the surrounding streets by large planters, and filled with colorful, moveable seating and tables. The park is located at the convergence of many vibrant neighborhoods encompassed by SOSNA, CCRA, Graduate Hospital, Schuylkill Neighborhood, and Naval Square. Whichever "edge" you relate to, the park is meant to be a zipper or central gathering space that stitches all of these neighboring patches into one quilt; it is a place to mingle and meet your neighbors while shopping locally.

The idea for the expansion of the triangle has been discussed for the past 10 years, and has been included in several planning documents and planning studies since 2005. In 2010, SOSNA organized the Grays Ferry Triangles Committee. The following year, the Triangles Committee applied for a grant from the Mayor's Office of Transportation and Utilities as part of the Pedestrian Plaza program, a city program designed to enliven underutilized streets by converting them temporarily into pedestrian plazas. Unfortunately, the grant was not awarded because there was not 100% participation from adjacent businesses.

Since that time, however, the Triangles Committee has worked diligently on improvements, including fixing the long-broken Catharine Thorn fountain, organizing monthly clean-ups, repainting bollards, and adding holiday lights. Committee members have also raised funds from the community, and developed programming for the area, including jazz concerts, a movie night, and the annual Plazapalooza block party.

Recently the committee surveyed surrounding businesses and residents, and found 98% of those surveyed approved of the expanded plaza. Thanks to help from Councilman Kenyatta Johnson and the Mayor's Office of Transportation and Utilities, the park is now a reality for at



least six months, allowing the community to test the park's feasibility and popularity. With luck, the park eventually will be made permanent, allowing for removal of asphalt for greening and storm-water management.

If you would like to make a contribution in support of the park, the following sponsorship opportunities are available, and will include a plaque with your name mounted on the item. Please contact Andrew Dalzell, andrewd@southofsouth.org.

Sponsorship opportunities:

- Planters, \$1,000 each – sold out
- Set of table and four chairs, \$500 per set
- Adirondack chairs, \$250 each

The following businesses sponsored furniture (as of print date):

- OCF Realty
- South Square Market
- City Living Philly
- Rodriguez Design
- The Daly Group
- Capozzi Real Estate
- Volpe Real Estate, Inc.
- Rita's Water Ice
- Naval Square Condominium Association
- Grace Tavern
- Phoebe's Bar-B-Q
- Six Fishes Neighborhood Acupuncture
- Ants Pants Cafe
- Neighborhood Books
- Bicycle Therapy

The Future of Philadelphia's Middle Class

By Maggie Mund, CCRA Executive Vice President

Approximately 50 people attended the CCRA event *The Future of Philadelphia's Middle Class* at Trinity Center for Urban Life on a rainy Monday night in April. They came to hear Susan Warner, an officer at the Pew Charitable Trusts, present her research entitled *Philadelphia's Changing Middle Class: After Decades of Decline, Prospects for Growth*. Joining her on the panel were Stephen Mullin of Econsult and Steve Wray of the Economy League of Greater Philadelphia.

Ms. Warner began her remarks with longitudinal data that showed how Philadelphia's middle class had steadily declined between 1970 and 2000, from 59 percent of the population to 42 percent in 2000. Thankfully, it appears to have stabilized over the last 14 years.

This decline in middle-class population is not unusual, as the U.S. middle-class population fell 10 percentage points during roughly the same four decades, 1971 to 2011, from 61 percent to 51 percent. However, Philadelphia's 17-percentage-point drop was severe, when viewed against the national numbers as a whole:

The precipitous decline occurred throughout the city. In 1970, the majority of Philadelphia neighborhoods were comprised of at least 50 percent middle-class households. In 2010 just a smattering of the Far Northeast, Roxborough and Center City remained solidly middle class.

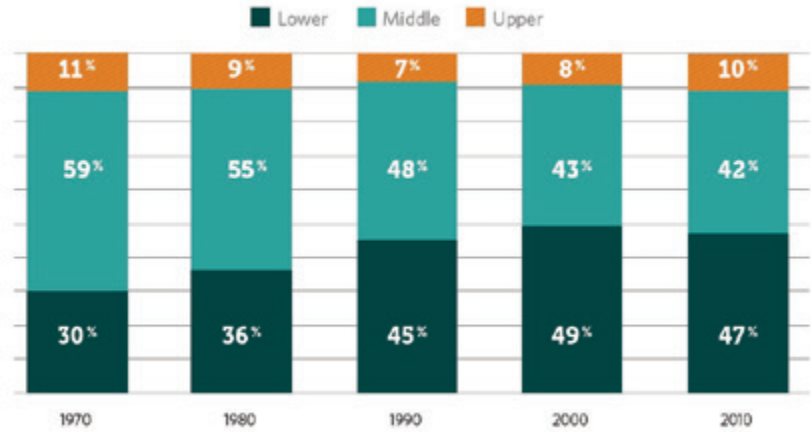
In 1970, 44 percent of the city's middle class lacked even a high-school diploma. By 2010, only 8 percent did. Similarly, only 18 percent had any college education in 1970. Forty years later, 50 percent did.

And rather than 33 percent of the middle class working predominantly in manufacturing and construction jobs – the single largest category within the middle class of 1970 – today 53 percent now hold jobs in finance, insurance, real estate, business, and professional services, compared to just 28 percent four decades ago.

Along with ample reason for concern, the study found positive change for some. In 1970, only 26 percent of the city's middle class was African American. By 2010, 42 percent had joined the group. (Whites made

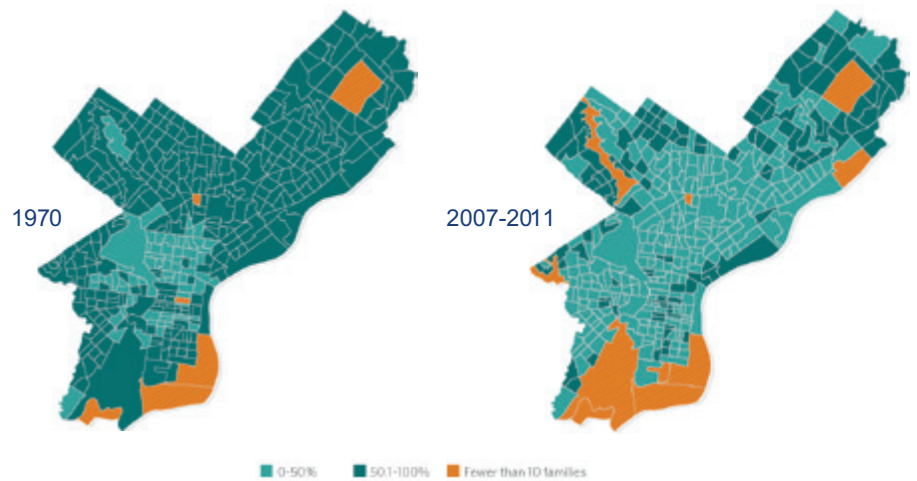


Philadelphia's Class Makeup



Graphics courtesy of the Pew Charitable Trusts

Where the Middle Class Lives:



up 74 percent of the city's middle class back then, compared to 54 percent more recently.)

Outmigration, death, and poverty were the factors behind Philadelphia's big middle-class loss, particularly as higher-wage blue-collar jobs disappeared, city schools became more unattractive to middle-class residents, crime rose in once-quiet enclaves, and better jobs began cropping up farther away from the city.

In addition to analyzing census data, Pew also conducted a poll of Philadelphians' attitudes. A third (34 percent) of today's middle class said they definitely or probably will leave the city in five to 10 years. Increasing crime, lack

of employment, and poor schools were the main reasons given by middle-class residents contemplating leaving Philadelphia.

Ms. Warner's presentation was followed by comments by Stephen Mullin and Steve Wray.

Stephen Mullin talked about the important role of millennials in the growth and development of the City, and cited their apparent lack of interest in the suburban lifestyle as a hopeful sign. He also noted that the definition of "middle class" in the report covered a very wide range of incomes, undermining its impact. And more important than who is in the middle class at any one

time is mobility between classes. That also has been stagnant in recent years, and is equally troubling to him as the decline in the number of middle class residents.

Steve Wray spoke of the need for quality early-childhood education as a way to improve poor people’s odds of transitioning into the middle class. He recommended investing \$300 million a year in pre-kindergarten education, which would quickly pay for itself in the reduced need for special education, prison, social services and other

costs. He also cited a recent study that found that, for every dollar invested in pre-K, the state’s economy would see \$1.79 in spending and economic activity.

Many questions, answers and comments were exchanged. The meeting was summed up with a story of Harry Truman, who was always searching for a one-handed economist because they would always say, “on the one hand, . . . and on the other. . . !” All concurred that our two economists did not need four hands, as they agreed more than they disagreed.



Left to right: Moderator Maggie Mund, with panelists Stephen Mullin, Steve Wray, and Susan Warner.

Facts for Families

Friends Select School Helps Greene Towne Montessori School Weather the Storm

By Colleen Puckett, Friends Select School

More than four inches of rain fell in a matter of hours on April 30, making it Philadelphia’s 14th-wettest day on record. Greene Towne Montessori School, located mere blocks from the Schuylkill River, experienced extensive water damage to its West Campus building at 23rd and Arch Streets, displacing 27 of its youngest students. The East Campus, at 2121 Arch Street, was undamaged.

Head of school Helena Grady immediately reached out to Rose Hagan, head of school at Friends Select School, located just a few blocks away at 17th & Benjamin Franklin Parkway. Within four school days, Greene Towne’s toddler classes had moved into a new temporary classroom. The toddler morning classes would be held at Friends Select through the remainder of the school year.

Ms. Hagan was happy to help. “Our relationship with Greene Towne goes back decades,” she says. “One of Greene Towne’s founders was a Quaker and a long-term member of our board of trustees. Many Greene Towne students over the years have come to Friends Select,” she says. “Our two schools are neighbors, and neighbors help each other.”

Reaction from parents from both schools has been positive. “We were so impressed with how conscientious Greene Towne was – the resettling was done so quickly,” says Mark Settelen, a parent with a child in each school. “At the end of the day, this is really a story about community coming together,” he says.

“We couldn’t have found a better home,” Greene Towne’s Ms. Grady says. “We are very grateful to Rose Hagan, business manager Mike Noonan, and Friends Select for helping us in our time of need.”

School will resume at Greene Towne’s West Campus in September. Summer programs at Greene Towne will carry on as planned at the East Campus.



Workers begin cleanup at Greene Towne’s West Campus.



Greene Towne’s West Campus courtyard, post-flood.



Friends Select School hosts 27 displaced toddlers from Greene Towne Montessori School, whose West Campus building was damaged by flooding on April 30. Greene Towne’s youngest students gathered recently with Friends Select students who previously attended Greene Towne.

Center City Springs to Life

Fitler Square Park Cleanup

April 26

Photos: Donna Strug



The Great Flood

April 30

Photos: Donna Strug



Grays Ferry Triangle Park Plazapalooza

May 3

Photos: Donna Strug

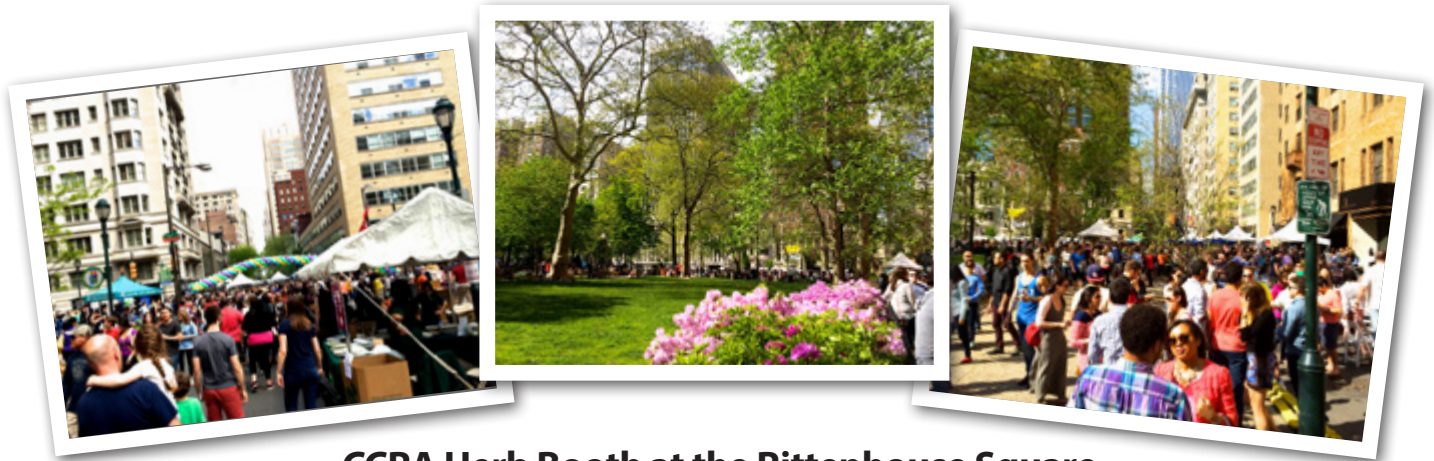


Center City Springs to Life

Rittenhouse Row Spring Festival

May 3

Photos: Donna Strug



CCRA Herb Booth at the Rittenhouse Square Flower Market for Children's Charities

May 7 & 8

Photos: (Left) Nancy Colman
(Right) Maggie Mund



Fitler Square Fair

May 9 & 10

Courtesy Fitler Square Improvement Association



Deputy Mayor Cutler Addresses CCRA Annual Meeting

By Frank Montgomery

The Annual Meeting of the Center City Residents Association convened on the evening of May 21 in the Curtis Center's Lenfest Hall. President Jeffrey Braff welcomed members, officers, nominees to the Board of Directors, and guests. Following his report on the past year's achievements and activities (see p. 3), and the introduction and election of new officers and members of the Board (see sidebar), the Historic Preservation Award was presented to the Friends of Rittenhouse Square, for their exceptional work in undertaking and executing the restoration of the stone masonry and other needed areas of this historic landmark (see accompanying photo and caption).

Next, the President introduced Rina Cutler, the Deputy Mayor of Transportation and Utilities for the City of Philadelphia. Ms. Cutler, who has held several key transportation positions in the Commonwealth, including Philadelphia Parking Authority Director and Deputy Secretary of PennDOT, discussed her vision and ideas regarding transportation in the City of Philadelphia.

In her role as Deputy Mayor, Ms. Cutler discussed her oversight of the Streets and Sanitation Departments, the Water Department, and Philadelphia International Airport, as well as her position on various boards such as SEPTA and Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission.

She explained that Mayor Nutter wanted to introduce a system of Deputy Mayors in Philadelphia to increase the amount of dialogue and coordination between the numerous City agencies, departments, and similar entities. She cited the South Street Bridge project as a success story of

this model: how it was quickly planned, designed, and constructed – ahead of schedule and on budget. The South Street Bridge also came under the City's current Complete Streets Policy, wherein all modes of transportation (Pedestrian, Bicycle, Auto, and Mass Transit) are accommodated on both public and private projects.

Ms. Cutler presented the following transportation statistics for both the City and the CCRA district:

- Citywide, the mode of transportation to the workplace breaks down as follows: Drive 50%, Transit 27%, Carpool 9%, Walk 8%, Bicycle 2%, Work from Home 3%, Other 1%.
- Bicycle ridership has grown in Philadelphia more than in the other top 10 cities.
- Of the 25,000 households within the CCRA boundaries, there are 6,900 without cars; about 45% of commuters walk to work; 18% use mass transit; and about 5% bicycle to work.
- Over 20 miles of bicycle lanes have been added since 2008.
- Since the introduction of bicycle lanes along Pine and Spruce Streets, all serious crashes have gone down 44%, including a reduction of 58% of pedestrian crashes and 17% of all crashes.
- Over 700 pedestrian count-down timer signals and 137 school flashers have been installed to increase pedestrian safety across the City.
- The Commonwealth has passed a comprehensive Transportation Bill, Act 89, which will allocate \$2.4 Billion towards transportation

A new project the City is undertaking is the introduction of buffered bicycle lanes along JFK Boulevard and Market Street West, where there is greater vehicle capacity. Ms. Cutler also mentioned that a program for comprehensive pedestrian-safety outreach is underway, with a strategic marketing campaign designed to educate the traveling public about various safety topics. Finally, she noted that Philadelphia will launch their Bike



Rina Cutler, Deputy Mayor of Transportation and Utilities, presents a talk on the city's changing transportation profile at the Annual Meeting on May 21.

Share program in 2015 (see December 2013 issue of *Center City Quarterly* for an article on the planned Bike Share program), as well as open its Traffic Operations Center.

Her main objective in her role as Deputy Mayor of Transportation and Utilities, Ms. Cutler said, is to make sure that everyone gets home safely each and every day.

Following her presentation, Ms. Cutler took a number of questions from the floor, among them:

- *Would stricter enforcement (such as in Key West) improve bicycle/pedestrian safety and law compliance?* Ms. Cutler felt that enforcement would help the situation; it's just that police priorities are many in the City, and therefore, it's mostly up to people to police themselves and try to educate wherever possible.
- *Should the parking-permit price structure be changed?* Ms. Cutler didn't take issue with potentially changing residential parking-permit structure, whereby households with more than one vehicle registered pay a higher premium, to drive down the number of vehicles per household.
- *Is the City looking at installing more bicycle racks?* Ms. Cutler said that the University of the Arts asked students to

Continued on p. 23



CCRA members chat over refreshments donated by Di Bruno Bros. at the law offices of Berger & Montague on Locust St.

CCRA Elects New Officer and Board Members

The Nominating Committee is delighted to present the following slate of candidates to the CCRA Board, for vote at the 2014 Annual Meeting. This group of highly skilled and enthusiastic residents is ready and willing to serve our community. The nominees either were recommended by CCRA members or self-nominated. Candidates were interviewed by the five-member Nominating Committee, and selected based on their skill set matched against the Board's activities. The Nominating Committee believes this slate of candidates will make a valuable contribution to the CCRA Board and its work. —Wendy Weiss, Chair, Nominating Committee

Michael Axler (Assistant Treasurer, to serve out the remainder of the two-year term expiring 2015 of Dan Dougherty, who is moving)

Michael and his wife, Susan, live on Rittenhouse Square. A native of Philadelphia, he worked as a commercial real-estate consultant and appraiser (MAI) with national firms for more than 25 years. He was based in Philadelphia and New York prior to opening his own practice in NYC in 1992. He looks forward to using his experience to help CCRA achieve its goals. Michael retired two years ago and moved to Center City from Bucks County and Brigantine. He serves on the board of the South Jersey Cancer Fund, and volunteers with his wife on numerous related organizations. The Axlers have two sons and four grandchildren.

Arthur Armstrong (three-year term)

Arthur and his wife, Kera, have lived and worked in Center City for more than 10 years. A commercial litigation attorney at Duane Morris, LLP, Arthur attended law school at Temple University and undergraduate school at St. Joe's. He is excited to be a part of CCRA's mission to continually improve Center City for residents and visitors alike.

Phil Consuegra (three-year term)

Phil has lived in Center City since June 2013. An experienced external-relations and public-affairs professional, he is currently Director of Development at William Penn Charter School, where he also teaches American Government and Politics to seniors. He is also active in Young Involved Philadelphia, Young Friends of the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Ronald McDonald House.

Bill Faust (one-year term)

Bill has lived with his family in the Rittenhouse neighborhood since 1999. A former CCRA Board member, he served on its Zoning Committee for a number of years and on real-estate development task forces that reported to the Board. Bill works at Allied World Assurance Company, Inc., as a senior contract surety underwriter.

Rick Gross (three-year term)

Rick and his wife, Roberta, moved to Rittenhouse Square two years ago, and have been enchanted by the neighborhood and the city ever since. Rick had been a real-estate and transaction attorney in Washington, DC, and is Senior Manager of his company, BW Realty Advisors LLC, which finances large public/private projects throughout the country. In addition, Rick won a Tony last year for co-producing the revival of *Who's Afraid of*

Virginia Woolf on Broadway; both he and Roberta are active with local theater and arts organizations in their new hometown. They have adult twin sons, and Max, a beautiful English Springer Spaniel who has become a well-known addition to the Rittenhouse dog community.

Michele Langer (one-year term)

Michele has practiced law in Philadelphia for 30 years. She and her husband, Alan Cohen, moved to Center City 10 years ago. Michele has been active on several CCRA committees, task forces and programs, including the Neighborhood Plan, Liquor Licenses, Residential Parking, the South Street Bridge and the House Tour. She has served on CCRA's Board previously ('05-'06), and on its Executive Committee ('06-'08).

Frances Levi (two-year term)

Fran is a retired City of Philadelphia administrator. She and her husband, Ned, raised two sons in Center City. Fran was the previous Editor of the *The Center City Quarterly*, serves on several CCRA committees, and as either an officer or board member of other non-profit organizations.

Phil McMunigal (three-year term)

Phil and his wife, Laura, have lived in Center City for more than 25 years. They renovated a home on the 1800 block of Pine Street and raised their children in the Rittenhouse neighborhood, participating in and benefiting from many of the organizations and activities

that have developed in this community.

Frank Montgomery (three-year term)

Frank and his wife, Heather, moved to Center City a year ago, after living in the Roxborough area for 11 years. They love walking around town, and taking advantage of the superb restaurant scene. Frank is currently a Project Manager/Engineer at Traffic Planning & Design, Inc. Frank is also in the PA Army National Guard, with more than 23 years of service, and overseas deployments to both Iraq and Afghanistan.

Harvey C. Sacks, (three-year term)

Harvey C. Sacks, J.D., is a financial advisor with Ameriprise Financial Services, Inc. His forte is holistic financial planning. In 2013 he and his wife, Mary, moved both their home and his offices to Center City from Solebury, to take advantage of the city's vibrancy. Wherever he has lived, Harvey has been involved with his local community. He and Mary have one child, a Center City-based med student.

Ben Waxman (three-year term)

Ben has lived in the Philadelphia area his entire life, and in Center City for the past five years. An award-winning former journalist, he currently works for the Pennsylvania Senate as Press Secretary for State Senator Vincent Hughes. Ben is passionate about making government more responsive to neighborhood concerns, and fighting for adequate funding for local public schools.



Newly elected Board members, from left, Michele Langer, Frances Levi, Ben Waxman, Phil McMunigal, Michael Axler, Harvey C. Sacks, Frank Montgomery, and Phil Consuegra. Not pictured: Arthur Armstrong, Bill Faust, and Rick Gross.

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submit design proposals for bicycle racks, and received many. Those proposals have been narrowed down, selected, and it's expected these racks should be installed later this summer.

- *Is the City considering using GPS technology, especially in transit, to improve operations?* Ms. Cutler replied

that, through TIGER grant money, the City is implementing Transit Prioritization for Traffic Signals, wherein SEPTA buses/trolleys would get preference when traversing the City.

- Several members of the audience asked about what can be done to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety. Many

CCRA members walk to their daily destinations in town, and expressed concerns about conflicts with bicycles. Ms. Cutler conceded that, while some bicyclists in the City do not follow current traffic laws (as is the case with motorists and pedestrians), their increased presence has been proven nonetheless to improve safety on the roads.

Out & About

Getting There From the Square

By Bonnie Eisenfeld

I had always wanted to see Fallingwater, a dramatic residence designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and built out over a waterfall in Western Pennsylvania, but as of last year I had not managed to get there, and had no idea how or when I would. So I was surprised and delighted to get a notice from the tour company Excursions From the Square about an upcoming three-day trip to Fallingwater and Pittsburgh, departing from Rittenhouse Square.

Excursions From the Square, owned and operated by Center City resident Ellen Kay Coleman, has been taking groups on a variety of cultural tours by bus and by air for



Bonnie Eisenfeld
Ellen Kay Coleman of Excursions from the Square

22 years. Over that time, Coleman and Excursions have developed an excellent reputation for quality trips lasting from one to 12 days, with destinations in the U.S., Canada and Europe. Their focus includes visual and performing arts, as well as scenic and historic sites.

Once registered for one of Coleman's motor-coach trips, all a traveler need do is pack a bag and show up at the southwest corner of Rittenhouse Square at the appointed time. On the morning of my trip, I was immediately impressed with the large, comfortable motor coach and the congenial and helpful driver. When Coleman arrived, I found her to be considerate, pleasant and enthusiastic. Inside the bus, to my delight, I found an insulated container stocked with bottled water, and a carton of muffins.

For our group of about 20 people we had a bus that accommodated many more, so there was ample room to spread out. Pennsylvania is a wide state, and the trip was long, but Coleman packs a lot into her itineraries. The first day, we visited the Flight 93 National Memorial in Shanksville, the Johnstown Flood Memorial, and the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh. Beautiful accommodations were provided in Pittsburgh at the Omni William Penn Hotel. The next day, our group enjoyed a daylong bus tour of the city, including stops at the Frick Art & Historical Center and the Carnegie Museums of Art and Natural History.

At last, on the third day we were on our way to see Fallingwater, in the rain. We stopped at a visitors' center, from which a tour guide escorted small groups into the house and presented interesting highlights. We learned of Wright's philosophy of design and how well the occupants actually liked living there. For example, Wright did not believe in window screens, insisted that the house be decorated with furniture he designed, and was not perturbed by leaking roofs.

Kentuck Knob, another residence designed by Wright, was our last stop. On the trip home, Coleman showed a film by Ken Burns about the architect.

Travelers report being pleased with the small and congenial groups, knowledgeable guides, and Coleman's professionalism, experience, and attention to individual needs. Satisfied customers from a variety of trips had the following comments:

"Although I have traveled to Paris many times, I saw it with a fresh perspective."

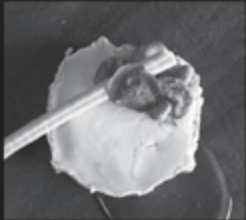
Coleman's "connection to Texan historians who joined us was priceless. We saw and learned so much."

Coleman "has never disappointed me. She is a knowledgeable leader and a pleasure to be with."

"She is unflappable and resourceful in dealing with the unexpected."

Upcoming summer trips feature performing arts festivals – The Canadian Theatre Festivals in Stratford and Niagara-on-the-Lake, July 8-15; the Bard Music Festival, August 8-10; and the Marlboro Music Festival, August 14-18. In the fall, a trip to the Midwest, "Art and Leaves in the Heartland," October 20-27, features the acclaimed Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, Ark., as well as art and history museums in St. Louis, Kansas City and Independence, Mo.

Excursions From the Square has offered day trips to New York City, Baltimore, and Washington, DC. Trips of longer duration have included Paris, Montreal, Quebec City, Ottawa, Savannah and Charleston, Boston, Chicago, New Orleans, Asheville, Charlottesville, Los Angeles, Florida, New England, Texas, and the Hudson River Valley. Among Coleman's offerings, one can find both old favorites and new destinations. Excursions From the Square picks up travelers at Rittenhouse Square, the Art Museum area, and City Line Avenue. <http://www.squaretrips.com/>

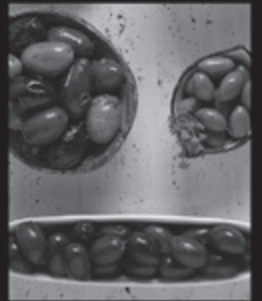


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Stotesbury Cup Regatta Reaches Finish Line In Face of Flooding

By Bonnie Eisenfeld

Saturday, May 17, was the second day of the Stotesbury Cup, a two-day regatta on the Schuylkill River, in which more than 5,000 rowers on 950 boats from 186 high schools all over the U.S. and Canada competed. But at 7 a.m., according to Margaret Meigs, Commodore of the Schuylkill Navy, “the Schuylkill River was unrowable.”

Because of heavy rain the day before, the river was too high, the current was too fast, and the river was filled with debris. Responsible for safety and fairness, regatta referees monitor conditions, check U.S. Geological Survey gauges along the river, and decide whether the river is safe enough for the event to proceed.

The regatta was supposed to start at 8, but Ms. Meigs had to make the disappointing announcement that morning semifinals

would be canceled because of dangerous river conditions. Luckily, conditions improved, and afternoon finals could proceed at 3, starting with the larger boats first (quads, fours, and eights), followed by the smaller boats (singles and doubles).

Normally, the top 18 boats from Friday’s time trials advance to Saturday’s semifinals. Instead, the top six finishers from Friday moved directly to the finals. “We were able to complete the regatta successfully and safely despite very challenging conditions,” reported Ms. Meigs. Philadelphia’s Mount Saint Joseph Academy won the girls’ Varsity 8 title, and the Gonzaga team from Washington, D.C., won their third straight boys’ Varsity 8 title.

The Stotesbury Cup Regatta, named for investment banker and philanthropist



Excessive spring rains, like those that caused this flood on the Schuylkill April 30, two weeks later played havoc with the world’s largest high-school regatta.

Edward T. Stotesbury, has been held every year since 1927, and is the largest high-school regatta in the world. Thousands of supporters and spectators attend. Ms. Meigs calls it “a marquee event of rowing.”

Town Square

Penn’s Village Launches Member Healthcare Support Program

By Pat Harner, Penn’s Village board member

Do you know about Penn’s Village? It is a neighbor-to-neighbor non-profit organization founded to help people remain independent and in their own homes as they age or develop special needs. It brings together neighbors of all ages through participation in social/educational programs and shared projects. The service area extends from river to river and from Washington Avenue to Spring Garden Street.

In addition to its bimonthly programs and volunteer-support services – such as rides to doctors’ offices, errands, friendly visits, and tech support – Penn’s Village is developing a member healthcare-support program. Its purpose is to help us navigate the healthcare system. An example of this type of support might be working with you to sort out medications that may be prescribed by multiple physicians. Do they make sense to take together? Will I remember to take them at the right time and with the right foods?

Penn’s Village is also partnering with Centennial Health Services, independent pharmacy specialists in medication management and counseling, and a bright, enthusiastic group of graduate nursing students from Penn. Their role is to help define the scope of services and design the implementation of this new program, which will be “staffed” with trained volunteers and informed by focus groups of neighborhood residents. We hope to launch this program in September. Penn’s Village will continue to provide educational programs and workshops on healthy lifestyles and personal safety to support this new initiative. If you are interested in learning more about this program, call 215-732-8782.

Everyone within our Penn’s Village community, men and women, find they play multiple and changing roles. Many of our contributing members are also volunteers; volunteers eventually may find they can use the same kind of help they once provided –



Penn’s Village member Liz Martin, left, and Penn Nursing Graduate student Anne Feczko, at a focus group on Member Healthcare Support.

rides to appointments or help with grocery shopping – and rejoin as Villagers.

If you like the concept; if you are looking for services now or a place to volunteer a few hours of your time; or if you hope that Penn’s Village will be there when you, a family member or a friend needs it, we invite your inquiries. You may contact us with questions, join, or learn about upcoming events at 215-925-7333, <http://www.pennsvillage.org>, or info@pennsvillage.org.



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Shop Talk

Renaissance Woman: Philadelphia Publisher's Florentine Needlecraft One of Many Talents

By Bonnie Eisenfeld

Nancy Lisagor's exhibit of over 30 colorful hand-stitched needlepoint pillows, each with a unique Bargello-inspired pattern, was on view at the Stadler-Kahn Gallery at 1724 Sansom Street from March 27 until April 21. Ms. Lisagor spent more than two years designing and creating her pillows, based on patterns found on chairs in the Bargello Palace in Florence. The Florentines believe the technique originated in Hungary.

Ms. Lisagor describes her inspiration and method: “Two years ago I started making these Bargello pillows, taking classic and historic patterns and altering them, distorting them, using color in an unusual way. All the work takes place on the canvas as I am doing it – choosing where to put the thread – what color to use next without a preplanned overall design. The design takes shape as I work.” Some patterns convey “a sense of decay as one material or surface pokes through the finished surface of another.” Some designs break up the regularity of the pattern with checkered squares or little *fleurs de lis* on fields of color.

Ms. Lisagor is best known as president of *MetroKids* magazine, a 25-year-old monthly publication providing a wealth of information – news, attractions, events, resources, opportunities and advice – for parents in the Philadelphia metropolitan area. With a circulation of 110,000 in Pennsylvania, South Jersey and Delaware, the magazine is available free of charge in library branches, daycare centers and stores. The company also publishes annual resource directories including the award-winning *SpecialKids* and *Educator's Edition*. <http://www.metrokids.com/>

A native of Illinois, Ms. Lisagor earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Michigan, and both a master's degree in criminology and a doctorate in sociology from the University of Pennsylvania. Before moving to Philadelphia, she lived in Manhattan, and with her husband, Frank Lipsius, co-authored the book *A Law Unto Itself: The Untold Story of the Law Firm of Sullivan and Cromwell*, on the history of a Wall Street firm. As a new mother trying to find



Needlepoint artist, publisher and author Nancy Lisagor, with some of her handiwork.



Piles of pillows: these colorful needlework patterns are inspired by Florence's Bargello Palace upholstery.

information about parenting, Ms. Lisagor got the idea for *MetroKids*, and in 1989 she founded and operated the publication from her Center City home. The company is now located at 1412-14 Pine Street.

Ms. Lisagor is a member of Women for Social Innovation, a Philadelphia women's giving circle, whose mission is to provide philanthropic investments to emerging social innovators with ideas for improving life for women, girls and families in the Greater Philadelphia area. The group provides an annual grant, the Turning Point Prize, to the applicant it deems best. <http://www.womenforsocialinnovation.org/>

Stadler-Kahn Gallery, 1724 Sansom Street, stocks gifts, vintage objects, fine art and an eclectic mix of textiles and designs, all handpicked by Alexander Stadler, a local author, illustrator and textile designer. www.stadler-kahn.com

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Summer Suds Survey: Great Beer Bars, Center City West

By Dane Wells

Have you heard a lot of talk about the craft-beer movement but need some guidance in checking it out? Allow us to provide these suggestions of nearby bars in the CCRA area with great selections and knowledgeable staff who are ready to assist.

To help, we will refer to **Ratebeer** www.ratebeer.com. They have a map feature to locate bars, and good reader reviews. Ratebeer also rates breweries and beers (on a 100-point scale); some of the raters are well-versed in the many nuances of beer culture.

First of all, we have a long-established brewpub in our midst, **Nodding Head Brewery** (www.noddinghead.com), 1516 Sansom Street. They have taken many medals at the Great American Beer Festival in Colorado, including for some collaborations with **Home Sweet Homebrew**, a great homebrewers' supply store on the 2000 block of Sansom. One of my favorite beers at Nodding Head is their Berlinerweisse, a not-very-common style that is tart and refreshing, with a low alcohol content – a great summer drink. Nodding Head serves decent pub fare. Ratebeer gives them a score of 77; I think they should be in the 80s.

The highest-rated beer bar in Philadelphia is **Monk's Café** (www.monkscafe.com) at 264 S. 16th Street. Ratebeer gives it a score of only 97. It is world-famous as a Belgian beer bar, but it also boasts a discriminating selection of American craft beers. Monk's was the subject of a *Center City Quarterly* article in March 2013.

Tria Cafe (www.triacafe.com) also has a very high rating, 92. Its original location is at 18th and Sansom, but they recently opened **Tria Taproom**, with 24 beer taps and 12 wine taps, at 2005 Walnut Street, a very nice bar with more emphasis on food. Tria is all about fermentables – wine, beer and cheese. In addition to several establishments, they also have a special location at 16th and Walnut, where they hold great classes for staff and customers. They know their stuff and are willing to share it with you – very admirable.

A place several friends have recommended, which has a Ratebeer score of 85, is **Jose Pistola's** (www.josepistolas.com) at 263



A sampling of several of the vast variety of beers on tap at the new Tria Taproom at 20th & Walnut.



Two bar workers man the 24 taps patrons can choose from at Tria Taproom.

S. 15th Street. It has about eight taps, well-selected, and decent Mexican fare. It is right around the corner from Monk's.

Cambridge (www.cambridgeonsouth.com), at 1508 South Street (the old Tritone location) is a new place that is getting a lot of attention; it has a Ratebeer score of 80. The 24 taps host an impressive and varied selection. They serve upscale bar fare.

Also notable is **Ten Stone**, 21st and South Streets, a popular local hangout with a Ratebeer rating of 67. Finally, just a few yards south of South Street (technically beyond CCRA territory, but in homage to our friends at SOSNA), we note **Grace Tavern** at 2229 Gray's Ferry Avenue, with a Ratebeer score of 73.

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Celebration of Center City Living/Mardi Gras Party

By Jeffrey Braff, President

On March 13, the already beautiful Academy of Vocal Arts was transformed into a colorful, shimmering venue populated by some 140 masked and beaded revelers, as the Association celebrated Center City living with a Mardi Gras Party.

To the sound of jazz tunes played by pianist Gail Rudenstein of Eclectic Entertainment, neighbors caught up with one another, placed bids on 75 silent-auction and two live-auction items, and enjoyed heavy hors d'oeuvres and light desserts donated by Di Bruno Bros. Wine tastings were contributed by Moore Bros., and "Hurricane Punch" concocted by our own Barbara Halpern, who co-chaired the event with Exec. V.P. Maggie Mund.

In addition, we honored John Randolph – founder of the Schuylkill River Development Council (think Schuylkill River Trail and Schuylkill Banks) and

Chair of the Community OutReach Partnership (think WinterShelter, Communicare, and Cook-Off) – with the Lenora Berson Community Service Award.



Revelers enjoy their costumed camaraderie at the Celebration of Center City Living/Mardi Gras Party in March.

CCRA especially wants to thank and acknowledge the following individuals and businesses for their support in making the 2014 version of this annual fundraiser one of the best yet:

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CCRA Calendar — Summer in the City

Colin Quinn in “Unconstitutional”

One-Man Show by acclaimed comedian and SNL veteran, Quinn returns to The Philadelphia Theatre Company Broad & Lombard Streets Friday, June 13 to Sunday, July 6



Colin Quinn returns to PTC (and the Cradle of Liberty) with his new show, "Unconstitutional."

Celebrate the 4th with Colin Quinn! Stick around after the Independence Day matinee for free snacks, Happy Hour drink prices and a chance to rub elbows with Colin himself. The bar will stay open post-show, serving Yard’s, Stella, and 21st Amendment beer, along with specialty cocktails to get your holiday weekend started. Tickets for this performance only, \$17.76. philadelphia-theatre-company.org

Your Brain

New permanent exhibition The Franklin Institute • 222 N. 20th Street Opens Sunday, June 14 Along with three traveling exhibitions: On, Circus! Science Under the Big Top; 101 Inventions that Changed the World; and Ocean Soul <http://www.fi.edu>

Bloomsday

Readings from James Joyce’s *Ulysses* Rosenbach Museum & Library 2008 Delancey Place • Monday, June 16 <http://www.rosenbach.org/learn/news/bloomsday-central>

Little Friends of Rittenhouse Square Festival

Rittenhouse Square • Wednesday, June 18 <http://www.friendsofrittenhouse.org/>

Ball on the Square

Friends of Rittenhouse Square Rittenhouse Square • Thursday, June 19 <http://www.friendsofrittenhouse.org/>

Wanamaker Organ Day

Macy’s, 13th & Market Streets Friday, June 27, and Saturday, June 28 Some events are free. More information at <http://www.wanamakerorgan.com/>

Bastille Day Festival at Eastern State Penitentiary

2027 Fairmount Avenue Saturday, July 12, 5:30 p.m. Free. (VIP tickets available online.) This year The Bearded Ladies will present the entire French Revolution in an hour-long spectacle of song, dance, and beheading, accompanied by the voice of Edith Piaf. Guest appearances by Napoleon, Joan of Arc, Benjamin Franklin, and a life-size French Baguette. As Marie Antoinette is dragged to the guillotine, 3,000 Tastykakes will be flung from the prison’s towers. <http://www.easternstate.org/bastille-day>

The Philadelphia Young Pianists’ Academy

Sponsored by the Yun-Hsiang International Foundation Curtis Institute of Music July 26 to August 2 Concert schedule: <http://www.pypa.info/home-en.php> (Note: This event is organized and operated by Center City resident Ching Yun Hu, who was the subject of an article in a previous issue of *CCQ*.)

Rittenhouse Square Fine Arts Show

Friday, September 19, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Saturday, September 20, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday, September 21, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Curtis Institute of Music

Free recitals 1726 Locust Street See dates, times, and locations at: <http://www.curtis.edu/performances/>

Architectural Walking Tours with the Preservation Alliance of Greater Philadelphia

Tours are offered through October Wednesdays at 6 p.m. Saturdays at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Sundays at 2 p.m. Duration: 90 minutes to two hours http://www.preservationalliance.com/events/walking_tours.php 215-546-1146

Schuylkill River Banks

Riverboat tours to Bartram’s Gardens Kayak tours, June through September Movie Nights, June through August Check website for dates and times <http://www.schuylkillbanks.org/events>

Continued from p. 36

6. Decision of the judges is final.
7. Upon registration, a volunteer will stop by with a CCRA Street Scene water gauge for use in the planter or street tree well.

Judging

Volunteer judges are chosen for their competence and accomplishments in gardening. Judging will take place late July through August, and contestants need not be home for judging as all plantings are on the sidewalk or attached to the front of the building.

Judging criteria:

- *Variety of Plants*
- *Suitability of Plants*
- *Horticultural Practice*
- *Maintenance*
- *Use of Space*
- *Originality and Imagination*
- *Design and Total Visual Effect*
- *Sustainability*

Awards Reception

All contestants and judges are invited to an awards reception at the Schuylkill River Park Community Garden to celebrate the high caliber of winning gardens. Prizes include gift certificates to local establishments, gardening paraphernalia, and ribbons. Photographs of the winning gardens will be showcased at this event.

To register, go to: <http://centercityresidents.org/Default.aspx?pageId=1849973>

Zoning Committee Report

Brian Johnston and Kevin Dunleavy, Co-Chairs
February – April 2014

502 S. 23rd Street (RSA-5) Not Opposed

ZBA# 22138, Hearing Date:
3/18/14 @ 9:30am.

Application to legalize use as a two-family dwelling.

Refusal: Table 14-701-1 The proposed use, two-family dwelling, is not permitted in this zoning district.

2054 Waverly Street (RSA-5) Not Opposed

ZBA# Not Known,
Hearing Date: Not Known.

Application for the reconfiguration of the roof, the erection of a rear bay, a front balcony, a front bay, a front fence wall and gate, a front wall, and two rooftop sun decks (upper and lower). Lower sun deck with a pergola, accessed by a pilot house, upper deck accessed by an exterior stair. Size and locations as shown on application.

Refusals:

14-706.(3)(a)(1) Any fence located nearer to the lot line than the required building setback or the actual distance of the building from the lot line (whichever is greater), shall be no more than four feet in height and no more than 50% opaque.

14-305.(6)[d] Where a rear wall does not meet a rear yard minimum depth requirement, a vertical extension of that wall is an increase of that specific nonconformity, and is not permitted. Vertical extensions of a rear building wall that do not comply with minimum required rear yard minimum wall that do not comply with minimum required rear yard minimum depth or yard areas must meet the requirements in Tables 14-701-1 through 14-701-3.

*Table 701-1
Max. Height of (2) Front Fences
Required: 4' Proposed: 6'*

*Min. Depth of Rear Yard
Required: 9' Proposed: 0'*

1716 Chestnut Street (CMX-5) Not opposed

ZBA# 22575, Hearing Date: 5/14/14 @ 2pm.

Application for the erection of an addition above a one (1) story portion of an existing attached structure; for the extension of the previously approved sit-down restaurant on the first and second floors (proviso: all trash stored inside). No change in use to previously approved multi-family household living (four [4] dwelling units) from third through fifth floors.

Refusals:

14-303(6)(a)(2) The proposed extension of the previously approved sit-down restaurant on first and second floor is not consistent with the terms of the variance granted or with this zoning code and shall be referred to the ZBA for action.

*Table 14-701-3
Max. occupied area (% of Lot) at second-floor level for buildings less than or equal to five (5) stories with one (1) or more dwelling units.*

*Maximum Allowable: 90%;
Proposed: 97%*

1901 Chestnut Street (CMX-4) Not opposed w/Provisos

ZBA# Not Known,
Hearing Date: Not Known.

Application for the legalization of a take-out restaurant on the first floor of space 44 S. 19th Street, and the legalization of an accessory non-illuminated, single-faced

awning sign (no copy on sides); in the same building with retail/restaurant uses and accessory signs as previously approved (size and location as shown in the application).

Referral:

*14-502(2)(d) / Table 14-502-2
The proposed use, take-out restaurant, requires a special exception in this overlay district.*

Refusal:

*Table 14-901-1 & Bill # 120430A
The maximum sign area shall not exceed 2 sf per linear feet of storefront width whereas the proposed sign having a total area of 35 sf exceeds the allowable sign area (2'x17'=34' sf) and therefore is not permitted.*

1914-16 Rittenhouse Square Street (RM-4) Not opposed w/ proviso

ZBA# 22626, Hearing Date: 5/21/14 @ 2pm.

Application for the partial demolition and the erection of an addition including a roof deck to an existing attached structure for use as a single-family household living with four (4) accessory off-street enclosed parking spaces (size and location as shown in the application).

Refusals:

14-502(6)(c)(1) Whereas the proposed use, off-street parking (not accessed by a shared driveway or rear alley) accessory to single-family household living, is not permitted in the residential parking control area.

Table 14-701-2

*Minimum Open Area
Required: 30% (1616 sf)
Provided: 3.3% (179 sf)*

*Minimum Front Set-Back
Required: 20 ft Provided: 0 ft*

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Showcase Your Showplace in the Street Scene Competition

By Maggie Mund, CCRA Executive Vice President

The CCRA Street Scene Garden Competition officially kicked off on April 27, with a workshop led by Grace Wicks in the Schuylkill River Park Community Garden. About 20 people attended and learned about the dos and don'ts of container planting.

Garden Categories

- **Container Garden:** a garden grown in containers. Containers may be window boxes, pots or both
- **Street-tree Wells:** a garden grown in an opening in the sidewalk, with or without a tree
- **Garden Block:** A block where a majority of residents display window boxes, pots and street-tree plantings containing shrubs or flowers

Gardener Categories

- **DIY – Do It Yourself:** garden planted by the individual property owner or renter
- **Professional:** garden created by a landscaping service or garden center
- Residential and commercial categories are available.



Grace Wicks shares some secrets for successful container planting at a workshop at the Schuylkill River Park Community Garden.

Contest Rules

1. Gardens entered for competitions must be located within the CCRA boundaries (refer to the map on our website) and be on the sidewalk or attached to the front of the building.
2. Contest entry deadline is July 1, 2014.
3. At least 50% of properties on a block must have plantings to qualify as a garden block.
4. Individual contestants may apply for themselves and on behalf of a garden block.
5. Contestants who volunteer to serve as judges are not permitted to judge other gardens in the categories in which they are competing.



CCRA Street Scene water gauge.