



CENTER CITY QUARTERLY



Newsletter of the Center City Residents' Association

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The Children's Room

By Christine Carlson

Through a turnstile, past the book lined walls, beyond the irritated “Shh” uttered at each errant noise, down the stairs and around the corner lies a Center City treasure – the Children’s Room in the Philadelphia City Institute Library on 19th Street across from Rittenhouse Square. Here the bookshelves accommodate the average height of young visitors and chatter is encouraged.

From behind her haphazardly organized desk, Miss Karen, the children’s librarian, greets regular patrons by name. At first glance, the setting appears serene – how sweet it must be to sit among the stacks and guide children to books that will become their friends. Can’t you just imagine pastoral music and birds chirping in the background? Yet in the midst of such tranquility, why is Miss Karen’s desk so cluttered? Surely this idyllic place allows for time to keep desks tidy. Hmm... perhaps things aren’t always as they seem.

I first visited the Children’s Room when taking my daughter to toddler story hour. As a child, I loved my local library and wanted her to develop the same affection for what has become hers. It was the first of many story hours for my children: from a chair in front of the room, Miss Karen reads books and leads songs while managing to keep the rapt attention of a room full of two year olds. It wasn’t until my daughter started school that I came to realize the job of children’s librarian was not as peaceful as I had once thought. For as often as Miss Karen is behind her desk, she is up and about, welcoming school



Karen Fleck, the children's librarian at the Philadelphia City Institute, reads to the author's children.

groups and creating programs. Her day can start with a story hour (up to 50 babies attend baby story hour!). Then watch her deftly welcome a class of first graders, read to them, help them each select and check out a book, and send them on their way. Afterwards, it’s time to prepare for the LEAP after school program and the steady stream of students completing homework and library projects. Some evenings end with pajama story hour, where nocturnally clad, teddy-bear-clutching children stream in for bedtime stories, crafts, and milk and cookies.

Visiting local elementary schools is also a part of Miss Karen’s busy day. You’ll see her reading to children visiting the Rittenhouse Flower Market and other community events as well. The end of the school year doesn’t offer her respite. Her summer reading program is fantastic, with dozens of children attending eight sessions of activities and events. It culminates in a Delaware River boat ride

Continue on page 2

where participating children and their families connect and strengthen the bonds of friendship.

Miss Karen, aka Karen Fleck, always loved books and libraries. She earned a master's in Library Science and has been a children's librarian for 23 years, the last 14 spent at the Philadelphia City Institute. In spite of her years of experience, she maintains a love of working with children. She says she is the luckiest person because she gets to be in a library all day and get paid for it. Watching her in action proves that she earns her salary!

A favorite part of Miss Karen's job is finding ways to make children excited about going to the library. She says, "While they are here they are learning all of the time – they just don't realize it. For them, reading will become a lifelong relationship. They will always be able to find solace in a book." Creating a positive library experience does not mean that children have carte blanche. No matter what the patron's age, Miss Karen teaches proper library behavior, and reinforces good manners, often prompting a forgotten please and thank you. She is also vigilant about safety. When unknown adults wander into the Children's Room, she makes

them aware of her presence by immediately asking if she can be of assistance.

Over the years, Miss Karen has become a part of many children's lives. I have been in the Children's Room during school breaks and seen high school and college students come back to say hello. She says she finds it rewarding when children greet her by name outside of the library. I now see I owe children's librarians an apology: I realize the complexity of their job, and appreciate how our families' lives are enriched by one special member of their ranks.

Beyond Babel: Congregations Speak the Same Language

By Steve Huntington

There are over 20 religious congregations in the CCRA neighborhood. Until this May, they had never gathered to discuss concerns. That changed on May 6 when, in response to a CCRA invitation issued by Congregations Committee Chair Steve Huntington, representatives of 11 congregations, more than 20 people, attended a breakfast at Parc Restaurant on Rittenhouse Square.

The group discussed a number of possible cooperative ventures in the future including:

- An outreach effort for new residents
- Interfaith newspaper column
- Working with Penn's Village – the volunteer program designed to support residents living in their homes
- Building maintenance issues

- Cooperation on the provision of social services

Those in attendance resolved to meet again this September. A walking tour/open house event for participating congregations is in the works for some time this fall.



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President’s Report



Adam Schneider, CCRA President

I write this column, nearly to the day, on the first anniversary of my presidency. While I am pleased with our progress of the first year, there is still much work to be done. It is at once pleasing and vexing to acknowledge that my ambitions for CCRA far exceed the available time to accomplish them. My main objective is to build on strengths and expand CCRA’s sphere of involvement in issues that affect our quality of life in the community.

In my last column, I discussed how CCRA was rethinking how we serve our constituency. I invited our members, and even non-members, to contact us with ideas about making the community better, or about quality of life issues. I asked the membership and board to provide constructive ideas to make CCRA better, bigger and more relevant to our community. The offer still stands. As I have said before, the organization exists to serve its members. I want to take this opportunity to review some of the highlights of the past year.

We have promoted good design and development with civic officials. We started a weekly eNewsletter, to communicate timely events in an easy to read format and we have expanded “Center City Quarterly,” our quarterly print newsletter. Efforts to revamp our website are ongoing. We held our first-ever board retreat this past March, discussing how to improve our core functions. We hosted the ever expanding Chili Challenge social gathering. I have asked committees to refocus and refine what they do, and set quantifiable standards to measure performance.

The Zoning Committee and the Crosstown Coalition, of which CCRA is a leading member, has been vocally advocating for sensible zoning reform and for preserving the time-honored participation of civic groups in the zoning process, as the Zoning Code Commission undertakes to rewrite the Zoning Code. Along with civic and business leaders, we advocated for – and achieved – a vastly improved design of the South Street Bridge. We worked with neighboring civic groups and residents to the south in a proactive attempt to advocate for good design when planning the redevelopment of large tracts of land in the “Southbridge” area, loosely bounded by Lombard Street, 21st Street, Grays Ferry Avenue, the PECO plant and the Schuylkill River.

We have built solid relationships with the University of Pennsylvania, with Penn Medicine at Rittenhouse as the anchor of our southern boundary, and the new Penn Park as the anchor presence to our west. New plot borders in the garden plots are in the process of being installed throughout the garden with funding from foundations, gardener donations, and the state. Our Tree Committee secured additional funding through elected officials to subsidize sidewalk tree plantings for any member who requests one. The Historic Preservation Committee has become active again and is planning a workshop in the near future. We also supported the creation of the crosstown bike lanes along Spruce and Pine Streets, which caused no loss of parking spaces or special permit parking for churches.

One area worthy of extra focus is the newly formed Liquor Committee. It is charged with the unenviable task of managing the interface between the residents and the large number of bars and restaurants in our district. These are among the greatest amenities in our neighborhood. They bring vitality to the streets and dollars to the businesses. However, certain businesses within the community operate irresponsibly and cause problems for immediate neighbors. The Liquor Committee addresses these concerns by bringing the problem locations to the attention of the city-sponsored Nuisance Task Force. In order to best utilize this powerful resource, we need to hear from you about the problem locations. The more calls we receive about a particular location, the more weight our voice will have before city and state officials.

I hope this gives you a sense of what CCRA is doing for you. Membership is at the core of what we are. If you know that your neighbors are not members, I encourage you to encourage them to join. I hope you find that our activities of the past year on your behalf are worthy of your support.

Respectfully,

Adam Schneider, President, CCRA

Times Square in Philadelphia?

By Frances V. Ryan

Earlier this year, Councilman Frank DiCicco, representing the First Council District, proposed the creation of a “commercial advertising district” on Market Street between 7th and 13th Streets. Bill 100013 sought to create a zone where non-accessory signs could cover the entire wall of a building. A non-accessory sign directs attention to a product or activity not offered on the property where the sign is located. Thus, the Gallery, the former Strawbridge & Clothier store and the former Lit Brothers buildings could be covered from top to bottom with signs advertising shows and promotions at the Atlantic City casinos, movies, video games, beer and alcohol... just about anything at all.

Bill 100013 allows for signs to be illuminated, flashing or animated and permits electronically changing messages. Streaming video displays throughout the day or night could be bombarding the senses on the corridor connecting City Hall to the Liberty Bell. Moreover, it would not just affect this corridor. The bill, as written, eliminates the legislative findings regarding sign controls throughout the entire city.

Without the legislative findings, all sign regulation in the city would be subject to attack as unconstitutional for violating the First Amendment. Mary Tracy, Executive Director of SCRUB said, “We can’t remove the legislative findings that give the city its

police power.” She believes that proposals for other “commercial advertising districts” in Center City, or anywhere property owners wish to profit from utilizing their buildings as giant billboards, would not be far behind.

SCRUB, the non-profit organization also known as *The Public Voice for Public Space*, uses advocacy, public awareness and education, community mobilization and legal actions to promote healthy, vibrant and beautiful public spaces in Philadelphia. When Bill 100013 was proposed, Tracy contacted the media, sent out e-mail alerts and met with a variety of stakeholders to educate the public both as to the specifics of the bill and the potential for opening the floodgates for massive advertising in Center City.

What ensued was a healthy discussion of Bill 100013. Councilman DiCicco defended his plan as one that would “add life and vitality to a commercial corridor that could use a shot in the arm.” *Inquirer* columnist Inga Saffron wrote, “Market East is probably the slice of Philadelphia most urgently in need of redevelopment, apart from the Delaware waterfront,” but she decried “planning by legislation, a shoot from the hip approach that the Nutter administration has been trying to give up.” Planning Commission Executive Director Alan Greenberger said his office agrees that changes may be necessary to the Market East area, but expressed concerns

for “unintended consequences” and asked Councilman DiCicco to hold the bill and make adjustments over the summer. Councilman DiCicco stated that he would ask for feedback before reintroducing the measure in the fall.

The Zoning Code Commission is in the middle of a comprehensive rewrite of Philadelphia’s Zoning Code. A careful review of appropriate measures to revitalize Market East should be part of this process, with input from planners, retail experts, and residents of Center City.

In today’s tough economic climate, it requires constant diligence to avert efforts to disregard the long-term health of the city with shortsighted fixes. The temptation is great to ransom the future for immediate gain. Tracy believes that Councilmen DiCicco’s bill could actually increase blight on Market Street by enabling property owners to squeeze revenue out of derelict buildings.

SCRUB remains diligent, always ready to work to ensure that Philadelphia’s public places be healthy, vibrant and beautiful. To keep abreast of the status of Bill 100013 or share your ideas regarding the Market East Corridor, visit www.publicvoiceforpublicspace.org or contact Mary Tracy directly at Tracy@publicvoiceforpublicspace.org.



This is the view looking west on Market Street from 12th Street towards City Hall today.



This is what the view could look like with the addition of a non-accessory sign if advertising were allowed “by right” after the passage of Bill 100013.

Altar-native Rock at the First Unitarian Church

By Leslie Young

Pop icon Madonna knows that “Music makes the people come together.” Even if you aren’t familiar with those song lyrics, you may be familiar with the frenetic music that sometimes pulses through the air around the First Unitarian Church at 2125 Chestnut Street on a Friday night. This church has been bringing the community together, in one way or another, since the ministry began back in 1796. For the past 15 years, this house of worship has also quietly, or on some nights not so quietly, become one of the most popular small venues for alternative rock music in Philadelphia.

Known on the local music scene simply as “The Church,” First Unitarian has a rental partnership with local concert organizer and promoter R5 Productions, which is run “for the kids, by the kids,” according to its website. The company’s focus on cheap, safe, all-ages shows, and its knack for booking popular if still somewhat-undiscovered acts, has elevated its reputation, and that of First Unitarian, to the national level.

Mike McKee, administrative assistant at First Unitarian, credits the R5 shows for “helping to raise the church’s profile as a community resource...we have R5 to thank for our church being mentioned in *Rolling Stone* magazine.”

According to McKee, First Unitarian has been renting out its basement-level Griffin Hall for

alternative rock shows for approximately the last 15 years. A grass-roots concert-organizing group called the Cabbage Collective had approached the church business administrator, Norman Fouhy. The Cabbage Collective already had a working model and loyal fan base, as it had been staging similar all-ages, gay-friendly, alcohol-free rock shows at another church in West Philadelphia. McKee says Fouhy was sold; while the music may not have been of the predictable choir variety, the all-inclusive, substance-free principles behind the concerts were in line with the church’s own. Also, an active rental program had been part of Fouhy’s business strategy since joining the church in 1989. R5 Productions grew out of the same cultural movement as the Cabbage Collective, and the church began working with them in the mid-90s.

Today the majority of shows, which are often pleasantly raucous affairs, are still held in First Unitarian’s basement, or Griffin Hall. However, McKee says the solid working relationship between R5 and the church has resulted in the opening of the church’s chapel and sanctuary for some select events. The soaring architecture of this Frank Furness-designed building makes the rare sanctuary shows a truly unique experience. McKee points to a performance by the The Polyphonic Spree—a sprawling choral rock group that features a choir—as his favorite performance: “They are the only group who charmed us into

letting them use our original Casavant pipe organ.” I’d call that altar-native rock.

R5 Productions has a box office at AKA records (27 North 2nd Street) where tickets to most of the shows they book, and all of the shows at “the Church,” are available without surcharge. For more information on R5 Productions and a schedule of upcoming shows, visit www.r5productions.com. For more information about the First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia, visit www.philauu.org.



The 19th century Frank Furness-designed First Unitarian Church attracts large audiences with 21st century Friday night alternative rock concerts.

A World Premiere: Hester Prynne Sings at AVA

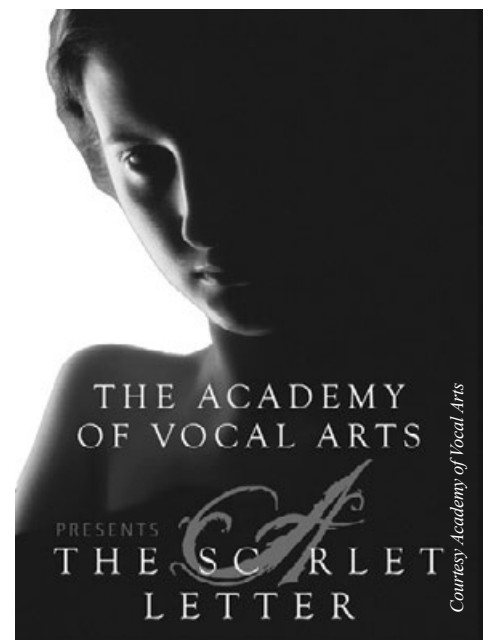
By Kristin Davidson

This fall, you don’t have to travel to New York, Paris or London to see a world premiere of an opera. A Center City institution, the Academy of Vocal Arts, will present the first performances of Margaret Garwood’s *The Scarlet Letter*.

The Academy of Vocal Arts (AVA) at 1920 Spruce Street has been training outstanding opera singers for 75 years. In 2002, their resident artists – students – performed the first act of composer Margaret Garwood’s new opera based on Nathaniel Hawthorne’s gripping novel, *The Scarlet Letter*. As a result, AVA did something it hadn’t done before and that is commission a new opera as a highlight of its 75th anniversary. Luckily for AVA, one of their alumni, Jeannine

Bouchard Cowles of Portland, Oregon, has a personal friendship with Ms. Garwood and agreed to sponsor the premiere. Margaret Garwood is primarily a composer of operas and vocal chamber works and is based in Philadelphia. The collaboration between her and Ms. Cowles provides AVA singers with the opportunity to sing in a new work and the Philadelphia audience with an opportunity to experience a familiar classic in a new form.

The Scarlet Letter with its neo-romantic score will premiere on November 19 with additional performances on November 20 and 21. All performances will be at the Merriam Theater, 250 South Broad Street. Tickets can be obtained by calling 215-735-1685 or



The Academy of Vocal Arts commissioned a new opera as the highlight of their 75th anniversary.

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Penn Medicine

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online at www.avaopera.org. The AVA season also includes performances of Puccini's *Suor Angelica* and *Il tabarro*, Strauss' *Arabella* and Mozart's *Don Giovanni*.

AVA is the only pre-professional, tuition-free opera training program in the U.S. and its graduates have gone on to major careers at the most recognized opera houses in the

world. In November, there is a chance to hear these emerging stars perform in this premiere right here in the neighborhood.

Sculling on the Schuylkill

By Bettyruth Walter

How nice to enjoy the country in the city. Okay, not exactly the country. But on any beautiful morning, while rowing up the Schuylkill River, I must remind myself that I am not truly in a peaceful, sylvan locale.

I am one of the lucky ones. I row on the Schuylkill River, and she is a wonderful river, the envy of the rowing community. The river is wide and long, offering the rower a six mile course, three up to the Twin Stone bridges, and then a return to our singular Boathouse Row.

As a rower oars up the river, the city skyline slowly presents itself, sparkling on a sunny morning. First the Art Museum, and stroke by stroke, as you head up river, the entire skyline shows itself, with a friendly hot air balloon, courtesy of the Zoo, bobbing overhead. Philadelphia really is a pretty city, and I am so glad that I have adopted her for my own!

In case you haven't noticed, there are no motorboats on the rowing stretch of our river. In fact, nothing with a motor is allowed on the Schuylkill River rowing course, other than coaching launches, and these must be wakeless, creating no waves which might be a disruption for the precariously thin and tippy sculls.

The rules of the river are set by the Schuylkill Navy. Yes, we do have one,

commodore and all. Many of these rules concern the traffic patterns for rowing on the river. The boats, which travel backwards so that you are always looking at where you have been rather than where you are going, could create quite a safety issue if we didn't have and obey these rules.

The boats come in sizes according to the number of rowers, so there are eights, quads, doubles and singles. The ages of the rowers are even more varied, as young as 13 or 14, and a few older than 80, according to my reckoning. The younger rowers can learn by signing onto a boathouse youth program, and adults must find themselves a coach to teach them the way onto the river. The city of Philadelphia also offers a learn-to-row program for youngsters during the summer.

To live in Philadelphia and to love the great outdoors is a joy. There is the splendid bike path which follows the banks of the river from Center City right to the boathouses, and far beyond. You can bike for miles and not have to worry about vehicular traffic.

There are beautiful parks, of which Rittenhouse Square is but one. No biking here, please.

Of course, just beyond the river, two drives, packed with traffic jams at certain hours of the day, ribbon both banks. And you can hear and see the cars at certain places along

the river. When I first went down to my boathouse, Bachelors Barge Club, the noise seemed quite loud. However, years later, I hardly notice it as I intently practice and enjoy the synergy of boat and rower.

Not to be ignored is the quality of the river water, which does sprinkle every rower from time to time. Stories abound about the Schuylkill. However, I have been told that the water of the river is far cleaner than in past years, and I try very hard to stay out of it.

I cannot imagine a more glorious setting for exercising both mind and body. The birds sing, families of geese and ducks swim near my blades, enjoying an early morning swim, blue heron fly over the lawns and the shade trees. Often a family of turtles lines up on a protruding tree branch in the river, sunning itself and welcoming me to the morning. As the seasons roll on, I can witness the trees going from barren to green to golden hues.

Glide on, you rowers. You may not be in the countryside, in fact, but you are in a special place indeed as you oar your way up the Schuylkill River, a place almost always peaceful and serene.



Betyruth Walter sculling on the scenic Schuylkill River.



The author is framed by the oars that she uses to row on the river.

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The Belgravia: Monument to an Elegant Era

By Nancy Ambler

Look back, if you will, to a time before Chestnut Street *needed* a renaissance. Close to affluent Rittenhouse Square and served by new and convenient public transport, in the late 19th century it became the site of grand houses like the Rush mansion at 19th Street. In the early 20th century the railroad drew many families to the new suburbs, and hotels and multi-family dwellings began to appear in the city. The Aldine Hotel, for example, replaced the Rush mansion, and on the north side arose a kind of dwelling entirely new to Philadelphia: the apartment hotel. This innovation was called The Belgravia.

The structure was designed by architect Frederick Webber and built, in partnership with William Milligan, in 1902. If its architecture looks familiar, it may be because you've seen its echoes many times in CCRA's neighborhood; 1830 Rittenhouse Square, The Latham, The Sprucemont, The Touraine, 1530 Locust and 250 South 17th are also Webber designs from just before the First World War. Webber's trademark was twofold. Behind the Beaux Arts façades were not the familiar masonry piles, but lighter and stronger steel-reinforced walls. And rather than solid masonry blocks, the new structures were H-shaped, providing light and air to interior spaces.

Named after an elegant quarter of London, The Belgravia was designed primarily to provide pied-a-terre for residents who maintained other establishments or who travelled extensively. Among its early guests

were Horace Rosengarten, the Emlen Ettings, Mrs. Coddington Billings, Mr. and Mrs. J.G. Rittenhouse, the A.W. Woods and Mr. and Mrs. George Massey, he being chief counsel to the Pennsylvania Railroad, a catalyst in creating the neighborhood. Its luxurious suites were complemented by two grand dining rooms, the grander of which, the North Gallery, was open only to guests and was the scene of many glittering parties. In 1936 new owners admitted more transient guests, installed a bar and opened both dining rooms to the public. However World War II brought irreversible changes. The hotel hung on until 1961, but was then acquired at a bankruptcy sale by the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.

That acquisition, roughly concurrent with the conversion of Chestnut Street to a "transitway," promised a new era. PAFA converted the main building to dormitory, studio and gallery space, while the extensive garden level became Peale Club, an elegant dining space for members. As time went on, however, the city abandoned the ill-considered mall concept and the Academy consolidated within its North Broad Street campus. PAFA sold the building in 1981 to the developers Silver & Harting. They in turn redeveloped it as office and retail space, and in their turn sold it to Philadelphia Management Company, authors of its present incarnation as condominium apartments.

Philadelphia Management began its rehab by scrubbing the façade, no small feat in light of its elaborate Beaux Arts ornamentation.



The beautifully restored façade of The Belgravia on the 1900 block of Chestnut Street was designed by Frederick Webber and built in 1902.

Today you can admire every detail, highlighted by the curving entry stair with its gleaming brass rails. Inside, the North Gallery is no more, but the splendid mosaic floors remain, as do the bay windows with their deep embrasures and many Art Nouveau leaded glass panes. The apartments themselves are spacious, and feature hardwood floors and open kitchens with granite counter tops and stainless steel appliances. The developers have practiced cost containment, giving rise to a community that's primarily young and on a fast career track. And unlike many Center City buildings, The Belgravia welcomes pets. A relic of the Gilded Age, it's a welcome addition to the contemporary cityscape.

En Plein Air: Art in the Open

By Ed Bronstein

Art in the Open, a new festival that celebrates the Philadelphia landscape both as an inspiration and as an open-air studio for artists, had its inaugural run this past June. The festival consisted of four days along Schuylkill Banks during which 35 professional visual, performance and installation artists created art inspired by their surroundings. The artists, all of whom happily interacted with everyone along the path who happened by, were selected by a jury of art curators from over 110 entries from around the world. An opening show of their work was held in City Hall for several weeks, and a show of work produced during their time along the river was mounted at

University of the Arts Rosenwald-Wolfe Gallery to conclude the event.

Students from Science Leadership Academy at 22nd and Arch Streets, working with local dancer Leah Stein, created dance pieces along the trail. Also, on the first day, students from Grover Washington, Jr. Middle School at 201 East Olney Avenue, under the direction of Ben Volta, this year's Artist-in-Residence, completed a seven month project about art and learning, by creating a two and three dimensional abstract installation representing that learning process; the resulting artworks were created and presented under the Market



Maria Anasazi, working on her large-scale installation, was one of 36 artists participating in the first annual Art in the Open festival along Schuylkill Banks June 9-12, 2010.

Street Bridge. Those schools were among a number of partnering institutions including the Greenfield School, PaFA, UArts, Philadelphia

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Museum of Art, Philadelphia's Office of Arts, Culture, and the Creative Economy, Schuylkill River Development Corporation and Greater Philadelphia Tourism Marketing Corporation, among others.

I had the initial idea for Art in the Open in 2008 and worked for over two years with six other volunteer professionals, along with an ever-expanding list of partners. My personal goal now is to make it an annual *community oriented event*, still centering on Art and Philadelphia's landscape, but also involving our three adjacent communities this coming year. Among other things, it would be terrific if the three organizations - CCRA, LSNA, and SOSNA - can again get involved – but this time *earlier* in the process. Among other goals I have for next year is to obtain funding and other support from our local governmental

representatives, and to see more of the community participate, either by volunteering, by hosting an artist or a “meet the artists” party, by finding neighborhood sponsors among our local businesses, and who knows what other ways.

Notwithstanding the lack of funding sources, the city administration was supportive with particular help from the Mayor, Gary Steuer, head of the Office of Arts, Culture, and the Creative Economy and his staff, and Joe Szymick and his staff at Schuylkill River Development Corporation. A key lesson that I have learned is that, at this difficult economic time, organizations working together, *within their existing budgets*, can reorient programs and come together as a larger group to benefit all by working together for common goals.



Tremain Smith created multi-media artwork inspired by Schuylkill Banks during the Art in the Open festival.

To see the full list of Partners and Sponsors, and get a full picture of the event itself and all of the additional events that were associated with it, visit www.ArtintheOpenPhila.org.

You Know What I Don't Like about Center City Living? Construction.

By Jared Klein

I am not talking about roadwork which, though terribly inconvenient, is a fact of life wherever you live, especially if you live south of Pine Street where the Water Department closes a new street every day.

Instead, I am referring to building-based construction. I am constantly annoyed to discover, every few blocks, a stretch of sidewalk closed to pedestrian traffic, forcing me to crisscross the city like a game of Frogger.

Now don't get me wrong, I am not anti-development. In fact I support tax incentives designed to stimulate new construction. Building and rehabbing condominiums in Center City is a good thing; not only does it generate more Center City residents (and CCRA members), but it helps drive the secondary economy around those buildings by bringing customers to new dry cleaners, corner stores and coffee shops.

What bothers me is the way we regulate construction jobs in Center City. I have travelled all over the U.S., and most major cities enforce regulations that govern how construction sites may alter pedestrian and auto traffic. In New York, for example, sidewalk closures are rare. Construction crews must use scaffolding to create a pedestrian tunnel through the work zone, similar to what has been erected

at the Academy House during its recent rehabilitation. To me, this is how urban construction must be done.

A prime example of what NOT to do is currently seen at the Curtis Institute of Music construction site on Locust Street, between 16th and 17th, where the sidewalk has been closed for months. During rush hour, this closure creates chaos as commuters trying to reach the corner PATCO station play car dodge-ball as they weave around the construction site to get to their trains. The Curtis site extends so far that SEPTA buses have trouble getting by, forcing them to drift into the adjacent lane, which causes even more disruption during peak times.

So, what can we do? We can work to enforce laws already on the books to end sidewalk closures for good. Councilman Kenney introduced legislation that passed in 2008 (bills 080623 - 4), mandating that covered walkways be used in certain cases. While this is a good first step toward pedestrian safety, the use of walkways is still not mandatory and the Streets Department struggles with drafting regulations to enforce walkway use. In my mind, an easy fix to this problem is to hit the contractors in their wallets by enacting legislation that assesses a weekly fee on construction sites that close sidewalks for longer than is necessary to ensure the safety of pedestrians (such as closing off demolition areas).

Mandating that every project create a covered walkway is commonsense legislation. With little economic impact on the construction project, creation of these tunnels removes unsightly fencing and barricades from neighborhoods and allows pedestrians to enjoy walking without needless, and often unsafe, street crossing. Auto traffic is also made smoother as cars do not have to contend with mid-block pedestrian crossing. Finally, from the contractors' perspective, creating a pedestrian tunnel fosters some neighborhood goodwill. I still think poorly of the Aria Condominium because of its year-long lane closure on 15th Street. As for Curtis – as it continues to enrich Philadelphia with its vibrant musicians, I hope it decides to enrich the neighborhood with a pedestrian bridge for the comfort of its neighbors.



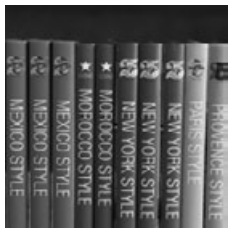
The sidewalk closure at the Curtis construction site creates problems for pedestrians, cars and SEPTA buses on the 1600 block of Locust Street.



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What Would Jane Jacobs Do?

By Virginia K. Nalencz

A review of a book on city life: *Wrestling with Moses: How Jane Jacobs Took On New York's Master Builder and Transformed the American City* by Anthony Flint (New York: Random House, 2009).

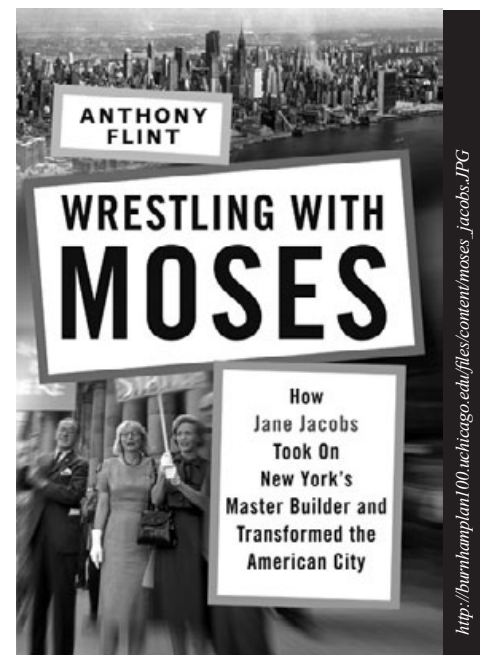
She approached the study of cities the way Julia Child baked a quiche: with verve, a classical sense of order and a determination that the endeavor should not fall flat. Can Jane Jacobs, who died in 2006 a week short of her 90th birthday, speak to an age that claims her influence, but disagrees about what precisely that influence might be? Anthony Flint's book uses the conflict between Jacobs and Robert Moses, master builder of New York City from the 1930s through the '60s, to interrogate Jacobs on her view of cities today.

In the mid-'50s as a staff writer at *Architectural Forum*, Jacobs interviewed Philadelphia's legendary planner, Edmund Bacon. She saw that in the neighborhood he had targeted for improvement, people sat on stoops, shoppers crossed narrow streets, and children hopped on sidewalks. No one was on the street in the "improved" district where Bacon proudly directed Jacobs' attention to the broad vista. Her encounter with Bacon led to a talk at Harvard in which she applauded the creative chaos of the streets. The talk grew into *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, and the rest is myth; Jacobs' name has been invoked ever since whenever cities are spoken of.

A myth needs a monster, and the Jacobs version boasts one of colossal stature in Robert Moses. According to Robert Caro's biography of Moses, the "power broker" had gone over to the dark side by the time he met his match in Jacobs. He had begun his career by sprinkling the Long Island shoreline with sand as fine as spun sugar to create Jones Beach as a playground for working people. By the 1950s he had become a tyrant who ran expressways through neighborhoods even when alternate, unpopulated routes were available. No sooner had *Death and Life* been published in 1961 than Jacobs discovered that her own neighborhood, including the venerable Washington Square, was in the path of Moses' grim wrecking ball.

In the fight to save the square and the slightly later struggle against Moses' planned highway that would slice through Lower Manhattan, Jacobs took no prisoners. Compromise is the enemy, she warned her troops. In the battle of Washington Square, some in the neighborhood argued for a narrower, less harmful roadway through the park. Said Jacobs: no roadway. At all. And remember to pull every political string as hard as you can.

Hearing about her epic battles with Moses, one might conclude that Jacobs wanted every neighborhood to resemble her own bohemian enclave in midcentury Greenwich Village. The truth, as usual, is more complicated. She is sometimes claimed as a forebear by those who say *Nothing In My Backyard*, but she believed above all in change and saw that cities need to evolve or die. If she had a rallying cry, it was: "Look at the specifics." She was clear about the uniqueness of cities and shrugged off the embrace of various movements. When planners awakened to the benefits of density, she observed mildly that gussying up a shopping center with mixed uses did not turn a suburb into a city. To those who wished to ban cars entirely, she replied that not the car itself, but allowing it to dominate planning decisions, created the problem. Her father,



a country doctor, had one of the first cars in her hometown of Scranton, Pa., she recalled; for pleasure or errands, the family was expected to travel by streetcar.

Flint's *Wrestling with Moses* is not so much a book about planning as it is about power, and about assessing Jacobs' work in the light of the present. Her great legacy, along with her immensely readable books and her lasting civic victories, is her insistence on the centrality of citizen participation in planning. In affirming that role, Jacobs aligns with the core mission of the CCRA.



Jane Jacobs and Robert Moses appear on the same beam only in the realm of Photoshop; in real life, they were fierce adversaries.

A Swell Party at Schuylkill River Park

By Derek Freres

On Saturday, June 5, 2010, over 230 people attended the inaugural Eat, Drink, and be Green cocktail party fundraiser held by the Friends of Schuylkill River Park. From 7:00 p.m. until 11:00 p.m., a large asphalt surface in Schuylkill River Park was transformed into a party venue through the installation of a 3,200 square foot tent, green-themed linens and tables, a silent auction, catered hors d'oeuvres, plentiful flowers, and a live band. Lynne Hopper, Friends' President, noted, "We reached a point where the list of park improvement and programming projects waiting to be executed far exceeded our yearly income, necessitating additional fundraising mechanisms. Eat, Drink, and be Green is one of those mechanisms. It is also a great opportunity for the neighborhood to come to together and have fun!"

At the event, Hopper thanked outgoing President Peg Connor for her years of service to the Park and presented her with a parting gift, a tree planted in her honor on Markward Hill. Michael DiBerardinis, Commissioner of Parks and Recreation, spoke to the crowd regarding the importance of public private partnerships, such as the Friends, without which the quality of Philadelphia Parks could not be sustained on the Department of Parks and Recreation's allocated budget. Attendees enjoyed wine donated by Moore Brothers, beer donated by Flying Fish Brewery, and liquor donated by Drinker's Philadelphia. The challenge with any large first-year fundraiser of this sort is to put together a great event where attendees have a fabulous time and leave wanting to return the following year, but still constrain costs sufficiently to break even or

to ideally generate a profit, all without being able to project how many tickets will sell and which sponsorships will come through. To constrain costs, Friends volunteers arranged the flowers themselves, developed relationships with in-kind sponsors for otherwise costly items, such as the alcohol, and negotiated discounts with several vendors such as our band, the Screaming Broccoli, who played at two-thirds their usual cost. Hopper notes that sponsorships are crucial to the financial success of a fundraiser this large. Without them, "It is difficult to see how one would make much profit," she said. "We are very grateful to all those who supported us. They played a crucial role in making this event a success, which in turn will engender benefits to the Park and the community."

Attendee Tammy Leigh Dement, Parks Revitalization Project Director at the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, commented, "I never would have thought to put a tent on a basketball court and turn that into a fundraiser, but it worked so well in Schuylkill River Park that it's leading me to reconsider how parks in general can be utilized." Creative approaches such as this are an important step toward developing sustainable funding to maintain and improve the kind of parks Philadelphians deserve. The Friends are still calculating all receipts, but they estimate a net profit of over \$17,000, which Hopper indicates, "is fantastic for our first year. Now let's try to push that toward \$50,000 for 2011 and beyond." Hopper continued, "The best part of holding an event such as this includes bringing people together in support of a common cause. We really felt a strong sense



Representing BoConcept, an Eat, Drink and be Green sponsor, are from left to right, Jackie Snowden, Michele Heer and Jill Book.



Attendees at the event danced to the music of Screaming Broccoli, a band with an appropriate name for a park fundraiser.

of community at the event and, by virtue of their attendance, the community clearly stated that they value high quality parks and recreation programming and that they're willing to allocate their time and their funds to realize that goal." Next year's Eat, Drink, and be Green will take place on Saturday, June 4, 2011, in Schuylkill River Park. We hope to see you there.

Growing Older: It's Better in the City

By Dane Wells

There is a new retirement option in Philadelphia. As nice as the suburban retirement communities are, many people don't want to give up their vibrant city life. They enjoy the option of walking to restaurants and cultural events and not having to rely on an automobile. Those who want the features of a continuing care community, but want it in Center City, found their options were limited.

Several years ago, a group of Quakers living in and around Philadelphia formed the Friends Center City Retirement Community (FCCRC), to explore ways to take advantage of the richness of center city. One of their main objectives is to create a sense of community. Beyond simply continuing to savor the independence and joys of downtown life, they wanted to establish a place to live among friends whose

company they enjoy, and a place for those who want to remain independent, and not burden families and friends.

Unlike retirement communities in suburban areas, they found that a Center City location does not have to recreate many spaces and services needed by their suburban counterparts. Numerous options already exist close by - shops, restaurants, cultural

activities, work opportunities, hospitals, social services, public transportation and so on. They are creating an urban hybrid of the traditional continuing care retirement community, a Quaker-affiliated community in Center City.

Phase one of their development, Friends Center City Riverfront, consists of approximately 20 apartments at 22 South Front Street and is presently accepting applications. Riverfront will be a small scale retirement community for those members who are ready to simplify their lives and to move now to a supportive residential community. The activities and programs will be available both to Riverfront residents and to non-resident members.

Participants have a variety of entry options, and the comprehensive, yet flexible monthly fee includes: Daily continental breakfast plus three communal dinners per week, bi-weekly housekeeping and bed linen service, utilities and all apartment fees including maintenance and taxes, 24 hour security and emergency response system, transportation coordination, social, educational, and cultural programming and resources, and lifetime healthcare and wellness services through a special arrangement with Friends Life Care, a 20-year-old Quaker-affiliated organization that provides life care to members in their homes.

Currently the FCCRC membership includes more than 750 people. Some don't plan to



The outdoor space at the Friends Center City Riverfront development is attractively landscaped.

move in for another 10 years or so; others have more immediate interests. One of the things that makes FCCRC different, and underscores their community mission, is that they are establishing an organization called FC3 which will offer a wide variety of programs and activities in Center City to both resident and non-resident members (those who are thinking about moving into a facility later). Both can partake of special trips, dinners, lectures, health programs and cultural events. For resident members, this means a more diverse set of friends. For aspiring residents, they will get to know

many of their future neighbors before they even move in.

The FCCRC is currently managed by a diverse and professional board, led by Center City Residents' Association member Ted Reed. They are currently hosting a series of open houses at the Friends Center City Riverfront, where interested people can learn more. For more information about Riverfront, go to: www.centercityretirement.com. For information or to schedule a tour: call Vicki Davis at 215-432-2553.

South x Schuylkill – A Dream for the Future

By Fran Levi

The evening of June 30 presented the boards of the Center City Residents' Association (CCRA), South of South Neighborhood Association (SOSNA) and South Street West Business Association (SSWBA) with an opportunity to come together, meet and greet, and review the possible redevelopment of the area adjacent to the South Street Bridge. Hosted by Toll Brothers, (the developers of the former Naval Home at 24th and Bainbridge Streets), the meeting was held in the Grand Rotunda of the beautifully restored Biddle Hall. The Biddle Hall and its dependencies, designed by William Strickland in 1833, are listed on the National Register of Historic Places and are designated a National Historic Landmark.

CCRA, SOSNA and SSWBA met in part to review an Executive Summary of *South x Schuylkill, a vision for the South Street Bridge Area, 2010-2050*, the final report of the semester-long project by University of Pennsylvania first-year Master of City Planning program students led by their instructor Gabriela Cesarino, AICP. A Joint Committee composed of representatives of these three group provided guidance to the students of what the report should include. To accomplish this the students met with residents, business owners, landowners and developers to gain insight on their ideas and concerns about possible development for the area adjacent to the new South Street Bridge.

Jim Campbell, a member of this Joint Committee, welcomed attendees and introduced the presidents of the three groups, Gus Scheerbaum (SOSNA), Adam Schneider (CCRA), and Jessie Frisby (SSWBA) who spoke about the importance of the area. Schneider reminded the CCRA Board members that this area is the southwest gateway to our community, and "any development will have great impact on our neighborhood."

Mike Schade, member of CCRA board and Joint Committee, presented an overview and an Executive Summary explaining that the area studied was

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bounded by Lombard Street on the north, 21st Street on the east, the CSX railroad tracks on the south, and the Schuylkill River on the west. As noted in the Executive Summary, the key points covered were:

- The Vision: A mix of uses creates enduring, vibrant places.
- Connections: Access and mobility are assets for a neighborhood.
- Focus Areas: Schuylkill Avenue and South Street around South Square Market.
- Preservation: History is a foundation of neighborhood identity.

The goals include the preservation of the neighborhood’s diverse character while enhancing it with more green spaces, improved pedestrian and bike access, and continued development of mixed use residential and commercial development. According to Schade, “Every resident should live within one quarter mile of a green space.”



South of the new South Street Bridge the students envisioned a promenade along the Schuylkill River.

Because CCRA’s Board of Directors would not meet over the summer, a motion was made and seconded to accept the Executive Summary. The motion passed unanimously and all parties agreed to work together with all stakeholders including the city, property

owners, and potential developers in the South x Schuylkill area with the intention to recognize the goals of the residents, neighborhood organizations and those adopted in the Executive Summary.

The Mummies Are Coming to the Penn Museum

By Darien Sutton

The University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology is the *only* east coast venue for the blockbuster exhibition *Secrets of the Silk Road* coming February 5, 2011. Known to many as the “mummy museum,” the Penn Museum has mummies of all kinds: birds, alligators, puppies, cats, adults, children, and babies. So it is the perfect venue to host some of the most fascinating, well-preserved mummies from China’s distant past.

America is an amalgam of ideas and people and a nation that embraces culture; we pride ourselves on being part of a “patchwork quilt.” We now know that present-day Central China was also once trading and mingling across cultures some 2,000 years ago, connecting East and West along the famous Silk Routes.

Secrets of the Silk Road tells fascinating stories of early human migration and cultural interactions in this desert crossroads of Central Asia. For example, we see that, though far from Europe and separated by great mountain ranges, these desert mummies have long noses, deep, round eyes, and red or blond hair. The astonishingly intact appearance of these mummies is due



The “Beauty of Xiaohu,” female mummy, ca 1800-1500 BC awaits visitors to *Secrets of the Silk Road* exhibition opening February 5, 2011.

to weather and environmental conditions rather than to formal preservation techniques generally associated with the more familiar mummies of ancient Egypt.

Secrets of the Silk Road includes the “Beauty of Xiaohu,” a showstopper mummy that Victor Mair, University Museum scholar and professor of Chinese Language and Literature,

called the “Marlene Dietrich” of mummies for her long blondish-red hair, beautiful face, and serene expression. She seems to have just fallen asleep—nearly 4,000 years ago.

Another stunningly preserved mummy is an eight- or ten-month-old infant in a vibrant blue cashmere bonnet. As if just laid down for a nap, the infant is swaddled in

a burgundy blanket with a pillow under its head. Light brown hair peeks out from under the bonnet, and a bottle made from a goat's udder lies beside it.

Along with the mummies, the exhibition contains approximately 100 everyday items such as carved hair combs, bronze mirrors, leather goods, woolen bags, and even recognizable foodstuffs (freeze-dried eggrolls, donuts and raviolis). There are also works of art including inlaid lacquered boxes, game boards, musical instruments, a beautifully painted wooden coffin, gold plaques, gold belt buckles and jewelry, silk tunics, wool stirrups, and finely woven shoes and rugs, not to mention painted wooden figurines and sculptures.

"I never dreamed I would see the day when these invaluable ancient artifacts would come to the Americas," said Dr. Victor Mair, the exhibition's catalog editor and co-curator. Credited with rediscovering the Tarim Basin



Among the artifacts that will be on display in the *Secrets of the Silk Road* exhibition will be a gold mask, ca 5th-6th century AD.

mummies for the West in the 1980s, Dr. Mair has been engaged in intensive research in Central Asia since that time.

"This traveling exhibition of materials from half way around the world," he says, "is

opening new doors—providing visitors with an unparalleled opportunity to come face-to-face with life in East Central Asia, both before and after the formation of the fabled Silk Routes that began more than 2,000 years ago."

After stops at the Bowers Museum in Santa Ana, California, and the Houston Museum of Natural Sciences, the exhibition will be in Philadelphia from February 5, 2011 to June 5, 2011.

TICKET AND TOUR INFORMATION for *Secrets of the Silk Road* at the Penn Museum:

Tickets: www.penn.museum
Timed tickets for individuals are available beginning September 15, 2010.

Discounted group tickets are available now. Email grouptickets@museum.upenn.edu, or call 215-746-8183.

Ladybug Release Party 2010

By Jacqueline Bershad

Each season in the garden has its own ritual – picking pumpkins in the fall, a quiet walk in winter snow, springtime planning and planting. Each summer at the Schuylkill River Park Garden a special event takes place, the ladybug release. Started four years ago by a small group of garden moms, this year the event drew about 50 people from the CCRA and garden communities. After a spring of too hot days, too cold days, and too rainy days, on June 10 families gathered on a sunny, picture perfect day to release the ladybugs.



Isabella shows the ladybugs that she is about to release in the garden.

As the group started to gather there was a scavenger hunt to encourage garden exploration. Children fanned out through the tidy rows of garden plots in search of hidden treasure. The goal was to find things that are common in the garden, but often rare in the city: water pump or rain barrel (there are no hoses in the garden; all watering is done by hand), a caterpillar or butterfly, earthworm, seeds, weeds, vegetables, and of course ladybugs. Some lucky scavengers even saw a brown bunny. The rabbits can't resist all the leafy lettuce and other veggies that grow in the garden. When the children found 10 things on the list they received a bag of gummy butterflies and worms – so big and intensely colored that parents might have preferred if they ate the real thing instead.

Then the group gathered to talk a bit about the reason for releasing the ladybugs in the garden. Ladybugs eat aphids, the small bugs that can damage plants, so releasing them is a natural form of pest control. The best time to release them is in the evening because they have a homing mechanism but will not fly in the dark. Wetting the leaves as bugs are released is also supposed to encourage them to stay put, so mister bottles were handed out, and were a lot of fun to play with even if they did not help make the ladybugs stick



Jacqueline Bershad is distributing ladybugs to the waiting hands of party attendees.

around. Then the group headed out into the garden with containers of bugs. The lids were removed and ladybugs scooped out into waiting little hands. The bugs immediately began to crawl up arms tickling as they went and then fly off in search of tasty bug treats.

The bugs set free, the families gathered for their own treats – a feast of hot dogs and chips provided by the CCRA and cooked up by garden members. Gardeners also contributed yummy ladybug themed desserts.

The garden is located in the Schuylkill River Park at 25th and Locust Streets right next to the small dog park. It is open to the public whenever there is a gardener inside and the gates are open. Stop in for a visit to enjoy a lovely bit of the natural world right in Center City. Perhaps you will see a butterfly, a bunny, or a ladybug.

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Not-So-Funny Happenings on the Way to the FORUM

By Steve Huntington

In response to an application filed by the owner of the Forum Theatre, the “adult” cinema on the south side of the 2200 block of Market Street, the Zoning Board of Adjustment granted a variance permitting the roof to be raised and the addition of a mezzanine level for “adult cabaret and adult modeling” with retail sales of “adult periodicals, novelty and gift items, and videos.”

Currently, the property’s use is for cinema only and any expansion of the building requires a zoning variance. By state law, variances can only be granted in situations where the existing configuration of the building presents a “hardship” to the owner.

CCRA appealed the Zoning Board’s decision to the Court of Common Pleas but Judge Gary Di Vito denied the appeal. In response, the Association recently filed a further appeal to the Commonwealth Court.

At the Zoning Board hearing and in the Court of Common Pleas, CCRA’s counsel, Stanley Krakower, objected to the expansion plans, stating that the physical

addition and the proposed uses would be detrimental to the neighborhood and that there was no “hardship” justification for the proposed expansion. The resident associations of two adjacent condominium buildings, the Murano on Market Street and “33” on 23rd Street between Market and Chestnut, have also expressed their opposition to the proposed expansion.

The Zoning Board approved the Forum’s expansion without issuing an opinion or placing any conditions on its approval. The Zoning Board’s failure to attach conditions was especially disappointing because, during the application process, the owner had signified his willingness to terminate the operation of his other “adult” facility, Les Gals, located to the east on the south side of the 2100 block of Market Street.

To date, the Court of Common Pleas has not issued an opinion stating its grounds for refusing the appeal, although one is expected shortly.

Tim Kerner, co chair of the Association’s zoning committee stated: “Of all the projects

that have been reviewed by our committee during my tenure as chair, this particular application cries out for a response from the community. The cost of fighting this issue, which could exceed \$5,000, represents a worthwhile investment in the quality of life of our community.”



CCRA is appealing in Commonwealth Court the Zoning Board of Adjustment’s decision to grant approval to the Forum Theatre to expand.

Zoning Code Commission

By Steve Huntington

The Zoning Code Commission, charged with recommending code revisions for City Council’s approval, has been busy. In the past three months, the Commission has published more than 300 pages of reports. The Crosstown Coalition, a consortium of 12 downtown civic groups of which CCRA is a founding member, has also been busy, issuing a series of position papers and meeting with Commission subcommittees.

More important, the Crosstown’s efforts have begun to bear fruit. A major Crosstown agenda item was the troubled issue of standing – who has the right to appear before the Zoning Board of Adjustment to represent the community’s interests. For decades, civic associations have presented neighborhood concerns before the ZBA, but a 2009 Pennsylvania Supreme Court decision authored by Chief Justice Castille, *Spahn v. Zoning Board of Adjustment*, called into question the rights of the civic associations

to appear in court on cases which are appealed from the ZBA.

There was concern that the Commission would expand the anti-neighborhood *Spahn* approach, which is limited to zoning disputes in the court system, to the administrative hearings before the Zoning Board. Three early drafts of Commission recommendations sidestepped the issue of standing. However, a June 9th Commission memorandum recommended that the new procedures “allow attorneys representing applicants . . . such as civic groups, to cross-examine, present evidence, and request the issuance of subpoenas.” If this language is carried over into the City Council legislation, it would ensure that civic associations such as CCRA will continue to participate fully in the zoning process.

Another point of concern for the Coalition was the composition of a proposed Design

Review Committee which would have the right to offer advisory, non binding, opinions on larger projects. The Coalition requested that the initial proposal be revised to include a rotating seat allocated to representatives of the neighborhood where the project under review was situated. The June 9th Change Memo included this Coalition request.

A third goal of the Coalition was to have the new code officially enact a decades-old custom whereby developers confer with civic associations before appearing before the Zoning Board. The Commission’s June 9th Change Memo recognized this process in principle by mandating such developer/community meetings, although the Coalition hopes to persuade the Commission to improve the present language by including more specifics as to the conduct of the community/developer get-togethers. In April, the Commission’s consultants

Continue on page 20

published Module 2 containing suggested revisions of the zoning categories within the Code. This document, more than 150 pages in length, seeks to consolidate and simplify the present provisions. The proposals are complex and require a thorough understanding of the present Code. The Coalition, using funds from CCRA and other member associations, has hired Cheryl Gaston, Esquire, to prepare an analysis of Module 2. Ms. Gaston is a retired

member of the City Solicitor's staff who, in the course of her career, advised the Zoning Board and was actively involved in the city's land use policies.

This is a project that CCRA, acting alone, could not have addressed with as much success for a number of reasons. First, the task's complexity has called for more volunteer time and expertise than the Association can

readily summon. Second, the political impact of the broad range of Coalition communities has made our voice more audible. Finally, the expense of this effort far exceeds the individual budgets of any single Coalition member.

The CCRA volunteers who have worked with volunteers from other members of the Coalition include Steve Huntington, Brian Johnston, Tim Kerner and Adam Schneider.

Zoning Committee Report – May, June

By Tim Kerner and Pat Mattern, Co-Chairs

1815-45 Walnut Street, Space 100 (C-5): Application for the erection of one (1) accessory internally illuminated projecting sign (three (3) faces) and one accessory flat wall sign (ATM sign) in space #100 in the same building with existing retail/commercial spaces, offices and parking and all other uses as previously approved. Refusal: The proposed accessory sign is within 150ft. of the boundaries of Rittenhouse Square, is visible from Rittenhouse Square and is not permitted in this zoning district. **Not Opposed.**

1830 Lombard Street (RC3): For the erection of a steel platform at rooftop level, equipment cabinet, one micro wave dish antenna (no longer than 15' in any direction) one GPS antenna and two non-penetrating sleds. Refusal: Whereas this use, wireless telecommunication facility which is within 500 feet of a residential lot line and is also atop a building with a one or two family dwelling, requires a special use permit from the ZBA. **Not Opposed with proviso.**

2027 Waverly Street (R-10A): Application to remove existing permitted rooftop deck and replace with pressure treated lumber, composite decking and stairs to existing penthouse accessory to a single-family dwelling. Refusal: Side yard minimum width: 5' required vs. 0' proposed. Maximum no. of stories: 3 required vs. 4 proposed. Lot lines 1'-6" required vs. none proposed. The proposed stairs are not permitted. *Fast Track application.* **Not Opposed with drawing clarifications.**

2536 Pine Street (R-10A): Application for the installation of outdoor seating and a planter at a previously approved eat-in/take-out restaurant (coffee shop) in an existing one story structure. **Not Opposed with provisos.**

1514-16 Waverly St. (R-10A): Application for the erection of a stair tower (pent roof) addition above the existing second floor accessing to the new roof deck and installation of residential elevator for single family dwelling. Refusal: Rear yard minimum depth: 9' required vs. 0' proposed. Open area: 30% required vs. 0 proposed. **Not Opposed.**

423 S. Carlisle Street (R-10): Application for construction of a 5'-2" x 11'-4" one story addition at the 1st story level as part of a single family dwelling. Refusal: Minimum open area: 175 sf (30%) required vs. 106 sf. (18%) proposed. Rear yard minimum area: 144 sf required vs. 106 sf proposed. Rear yard minimum depth: 9'-0" required vs. 7'-7" proposed. **Not Opposed.**

1513 South Street (C-2): Application for the erection of a second story addition, a third story addition, a fourth story Penthouse addition, a roof deck (located above the third floor roof) and a second floor rear Juliet balcony as part of an existing three story attached building (NTE 35' high) for use as a vacant commercial space for uses as permitted in C-2 commercial district on the first floor (use registration permit required prior to occupancy) and a two family dwelling above, (size and location as shown in the application). Refusal: Minimum open area: 200 sf (25%) required vs. 92 sf (10.5%) proposed. Rear yard minimum depth: 8 feet required vs. 5.75 feet proposed. Maximum no. of stories: 3 allowed vs. 4 proposed. **Not Opposed.**

2300 Walnut Street, SWC 23rd Street (C-4 under 14-1607 Control): Application for the public parking garage on cellar in the same building with an existing 183 dwelling units with all other uses as previously

approved. Refusal: The proposed use, public parking garage, is not permitted in this zoning district. **Opposed.**

1431 Lombard Street (R-10): Application for a three (3) family dwelling in an existing four (4) story structure. Size and location as shown in the application. Refusal: Rear yard area (3 family): 344 sf required vs. 165 sf proposed. **Not Opposed.**

The House Tour Is Just Around The Corner!

CCRA's 52nd Annual Fall House Tour is Sunday, October, 10, 2010 from 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m., rain or shine. Tickets are \$20.

This is a MARVELOUS self guided tour of Center City residences reflecting the diversity of our interesting and exciting community.

Consider volunteering your home for this year's tour. Houses, apartments, condominiums and other private and public spaces are welcome. You can choose to open your whole house, just the first floor and garden or whatever you wish tour visitors to see. Please encourage your friends and neighbors to participate by either volunteering their homes or being hosts/hostesses for a two hour shift at one of the stops on the tour. Hosts and hostesses receive a free House Tour ticket.

Please contact Kathleen Federico at 215-850-3876 or Kate Federico at 215-850-3877 if you are interested in participating in the 2010 CCRA House Tour.

Taking Care of Business

By Virginia K. Nalencz

“Walking to work,” says Keith Cox, “is life’s greatest luxury.” His wife Jena, an attorney who works on Rittenhouse Square, agrees. They came to Philadelphia in the ’80s when it was not at its most robust and have stayed to see the renaissance of the city, particularly of Center City West. “After 30 years,” says Cox, “I still find new things every day, walking around the city.”

As membership chair of CCRA one of Cox’s priorities is to identify and promote locally owned businesses in this convenient, walkable neighborhood. His plans include reaching out to individuals and families who may be thinking about a return to the city after years in the suburbs. “Philly people” who moved out when the city was at a low point in the ’70s and ’80s might retain an outdated perception of lack of safety, but old notions die hard. Cox shakes his head in wonderment as he tells about the parents of an intern in his wife’s firm who hovered to the extent of cautioning their daughter not to leave the building for lunch—in Rittenhouse Square!

Cox himself arrived in Philadelphia from various long distances, from beginnings and college years in North Carolina through graduate study at Cornell, a stint in the Peace Corps in the Philippines and finally a combination of work and study at Wharton. In 1980, halfway through the MBA program, he founded his first company, software development involving wireless telephone technology. Many companies followed, focusing on interactive software, medical education and corporate training. He is working now on technology to use text messaging to provide support and



Keith Cox



Franz Levi

The opportunity to live above the store, as is possible in these mixed-use buildings along 20th Street, helps keep small business owners in the city.

reinforcement in the days and weeks after people complete training courses.

“Being an entrepreneur is not a career choice, it’s a character flaw,” says Cox with a laugh. “Businesses have a cycle of birth, maturation and death. Philadelphia is a great birthplace. The breakpoint is about 50 people in a business. Then you start to pay a premium to get people to commute. All the extras in the city—business tax, wage tax—run into real money. At this point, businesses start to move out of Philadelphia.” Cox points to the parallel with couples who stay until kids are ready for school. “Then the hassle tips them into moving to the suburbs. Ironically, having moved to the ’burbs for the good public schools, they often send the kids to private schools anyway.”

Lou Rosner says his family did exactly that. When the Rosners and the Coxes moved to Center City West in the ’80s, they became part of a group of young marrieds, and subsequently young parents,

whose block on Naudain combined some of the best features of big city and small town life. “We had good neighbors,” says Rosner. “We used to close off the block and make it a play street. The block was narrow, with no parking, so almost no traffic, very amenable to kids playing.” Although the family eventually moved to a close-in suburb, they were so committed to their children’s school that they performed what Rosner calls “a crazy reverse commute for the kids” who stayed at The Philadelphia School through the eighth grade, then moved on to Friends Central.

Says Cox, “I like urban living, even in negative times. People create businesses where they want to live.” Cox, who likes to start businesses, continues to find the city a good place for business creation. “All the requirements are there: office space, capital, smart people,” he says. “All that is easier in the city. Politicians need to hear the message that if they help to create conditions that make the city a great place to live, people will live and work here.”

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The Koresh Company: Dance in Philadelphia's West End

By Nancy Ambler

Ever wonder what happens behind the glass at 2020 Chestnut? Or perhaps you remember, from the Koresh Company's gracious participation in CCRA's 2008 House Tour. The space both houses studios for the celebrated Company and provides classes for other dance disciplines – not to mention for those who aspire to the dancer's physical perfection.

The Company and its sister School are the creation of Sabra brothers: Ronen (Roni) the dancer, founder and now Artistic Director, Alon, the Executive Director, and Nir, now Director of the School. From childhood Roni trained with his mother, a folk dancer in the Yemenite tradition, and with a Tel Aviv folk troupe, then became a member of Martha Graham's Batsheva 2 Dance Company. His first affiliation in the States was with Alvin Ailey in New York, from which he was recruited by Shimon Braun for his Waves Jazz Dance Company in Philadelphia. Shortly thereafter the University of the Arts added him to their faculty. By 1991 Roni was still enamored of jazz dance, but longed to increase his range of expression. At the urging of both his audiences and many of his fellow dancers, and with sound financial guidance from brother Alon, he formed his own company. And at Alon's suggestion, he incorporated into the organization a school, which has trained many current members of the troupe.

Its success has been spectacular. The Company has performed in 25 states and numerous foreign countries. Performance in its home town was less frequent until 2008, when the

Koresh brothers entered into an agreement with the Philadelphia Theatre Company for rehearsal and performance space in their new Suzanne Roberts Theatre. In the upcoming season local aficionados can see five performances October 28 - 31 of a new work by Roni, "Benchtime Stories," and on May 11 another, "Through the Skin."

How to define Koresh dance? Its composition reflects the history of its founder, encompassing Israeli and Yemenite folk traditions, jazz and even hip-hop, and incorporating more than 60 of Roni's original works. The common denominator is energy - a burning intensity. To see a Koresh production is to become part of a driving force that gathers you up and sweeps you through the performance.

Koresh is still very much a family affair. Alon works behind the scenes, managing the business of a growing troupe and the byzantine logistics of international touring. Nir manages the School, which offers training in disciplines ranging from classical ballet to hip-hop. Roni is a highly visible presence in the dance world.

His choreography has been commissioned by such organizations as Spectrum Dance Theater in Seattle; the Cerritos Center in LA and Dance Affiliates here in Philadelphia. He has taught master classes here and in Japan, is a frequent guest teacher at festivals such as Jacob's Pillow, and remains on the faculty of the University of the Arts here.

Roni's creation is threefold:

- **The Company** strives to be an artistic force by creating innovative and emotional dance performances.
- **The School** offers classes and workshops to both adults and children, and offers beginners and professionals a means of artistic expression, as well as splendid exercise.
- **The Koresh Kids Dance** program brings free lecture/demonstrations to local public schools.

The artistic community is richer for Roni's commitment, and Center City for his presence here. To learn more about performances, classes or outreach, please call 215-751-0959, or go to www.koreshdance.org.



Gabriel Biencycki, <http://www.koreshdance.org/pressroom>

Fang-Ju Chou Gant is a member of the Koresh Dance Company.

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The Triangles and Why They Matter

By The Triangles Group

The triangle spaces formed as leftovers when diagonal streets end in the orthogonal grid of Center City are a typical Philadelphia occurrence. Almost every neighborhood around Center City has them: Moyamensing, Passyunk, Ridge, Germantown and our very own Grays Ferry. They have historical roots as they were formed typically around the outskirts of the original Center City grid where outlying roads, trails or paths met William Penn's original city plan.

These trails in many cases predated the development of the neighborhoods. They represented the straightest lines and easiest routes into the city from communities like Germantown or significant landmarks like "Grays Ferry," a Schuylkill River ferry crossing operated by the Gray family. People walked, produce was delivered, and animals were driven in the most direct line from nearby towns and farms to the city along these routes. As Philadelphia grew and the surrounding neighborhoods developed by extending the grid of streets derived from Center City's original layout, the diagonal routes were awkwardly reconciled into the expanding grid. The resulting leftover triangular spaces are a rare opportunity, in our city of orthogonal grids, to make public spaces in places where overlapping streets are redundant or under-used.

Our neighborhood has three such triangles that are currently awkward and underutilized located in the business area of South Street, Grays Ferry Avenue and 23rd Street and at Grays Ferry Avenue, 24th Street and Bainbridge Avenue. The South of South Neighborhood Association and the Center City Residents Association in collaboration with local business members has formed a Triangles Group to study the three local Grays Ferry Avenue triangles, with the goal of developing a community design plan for future improvements to area. Meetings have been held to engage the businesses, and a plan for a traffic study, including plans for public meetings, will begin in the next few months. The group hopes to discuss address issues such as:

Safety

As one of the main arteries to and from the central business district of our city, this area needs to be pedestrian friendly. Over the past year there have been several accidents and injuries at these intersections. By eliminating



At 23rd Street and Grays Ferry Avenue is the Catherine Thorn fountain in the center of one of the small plots of land being considered for improvement by The Triangles Group.

blind spots, promoting more regular traffic patterns and allowing for a better defined walking route, improvements to the triangles may help to prevent such issues in the future.

Community Identity

Some recognize it as "South Square" because of the name of the supermarket, "Odunde triangle" because of the Odunde festival, or "Catherine Thorn triangle", the name inscribed on the fountain. But this little commercial district lacks a collective sense of itself or an identity.

Public Places

People engage with each other in collective activities like shopping, working and entertainment in public spaces. The public realm should encourage these activities by its design to the benefit of residents and businesses alike.

Cultural/Historical Recognition

People have lived in this neighborhood for years and the potential to recognize and celebrate the history and culture of the neighborhood is always a great way to gain some sense of identity and provide recognition to a place.

Sustainability/Storm Water Control/ Greening

Right now these triangles are leftover spaces without any great value. There is an

opportunity to make the leftover triangle spaces more environmentally friendly by reducing storm water runoff and adding more canopy trees and park space.

Linkages

These public areas should be thought of as important places that are physically connected to the surrounding and contiguous neighborhoods. They are one small link in a chain public places... the development of South Street Bridge across to West Philadelphia, the Schuylkill River Trail along the river to Fairmount Park, and the other public parks and spaces in the adjacent communities that unite this area and make it a unique place to live and conduct business.

Economic Development

The success of the neighborhood commercial district is based on all these talking points. We want to see the commercial district serve the neighborhood, which means visibility, easy access from the surrounding neighborhoods, and ample parking, along with pedestrian friendly crosswalks, streets and public areas.

Keep Informed/Get Involved

For contact information and upcoming public meetings, visit www.graysferrytriangles.org.

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Sunday, November 14 2 p.m. Free
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Sunday Worship

9:45 a.m. - Child Care Provided
12:30 p.m.

10:00 a.m. Adult Christian Education and
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11:00 a.m. Worship Service

Coffee and Fellowship hour follows.



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FIRST...and *still* making a difference.

Tango Down to Gavin's Café

By Robin Kohles

Gavin's Café is a cheery and delightful new café. It is located on the corner of 26th and Pine Streets, across the street from Taney playground, fields, dog park and tennis courts. Whether you are stopping in for a coffee, a sweet treat or a meal you will most likely be greeted by the owner, Jezabel Careaga. The doors are almost always propped open and the space is cool and bright, a welcome respite after school or time at the park. There is indoor and outdoor seating and the café is open everyday.



Jezabel Careaga prepares American and Argentinean dishes for Gavin's Café customers.

The menu is a mix of American and Argentinean food with emphasis on freshness, reflecting Jezabel's heritage (she is originally from Palpala, Jujuy, Argentina). The menu offers sandwiches, salads, soups, pastries, smoothies, ice cream, and an array of Argentinean desserts. These desserts are truly spectacular, including profiteroles, tarte de manzana, arrolladitos, pan de leche, cheese plate with dulce de cayote or dulce de higos (figs), and pasta flora (a soft cake topped with quince jelly, usually served at birthday parties). All ingredients are fresh and healthy, and Jezabel makes all of the pastries on site. You can often see her pulling out a fresh pie to cool!

Gavin's Café is located in what used to be Killeen's bar. Killeen's closed its doors in 1990 and had sat vacant for 20 years. Jezabel and co-owner Mark DeCoatsworth worked hard to renovate the dark bar into a clean and sunny café. They were surprised how well preserved it was - glasses and dishes still sat on shelves and an unused stock of beer remained; they were even able to save the original wood and mirrored back bar.

The café name Gavin is a family name of co-owner Mark's; it is a maiden name of his Aunt Margaret Doyle who has lived her whole life at Pine and Taney Streets. The Gavin family has lived on Pine Street since the 1830 and used to own a bar located at 24th and Lombard Streets (now Tastebuds Café).

Jezabel learned to cook from her grandmothers Maria and Julia, and two dishes are named in their honor. Besides loving to cook and enjoy food, Jezabel also has a background in hotel management with experience in sales, housekeeping and restaurants. Her childhood dream of opening a tea house has instead been realized as a coffee house.

Gavin's Café is a welcome addition to the neighborhood and is open Monday - Friday 7:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m., Saturday - Sunday 7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.



Jezabel Careaga and Mark DeCoatsworth, co-owners of Gavin's Cafe, retained and restored Killeen's wood and mirrored back bar.

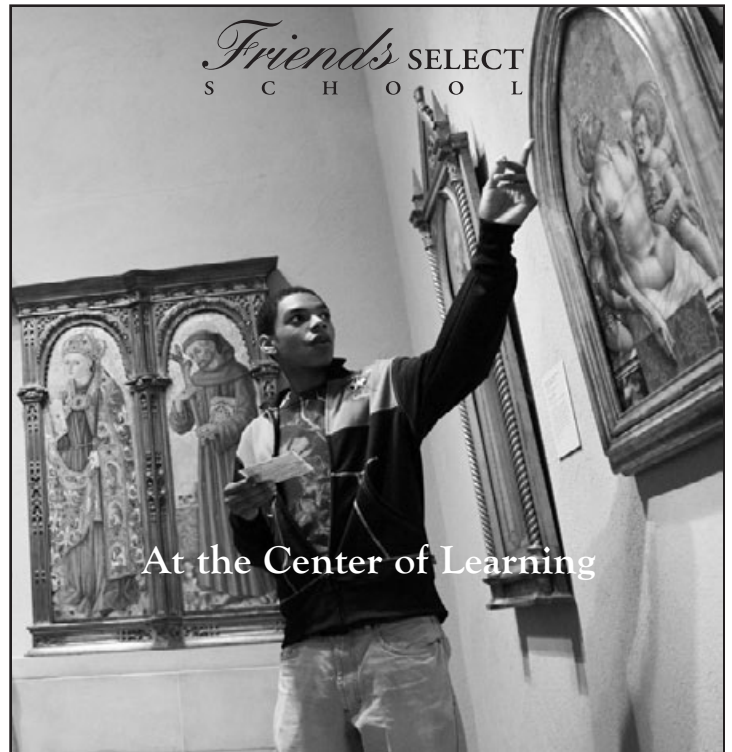


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 - Sunday October 10 at 1 PM
 - Tuesday October 19 at 3 PM
 - Thursday November 4 at 3 PM
 - Saturday November 13 at 11 AM

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Preschool Open House: October 28, 7:00 p.m.
 K-7th Grade Open House: November 4, 7:00 p.m.
 Information Session for LGBT Families: October 9, 9:00 a.m.
 Information Session for Families of Color: November 6, 9:00 a.m.

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CCRA Neighborhood Fall Events

Schuylkill River Park Community

Garden Potluck Picnics

Sunday, September 26, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. and October 24, 5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Gardeners, CCRA members and friends are invited. Bring your own picnic and a dish to pass if you like. The grill will be fired for all to use. Sodas, plates, napkins, utensils and ice will be provided. For more information contact picnic@srpcg.org.

Annual Halloween Pumpkin Hunt in Fittler Square

Saturday, October 23, 3:00 p.m.
Bring your own treat bag to pick up the pumpkins and stay for the fun.

Rosenbach Museum & Library Halloween Event in Fittler Square

Saturday, October 23 following the Pumpkin Hunt, Fittler Square Improvement Association and the Rosenbach Museum & Library will team up for a special Halloween event with arts and crafts and face painting for the kids and entertainment for all.

The Rosenbach Museum & Library 8th Annual Dracula Festival

2008-2010 Delancey Place
This October, the Rosenbach - home of Bram Stoker's original research notes and outlines for *Dracula* - brings you another chilling Dracula Festival, a month-long series of events inspired by Stoker's classic novel and the iconic figure. The Dracula festival will also include author events, tours and workshops at the Rosenbach throughout the month of October. Check the museum's website www.rosenbach.org for details.

Secrets of the Schuylkill

Saturday, September 11, 18 and 25; October 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30, 2:00 p.m.
A one hour fun and fact-filled boat tour that highlights the past, present and future of the Hidden River. Discover the sights, sounds and history of the river, from the early 1700s at historic Bartram's Garden, to the 1800s at the Fairmount Water Works, to award-winning 21st century skyscrapers. The Banks offers a setting and experience unlike any other in Philadelphia.

Boat to Bartram's Garden

Sunday, September 5 and 19; October 3, 17 and 31, 1:00 p.m.
Leave Center City by boat and travel down the Schuylkill River to Bartram's

Garden, America's oldest botanic garden. Disembark and tour the National Historic Landmark Bartram House and botanic garden, stroll the lawns and meadow, and browse the Museum Shop.

Hidden River Outfitters Kayak Tours

Sunday, September 12, 9:00 a.m. and Saturday, September 25, 2:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m.
Professionally guided kayak tours of the Schuylkill River between Walnut Street Dock and Fairmount Water Works, including one half hour of instruction. Moderate exertion level.

Advanced Kayak Tour to Bartram's Garden

Sunday, September 12, 11:00 a.m.
Start your kayak tour at Walnut Street Dock, travel downriver to Bartram's Garden. Once there, enjoy a boxed lunch from Nook Bakery & Coffee Bar and a tour of historic garden, before paddling back to the Walnut Street Dock. Tours will likely take three to four hours. Moderate to heavy exertion level.

Moonlight Kayak Tour

Saturday, September 25, 7:30 p.m.
Let the moon guide you on a tour of the Schuylkill River. Tours are guided by professionals and travel the Schuylkill River between Walnut Street Dock and Fairmount Water Works. One half hour of instruction is provided plus one hour on the water. Moderate exertion level.

Philly FUN Fishing Fest

Saturday, September 11, 7:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
Grab fishing poles and bait in the quest to land the largest or rarest catch of the day! Participants of all ages and levels of experience are invited to fish along the banks of the Schuylkill River from Locust to Chestnut Streets during this free annual event on Schuylkill Banks, sponsored by the Philadelphia Water Department with the support of the Philadelphia Department of Recreation and the Schuylkill River Development Corporation.

For more information about Schuylkill Banks events or to reserve your riverboat or kayak tour ticket, contact Danielle Gray at 215-222-6030 x103.

Schuylkill River Park Fall Festival

Saturday, October 16, 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Friends of Schuylkill River Park will host their annual Fall Festival at Taney and Pine Streets. Children's activities include games, art, a fantastic moon bounce and live animals. There will be lively music and dancing, an assorted mix of vendors, delicious food and drinks including grilled and vegetarian offerings. Everyone is encouraged to bring their dogs to socialize or participate in the canine events. Those interested in participating as a vendor, volunteer, or making a donation can contact the Friends at fsrporg@gmail.com.

Philadelphia City Institute Children's Storytime Programs

1905 Locust Street
215-685-6621

Baby Lap Sit Storytime is designed for babies aged 6 – 18 months and their caregivers.
Every Friday in October, 10:15 a.m.

Toddler Storytime is designed for children aged 19 – 36 months and their caregivers to participate in rhymes, stories and songs.
Every Thursday in October, 10:15 a.m.

Pajama Storytime where children aged 2 ½ - 7 years wearing their pajamas and accompanied by their favorite stuffed animal and their caregivers enjoy stories, surprises, and tasty cookies and milk.
Last Wednesday of September, October and third Wednesday of November, 6:45 p.m.

CCRA's Halloween Trail

Information on this annual event will be available soon. If you are interested in volunteering to help organize the event please call or email CCRA office.

Police Report: A New Element in the Neighborhood

By Alex Klein

At times an unwanted or undesirable element may enter our safe zone, our neighborhood. It could be graffiti, car thefts, home burglaries or even violent crimes. These concerns emerge from time to time and can be recognized as trends or cycles. They appear for a while, cause a problem and then disappear. What causes them to appear and what makes the unwanted elements go away?

This summer the residents of Center City faced some of these concerns while once again dealing with a subculture known as "Crusties," members of a contemporary squatter society. Crusties are typically young and may be homeless. They are noted for their unkempt appearance and are associated with road protests, raves, begging, train-hopping, street entertaining and the young homeless. Crusties reject consumerism by reusing, and subsisting off society's waste through activities such as dumpster diving and squatting.

People walking along the Schuylkill River Banks and users of the Markward playground at Taney and Pine Streets may have felt the brunt of the Crusties taking up residence among them. What was different this year from previous years was the number of Crusties that arrived in the area and their general nature, which had become much angrier and in some cases violent.

While only a minority of the group may be the perpetrators of illegal activity, there were reports of confrontations along the riverbank

as well as with Markward playground staff. Much of the Crusties' activity did not amount to more than misdemeanors or minor citations, the results of opportunistic behavior. Crime can arise from vagrants squatting in a middle-class neighborhood with access to quality items that are left unguarded. Clean facilities such as the restrooms at the playground could be used for bathing.

Nobody has the perfect solution on how to deal with elements we may not want to be around. What we have learned from

the experiences this summer is that people on both sides of the fence have rights and must be considerate of one another. We know summer brings transient visitors to our neighborhood and residents must be more vigilant and prepared for next summer's onslaught. We cannot restrict who enters our "safe zone," and it is our responsibility to talk to our children and warn them of the consequences of interacting with those who engage in extreme lifestyles. In addition, we should also be more aware of the trouble that can arise and how to react to it.

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Homicide
Rape
Robbery/Gun
Robbery/Other
Aggravated Assault/Gun
Aggravated Assault/Other
TOTAL VIOLENT CRIME

PROPERTY CRIME
Burglary/Residential
Burglary/Non Residential
Theft Of Motor Vehicle Tag
Theft From Person
Theft From Auto
Theft
Retail Theft
Auto Thefts
TOTAL PROPERTY OFFENSES

TOTAL PART ONE CRIMES

YEAR TO 5/30		
2009	2010	% Change
0	0	0%
0	0	0%
43	30	-30%
44	38	-14%
13	6	-54%
33	35	6%
133	109	-18%

2009	2010	% Change
70	117	67%
31	19	-39%
15	18	20%
29	23	-21%
319	419	31%
505	455	-10%
201	193	-4%
53	43	-19%
1223	1287	5%

1356	1396	3%
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Good for Elders, and for the Youngsters Too

By Maris Krasnegor, Communicare Director, and Neville Strumpf, Advisor to Communicare

Communicare, an all-volunteer program of the Community Outreach Partnership (CORP), based at Trinity Memorial Church, 22nd and Spruce Streets, has been introducing caring volunteers to isolated Center City elders for 20 years.

We carefully interview each elder who asks for our help to determine what it is they want and need. Then we introduce them to a compatible volunteer who can best provide the support required. Equal care is used in interviewing and selecting volunteers. We seek compassionate, trustworthy, kind

individuals, attentive listeners who enjoy spending time with interesting older people. Volunteers receive careful coaching and orientation, as well as ongoing support from the Communicare director as needed.

There is a growing need among Center City's low-income elderly for the support that Communicare provides. CORP is currently embarking on plans to expand the number of people we're able to serve. A major requirement for expansion is, of course, more volunteers. Here are two accounts of current volunteer/elder relationships:



Communicare volunteers visit isolated elders living in Center City.

Faith and Nan

When Faith B. was first interviewed, she was quite isolated, unable to walk far due to circulation problems in her legs. Ms. B. is

intelligent, sensitive and somewhat shy. An avid reader, she enjoys a certain amount of solitude, but at that time was struggling with an oversupply. We introduced her to Nan F., a capable and committed volunteer. The two clearly enjoy talking and laughing together, watching the antics of the resident cat, planning food shopping lists and discussing Ms. B's medical progress. They share an interest in books and the arts and, when Ms. B's leg improved recently, attended the theatre together. The successful pairing of Nan and Ms. B. demonstrates how the right volunteer/elder match can have a supportive effect in the lives of elders. The appropriateness of the match is central to the success of the endeavor.

Ellen, Joanna and Caroline

When Ellen applied to become a volunteer, she asked if her young daughter Joanna could

be included. She wanted her to have the opportunity to develop a special relationship with an elder, since her own grandparents lived far away. Ellen and Joanna have been visiting Caroline K. ever since. Ellen says, "We have celebrated her 90th birthday together, the Baptism of my second daughter, and we saw *The Nutcracker* together at Christmas. We all look forward to our visits and she always gives us a wonderful welcome by peeking out her door as we get off the elevator. As soon as she sees 'Miss K,' Joanna runs full speed down the hall and into Miss K's apartment, heading straight for her favorite rocking chair to make herself right at home for the visit."

Could you lend two or three hours of your time to befriend a Communicare elder? Weekly schedules can be flexible. The following elders are waiting to meet a volunteer:

Mr. A., who lives at 9th and Locust Streets, is retired from the legendary Victor Café. He loves classical music, opera especially, and has a huge collection of old records. He requests a volunteer to accompany him to medical appointments where he often feels rushed and has trouble getting his questions addressed.

Ms. D., a lively 81 year old woman at 13th and Lombard Streets requests a volunteer with access to a car. She envisions a clothes-shopping spree and would love to go out for breakfast once in a while. She also needs occasional transportation to the doctor (two or three times a year).

To learn more, please contact Maris Krasnegor at 215-732-2515.

PTC @ 35

By Debbie Fleischman

Philadelphia Theatre Company (PTC) has big plans for its 35th Anniversary season this year. The company kicks off the 2010-2011 season celebrating its roots with the entire month of October dedicated to new plays. For the celebration called PTC@PLAY the company will hold new play readings and public conversations with exciting contemporary writers, continuing its long-held commitment to nurturing America's finest playwrights and composers.

"We are all very excited about this milestone season in which we celebrate our continuing relationship with great writers and composers such as Lynn Nottage and William Finn as well as our ongoing commitment to developing new work which has been an essential part of PTC since its founding. We are also thrilled to be presenting the brilliant Anna Deavere Smith in her much awaited Philadelphia premiere of *Let Me Down Easy*," said PTC's Producing Artistic Director Sara Garonzik.

"We are coming off a stellar season with two world premieres and record audiences. In these uncertain economic times we are especially pleased that we continue to attract new audiences who share the joy of experiencing new work," said Diane Claussen, PTC's Managing Director.

The first production in the four-play series will be the two-time Tony Award-winning Broadway musical *The 25th Annual Putnam*



Kathleen Turner starred as Molly Ivins in Philadelphia Theatre Company's world premiere production of *Red Hot Patriot: The Kick-Ass Wit of Molly Ivins*.

County Spelling Bee with music and lyrics by William Finn and book by Rachel Sheinkin November 12 – December 12. This quirky and hilarious musical shadows the lives of six spelling bee contestants who realize there is a lot more to life than winning. *Spelling Bee* is a co-production with New Jersey's Paper Mill Playhouse.

From January 21 – February 13, PTC will produce a work of depth and quality that will be announced later this fall to round out the four-play season.

Let Me Down Easy, written and preformed by Anna Deavere Smith, looks at human struggles, such as the tragedy of Katrina, the steroid scandal, cancer therapies, and the poor American health-care system with her trademark journalistic precision and poignancy. This smash hit direct from New York runs from March 18 – April 10.

The season comes to a close with the Pulitzer Prize-winning drama *Ruined* by Lynn Nottage on May 20 – June 12. *Ruined* was inspired by a collection of



The Suzanne Roberts Theatre on the Avenue of the Arts is the home of the Philadelphia Theatre Company.

interviews from Africa about human struggle in war-torn Congo. Detailing the strength behind human sacrifice, *Ruined* was the most honored play in the 2009 theatre season, winning over a dozen awards and great critical acclaim.

PTC's 35th Anniversary Season should not be missed. Subscriptions for the 2010-2011 Season are currently available starting at only \$105 for a four-play series by calling PTC at 215-985-0420 or visiting online at PhiladelphiaTheatreCompany.org.

PTC is a leading regional theater company whose mission is to produce, develop and present entertaining and imaginative contemporary theater focused on the American experience that both ignites the intellect and touches the soul. In October 2007, PTC moved into a home of its own, the Suzanne Roberts Theatre on Center City Philadelphia's Avenue of the Arts, solidifying the company's status as a major player on the American theater scene.



CENTER CITY RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

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Kate Federico at 215-850-3877 if you are interested
in participating in the 2010 CCRA House Tour.*

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As they sing on Sesame Street, "One of these things doesn't belong here," in our neighborhood.



CCRA helps fight the expansion of the Forum Theatre (lower left), while applauding endeavors, from top left: the meeting to discuss the future of the Southbridge area, the ladybug release party at the Schuylkill River Park Community Garden and the Schuylkill River Park gala.