



Table of Contents

AVI: A Three Act Drama of Dysfunction 1

President's Report 3

Let CCRA Help Get a Tree Planted
on Your Street for FREE 4

Freire Charter School Students
Perform Beethoven Alive! at Please
Touch Museum 5

Empty Nesters Making a Home in
Center City with the Help of "Friends" 7

Hunger Still Happens Every Day:
Philabundance to the Rescue 8

18th and Delancey Eye Sore: Neglect in
Our Neighborhood, on Several Levels 9

Special Thanks to
Recognition-Level Members 11

Watch, Listen, Learn, and Taste at COOK 13

Traffic Flow Near 24th and South:
Food for Thought 14

Mystery Building: A Key Milepost on the
Information Highway 15

Naudain Street Artists' Colony
Open Studio Tour 17

The City School: A Christian Institution
Emphasizing Excellence and Accessibility 21

Philadelphia2035 and Central District Plan 23

CCRA Neighborhood Summer Events 25

Zoning Committee Report 25

September 25 School Fair at
Franklin Institute 27

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AVI: A Three Act Drama of Dysfunction

By Steve Huntington

The three act drama surrounding the passage of the Actual Value Initiative (AVI) provided a front row seat to principal actors on our community stage: the Administration, City Council, and the press. While there were some notable high points in the First and Second Acts, overall the performances were lacking, and the Third Act was disappointing at best, disheartening at worst.

In the First Act, the fourth estate was the star. As the curtain rose, a 2009 Inquirer series detailed the inequitable, opaque, and politically influenced package of realty assessments administered by the Board of Revision of Taxes. Headlines described the BRT's all patronage staff procedures: "Patronage, Politics, Secrecy and Delay" – "BRT Serves as Political Jobs Bank." At Council hearings, members expressed surprise at the BRT revelations, bringing

to mind Captain Renault in *Casablanca* who pocketed his evening winnings while claiming to be "shocked, shocked" to find gambling in Rick's casino.

The drama's fast pace continued with a May 2010 voter referendum abolishing the BRT. But just before the curtain fell, the First Act's uplifting themes turned south. The state Supreme Court, appearing in a cameo role, held that the BRT was still empowered to hear tax appeals even though the BRT's assessment function could be transferred to the Office of Property Administration (OPA), the brand new Administration agency which commenced the reassessment process in January of 2011.

Act Two opened with the Administration's 2012 request that Council levy a tax rate

Continue on page 2



Widely divergent assessments of identical houses on same East Falls block.

before the OPA assessments issued: a process which would have ensured that when the tax bill passed Council, no property owner would be able to calculate their tax bill. In May of 2012, the Administration assured Council that the OPA delay would be minimal. The assessments, they said, would arrive no later than October of 2012. The response of the citizenry to the disconnect between the delivery of the assessments and the imposition of the rate was prompt and unanimous. CCRA, and many other sister civics, testified against the proposal, contending that no citizen should be asked to support a tax rate program without also knowing the assessments to which the rate would be applied. (CCRA testified also that the City should be looking at sources of potential revenue other than property taxes, especially tax deadbeats.) Council, in its only starring scene, stepped to center stage and scuttled the Administration plan after negotiating a deal with Harrisburg to implement AVI in 2013.

The Act Three curtain lifted when Council reconvened two and a half months later on September 13, revealing a bare stage with no AVI actors present. The Administration's October 2012 deadline for the delivery of the new assessments came and went. It was not until February 2013 that the OPA assessments were publicly presented, together with an announcement that the margin of error measuring the correlation of assessments to fair market value fell within standards established by the International Association of Assessment Officers (IAAO). Only then did Council enter from the wings, introducing at the 11th hour more than a dozen bills dealing with the many issues which had been center stage a year earlier during the First Act: a homestead exemption; gentrification relief; deferrals; rate ceilings; relief for the less well to do; nonprofits. In a brief scene, OPA executed its star turn, promising the neighborhoods in a series of public meetings that all city assessments would be posted online simultaneously with the mailing of each assessment.

In March, the audience grew restless after learning that OPA's on line postings lacked key information as to zoning classification, frontage, depth, total area, sale date, and other salient facts. A citizens group of 21 civic associations, the Crosstown Coalition of Taxpayers, which met every two weeks in the CCRA offices and in which CCRA

Thinking of a Realty Tax Appeal? – Lawyer and Non-Lawyer Options Available

Members who want to appeal their tax assessment before the October 7 deadline without incurring attorney's fees may consult the "AVI Appeal Guide," a Crosstown Coalition of Taxpayers publication authored by Walt Spencer, CCRA Treasurer, and CCRA member, Ed Shay, Esq., available at www.centercityresidents.org. (As noted elsewhere, CCRA has been an active member of the Coalition, with several CCRA members holding leadership positions.) The Guide includes:

- * Instructions on requesting a hearing with the BRT to argue for a reduced assessment, including how to complete the BRT application form.
- * Suggestions for supporting an appeal based upon a belief that your home was assessed more than its fair market value and/or more than similar homes in your immediate area.

For owner members residing in single family homes assessed at less than \$1 million who wish to retain counsel, two law firms with BRT experience have agreed to represent CCRA members on BRT appeals either: (a) at a flat charge of \$750 (exclusive of costs and not including a further appeal to the Court of Common Pleas), provided the firm is retained no later than September 30; OR (b) on a contingent fee basis, as negotiated by the firm and client, whereby the firm receives an agreed upon percentage of any taxes saved. These firms have further agreed to provide a half-hour telephone consultation as to the merits of filing an appeal for a flat charge of \$150, which would be applied towards any future fee in the event that the law firm is retained to process the appeal. The participating firms are:

Daniel P. McElhatton, Esquire
McElhatton Foley P.C.
1600 Market Street, Suite 2500
Philadelphia, Pa. 19103
215-557-0811
dpmcelhatton@mcfol.com

Paul Toner, Esquire
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Philadelphia, Pa 19102
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Toner and Mc Elhatton each recommend that, as a first step, homeowners should consult the house sale prices and the assessments in their immediate neighborhood to determine whether their assessment is in line with market prices and the assessments of their near neighbors. Sections III and IV of the Guide explain how to complete this homework.

played a leading role, issued three written requests to OPA seeking data that had been collected at taxpayers' expense. Not only were the requests not answered, they were not acknowledged. It was only after a request was made to OPA in open Council by Councilman Johnson (prompted by CCRA) that a data disk was delivered to the Coalition, six weeks late.

Administration cast members looked for cover after two critical reports landed with a splat on stage in May, one issued by Carnegie Mellon professor Robert Strauss (retained by Controller Alan Butkovitz) and a second prepared by a Crosstown Coalition volunteer team led by CCRA Treasurer, Walter Spencer. Both reports concluded

that, contrary to the Administration's assertions, the margin of error far exceeded IAAO standards and that substantial inconsistencies existed. In particular, the Coalition report concluded that residential assessments were regressive; modest homes were overassessed; high end houses were underassessed; and the land assessments were inexplicable.

It was time to steal a page from the Sondheim songbook. The clowns were sent in. Council, drawing inspiration from the Mad Magazine antics of Alfred E. "What Me Worry" Neuman, did not commission a review of the accuracy of the OPA effort upon receiving the Strauss

Continue on page 4

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For information and deadlines, please call 215-546-6719.

President's Report: Reflections on First Term



Jeffrey L. Braff, CCRA President

At the start of my first term, in my very first "President's Report," I identified seven goals that I hoped to accomplish in the ensuing two years:

1. **Place CCRA in a position of financial stability.**
2. **Enhance CCRA's visibility.**
3. **Increase CCRA's membership numbers.**
4. **Improve fundraising.**
5. **Reap the rewards of the (then) new CCRA website.**
6. **Explore operating efficiencies.**
7. **Build a cadre of volunteers.**

And I noted that the accomplishment of Goals 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 would address the number 1 goal of putting the Association in a position of financial stability.

So how have we done? On the issue of financial stability, two years ago I reported that the Association had been dipping into its cash reserve to fund its basic operations, and that unless we could turn things around, we would be out of business before the conclusion of my term. So I am delighted to report that we have gone from an operating loss of approximately \$37,000 in the fiscal year ending June 30, 2011, to a modest gain of approximately \$4,600 in FYE June 30, 2012, and a gain of approximately \$24,600 in FYE June 30, 2013. Of course, CCRA is not in the business of making a profit. But by bringing in more revenue than expenses in the last two years, we have stopped the steep erosion of our balance sheet, and we are in the process of rebuilding a modest cushion, one that, if maintained, should enable the Association to continue to undertake the many activities that preserve, enhance, and celebrate urban living.

And what about the subsidiary goals? Though it is highly subjective, I believe CCRA's visibility has been enhanced. Aside from increasing the number of activities we have undertaken, our role in the AVI issue, including the Primer on Real Estate Taxes, the "Nuts & Bolts" presentation on how tax assessments are conducted, and our leading role in the Crosstown Coalition of Taxpayers, garnered considerable attention.

In addition, we have been making informational presentations to selected hi-rise condo associations. (If you live in a hi-rise that we should speak to, please let me know.) And thanks to Board member Kim Jessum, we have started to take advantage of social media. (Please like us/friend us on Facebook.) Finally, "CCRA FUNDED CLEANING" is now emblazoned on the neon-colored vests worn by the workers that CCRA pays to clean the sidewalks on trash days.

We also have improved our fundraising in several areas. Under the able leadership of former Board member Joe Rively (who is moving out of our neighborhood but has pledged to provide continued assistance), we have built solid relationships with a number of sponsors. We brought back, and resuscitated, the Celebration of Center City Living. And many of you have increased your membership levels to recognition categories (see page 11), and have generously donated to our Annual Beautification Campaign. Thank you again.

With respect to membership numbers, the good news is that we seem to have reversed the decline. (We presently have just over 1,000 households.) Unfortunately, we seem to be a victim of a recent nation-wide trend, especially among younger people, not to join community organizations. Sociologists have offered many theories for this phenomenon, but it is something we need to work hard at to overcome.

As for the remaining goals, we are making better use of our website, especially with respect to ticket sales and membership renewals. Furthermore, these have yielded some operating efficiencies and cost reductions. Finally, we still need to do a better job of soliciting volunteers for particular projects and taking advantage of your volunteerism. (Join a committee through the website. From the Home page, click on "About CCRA," then "CCRA Committees." Or simply call the office at 215-546-6719.)

In conclusion, although we appear to have accomplished our top priority of financial stability, we will not stay there unless the Association remains vigilant with respect to each of the other six goals.

Jeffrey L. Braff, President

and Coalition studies. Instead, Council contented itself with an analysis of the AVI impact by Council district, suggesting that the key concern was not whether the assessments were accurate, but whether they were politically acceptable. And the assessments, regardless of whether they were accurate, were politically acceptable. Only two of ten Council Districts, those of Kenyatta Johnson and Mark Squilla, were significantly impacted by increases.

Supplementing the Sondheim theme was a walk-on cheerleader role played by the media, which apparently confused a desirable end, an assessment system correlating market value with assessed value, with flawed means, an improperly performed assessment process. Working the poms poms for AVI, an April 24 Daily News editorial reasoned that the assessment process could not be all that bad since there were only “about 25,000” appeals in a property base of 579,000. The calculation

as to the number of appeals was presumably obtained from OPA. Except that number was wrong. The appeals, which all had to be registered by April 1, are in excess of 45,000. And that number does not account for all the taxpayers who did not challenge their assessment because they believed that they were underassessed.

The Administration’s final message is that of Alfred E. Neuman: “Not to worry, we will get it right eventually. In every day, in every way, the assessments will improve.” Fool me once, shame on you.

Editor’s Note: The author of this article, Steve Huntington, is CCRA’s Executive Director, Coordinator of the Crosstown Coalition of Taxpayers, and clearly a wanna be drama critic. Based upon up close personal observations, the frustration and disappointment that permeates this piece is genuine. But writing it was extremely therapeutic.

Help Wanted: CCQ Editor

By Jeffrey Braff

Fran Levi, the individual principally responsible for the present format and professionalism of this publication has, after 5 years, retired from her position as Editor. We are certainly grateful for Fran’s work, but having raised the bar as to the quality of the Quarterly, she has made it more difficult to find a successor. (With some guidance from Fran, and regular contributors Jenny Nalencz and Bonnie Eisenfeld, yours truly served as “Acting Editor” for this edition.) We already have a number of volunteers who have stepped forward to offer assistance, and virtually all layout responsibilities are handled by our excellent printer, Creative Characters. What we are missing is someone willing to be the Editor. If you are interested, or want more information, please call or email the CCRA office.

Let CCRA Help Get a Tree Planted on Your Street for FREE

By Jeffrey Braff

It is obvious that street trees “soften” the urban landscape, provide welcome shade in the summer and, more generally, enhance our neighborhood’s beauty. But street trees also improve air quality by producing oxygen and absorbing carbon dioxide; improve water quality and reduce flooding by reducing storm water runoff; reduce cooling costs by shading windows and walls; and tend to reduce the speed of motorized vehicles (this is a psychological effect akin to that resulting from the reduction of lane width). And numerous studies have established that street trees have a substantial positive impact on property values, and that they make commercial retail areas more attractive to shoppers.

The Friends of Schuylkill River Park Tree Tenders and Philadelphia Parks and Recreation, working with the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, are part of a regional partnership, “Plant One Million,” to plant one million trees throughout the Greater Philadelphia Region, thereby restoring the tree canopy to 30 percent. And the City of Philadelphia has its own goal of planting 300,000 new trees by 2015.



Trees are good!

You can get a free street tree in front of your Center City residence or business, and CCRA’s rejuvenated Tree Committee, led by Bill Faust (Chair), Carolyn Duffy (FSRP Tree Tenders), and Ayse Unver (PHS), will guide you through the process and help facilitate the planting. Simply go to CCRA’s website,

www.centercityresidents.org and click on “About CCRA,” then “CCRA Committees,” and then “Trees” or call the office at 215-546-6719. And encourage your neighbors to get a tree. (All tree plantings require the property owner’s authorization.) Let’s make the entire neighborhood a bit greener!

Freire Charter School Students Perform *Beethoven Alive!* at Please Touch Museum

By Ilene Meyers Miller, Communications Manager, Play On, Philly!

The 60 young musicians from Freire Charter Middle School at 1025 Market Street had just started playing instruments at the beginning of the school year and most had no previous musical training. Of course, they had already performed several concerts for their friends and family, but here they were at the Please Touch Museum on June 5, performing in a major concert for hundreds of museum visitors in the Museum's monthly Target® First Wednesdays event.

The concert was part of *Beethoven Alive!*, a presentation by Play On, Philly! (POP), the innovative music education program that provides tuition-free intensive after-school music instruction for the Freire students. In addition to the student concert, POP Teaching Artists conducted interactive performances for young children throughout the Museum.

The Freire students, along with others from St. Francis de Sales School and West Philadelphia Catholic High School, impressed the capacity audience with *Simple Gifts* (a Shaker hymn), the theme from the movie "Rocky," and Beethoven's *Ode to Joy*. It was a well-deserved finale to a momentous year.

Freire Charter School, which has long operated a high school at 20th and Chestnut Streets, opened its middle school last year. The POP program was introduced immediately. Freire Head of School Kelly Davenport was impressed with the work she witnessed at POP's original location at St. Francis de Sales School in West Philadelphia. "Our organizations are similarly like-minded in that we are all working toward a common goal – to help these kids achieve and succeed," she said. "Working with POP is a wonderful experience for the students and staff alike."

POP provides music education for children for whom music would not otherwise be accessible. It is a part of



Students from the Freire Charter Middle School performed in the *Beethoven Alive!* concert on at Please Touch Museum.

a growing national movement of social programs that stress not just music, but all the benefits concurrent with musical study, including discipline, motivation, commitment, and community. It is based on the social development program of Venezuela, *El Sistema*, of which Gustavo Dudamel, conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, is a graduate.

Started in 2011 at St. Francis de Sales School in West Philadelphia with 110 students, the program now boasts almost 250 participants. POP at Freire Charter Middle School is open to all students and meets every day after school for two hours. Eleven professionally trained Teaching Artists guide the students in group instrument lessons, as well as general music, ensemble, and orchestral playing.

According to Kathleen Krull, POP's Artistic Director, the students' progress is overwhelming. "Most of these kids joined POP with no previous musical training, yet by December they performed in their first concert," she said. "It's not easy to study music every day after school for several hours, but these kids have put in the hard work and determination to enable them to

perform at a venue like the Please Touch Museum. I couldn't be more proud."

As a fitting end to the school year, POP Teaching Artists recognized each Freire student with an award. Percussionist Nasirah Huff was voted "Most Dedicated" because she got up early to practice before school. Clarinetist Amir Cooper won the "Thinker" award because he is a great problem solver, and Joshua Sullivan won the "Clutch" award for always stepping up to the plate during crunch times before a concert.

Twin sisters, Tyeshesa and Ryesha Thompson were voted "Students of the Year." "I love being a part of POP, and my friends and French horn teacher, Ms. Kristina," a glowing Ryesha said. Both sisters, as well as 120 other POP students, will spend the month of July in a POP summer session.

To view a video about Play On, Philly! visit www.whyy.org/Fridayarts. To learn more or to arrange a site tour, visit www.playonphilly.org or call 215-729-1863. To learn more about Freire Charter Schools visit www.freirecharterschool.org.

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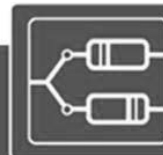
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Empty Nesters Making a Home in Center City with the Help of “Friends”

By Robert Weiss

Forty-three years ago I moved into an exurban Chester County home on almost two acres, where I had proceeded to create a wonderful refuge from work—a 6,000 square foot vegetable garden. Several career changes later, and several marriages later, and after helping to care for aging and ill parents, Jane and I considered real retirement and a change in venue. Yes, we loved our life-style, but we were growing tired of the perpetual work, the home maintenance, and the warfare with the animals and insects and diseases wanting to win back our garden. There was much to love: the greenery and lovely vistas from high on our hill, the wonderful supply of organic vegetables and berries and herbs from April through November every year, the nightly fires all winter in our wood-burning stove, the screened-in back porch where we took all our summer meals, and hundreds of bottles of wine in a superlative cellar. But we were ready to seek a simpler way to live. I should add that I’m almost 75, and Jane’s not.

So we considered where to re-settle in down-sized mode. Jane and I talked about Manhattan, where we went regularly to opera and theater and gourmet food stores. Too large and unmanageable, we decided. Los Angeles, close to loved ones? Too many square miles to deal with, too dependent on automobile transport. Baltimore or Boston or Washington? Boston too cold, the others lovely East Coast cities but both too limited for our interests. Philadelphia seemed just perfect—walkable, culturally rich, food-conscious, and possessed of many available high-rises that might suit our needs. Besides, I was familiar, and so was Jane. A Philly native, I also had my college years here, and had taught here for several years, and Jane (a native Delaware Countian) had worked in Center City for several years.

Two years of Internet research by Jane led to our making an offer on an apartment in an older co-op building on Rittenhouse Square. We apparently passed review and went to settlement. We had no real sense of what we were getting into. All we knew is that we were committed to making a vast change, that we were leaving a wonderful semi-rural pleasure palace, and that we probably would never grill steaks or



The author readying the grill for steaks at the Schuylkill River Park Community Garden.

vegetables again, and that we didn’t know what we were in for.

Then some tough work began. We downsized seriously. Our task was to make 43 years of accumulated stuff disappear. First we carefully selected what few possessions we wanted to move with. Then we held a large estate auction for everything else: old furniture, antiques, garden equipment, tools, kitchen appliances and gadgets, art work, you name it. Virtually everything was sold off. The remainder, including thousands of books, was donated to non-profits.

Our new apartment was spacious, and all the things we brought with us helped to flesh out our new home: we still had our antique lamps and Caucasian rugs, our antique American table and cupboards, our Yamaha keyboard, and our Cuisinart. The walls hung most of our ancient rugs and original artwork. We began to get adjusted.

But we still knew not a soul except for two buddies from the past. How to proceed, we wondered. Our two cats took a while to get adjusted, and we occupied some of our time with them when one of them suffered serious depression and weight loss (after all, he had once ranged the fields

and caught snakes and humped his gal, and then we suddenly took him away from all of that). We knew many restaurants near the Kimmel Center because we already were orchestra subscribers, and we knew many places to go in Philly for food and entertainment. But would we find friends, things to do, and be able to build a satisfying and rich new life without knowing people to start with?

Luck was on our side. The day we met with our building’s Admission Committee we went out to dinner at a nearby restaurant, started chatting over wine, and looked up to discover a good friend of Jane’s who had married and now lived just two buildings away. A few weeks later I learned that an old work buddy had a place another few buildings away, and I contacted him for a lunch date. And then I bumped into some old friends of my sister who lived right in our building.

But the key stroke of luck was learning about a group of senior citizens we could join with, called Friends in the City (www.friendscentercity.org), who seemed to do interesting things and to provide a conduit for socializing with folks who were like-minded and similarly up in years. So we

Continue on page 8

paid our dues and started to enjoy the activities provided through this group. We knew it was associated with the Religious Society of Friends, but in our opinion that was a plus since my daughter had attended a Friends' elementary school and Jane's mom had spent her last years in a Friends' nursing home. We appreciated all the good works done by the Friends and did not feel proselytized or uncomfortable in any way.

So what did we experience? Ethnic lunches once a month, a walk to the fish ladder along Martin Luther King Drive, Curtis music school concerts preceded by dinners

at Branzino, a tour of the Masonic Temple, a play-reading group, and more. Friends in the City, a new network for seniors, gave us a great way to meet people and learn more about what Philly has to offer.

And meanwhile, on our own, we've been discovering that we can still do a little gardening in a city plot, can locate a broader range of restaurants to our taste, can food-shop in several ethnic enclaves such as Chinatown, and can take advantage of more cultural opportunities than we had ever dreamed. No longer a necessity, our car got sold, and Zipcar

takes us where we want. Since we are both active walkers, we've happily embraced the Schuylkill River Banks trail and find any excuse to walk several miles in any direction from our new home. And while we know about SEPTA's free rides for seniors, we have yet to take one in seven months of downtown living.

And even grilling has become possible again! A few weeks ago we went with another couple to the Schuylkill River Park Community Garden, did up some pieces of chicken and some local asparagus, and knew we were at home.

Hunger Still Happens Every Day: Philabundance to the Rescue

By Bonnie Eisenfeld

In 1984, Pamela Rainey Lawler, a business communicator, read *Starving in the Shadow of Plenty* by Loretta Schwartz-Nobel, a book documenting hunger in America. Lawler learned that despite massive efforts to eradicate poverty, the problem not only persisted, but was growing. At the same time, Philadelphia was in the midst of a restaurant renaissance. Lawler, who dined out and entertained often, remembers that time: "I was increasingly disturbed by the disparity between my life and the life of so many others in the city."

Through her research, Lawler learned that about 300,000 people in the Delaware Valley -- elderly, children, and families, invisible to the public -- regularly went without food, while 20% of food prepared for human consumption was wasted. Restaurants, bakeries, and caterers had leftover useable food and were willing to donate it, but couldn't transport it. Agencies that fed the hungry -- shelters, soup kitchens, and emergency food pantries -- needed the food but couldn't pick it up. Transportation was the missing link.

To fill the gap and test the theory that perishable foods could be moved safely and efficiently, Lawler began driving her station wagon, providing timely pick-ups of surplus food along with containers and a legal protection agreement. Business owners who were early donors include: Judy Wicks of the White Dog; Kathleen Mulhern of the Garden Restaurant; Steve

Poses of Frog/Commissary; Lynn Buono and Skip Schwartzman of Feast Your Eyes catering; Reading Terminal Market merchants; PeachTree Caterers; and the Chef's Market. The new idea caught on. Armed with funds raised from the Jewish Federation, the Philadelphia Archdiocese, and a private donor, Lawler took her business background and entrepreneurial zeal and started Philabundance.

Within a year, Mitsubishi donated a refrigerated truck and Philabundance hired a paid driver. Volunteers worked as drivers and fundraisers and donated communications services as well as legal and logistical advice.

Lawler established Philabundance as a formal 501(c)(3) not-for-profit, and she mobilized the food industry to donate food on a regular basis and to participate in annual fund-raising events. Ten years later, in 1994, with two refrigerated trucks, a van, a lean staff, and a cadre of volunteers, Philabundance had delivered more than three million pounds of food to 120 agencies feeding the hungry.

Since that time, the number of people in this area without access to enough food each day has grown to 900,000 -- a quarter of them children. Growing numbers of working people are also joining the ranks of those in need of food. Today, Philabundance provides meals to 65,000 low-income hungry people every week through its member agencies.



Jim Graham, Graham Studios

Pamela Rainey Lawler, founder of Philabundance.

Philabundance opened a state-of-the-art food center in South Philadelphia to receive and distribute food and house a growing fleet of trucks. In 2005, Philabundance merged with the Greater Philadelphia Food Bank. Donated food from manufacturers, distributors, regional farms, the port, and community food drives accounts for about 85% of food distributed to 500 agencies: food cupboards, shelters, residential programs, social service agencies, emergency kitchens, and neighborhood distribution programs. Philabundance provides fresh produce, bread, dairy products, canned and packaged goods, and prepared foods with an emphasis on healthy

and nutritious eating. The organization has 13 trucks on the road, six days a week, and two centrally-located warehouses.

Philabundance now runs its own direct service programs for seniors, children and infants, disabled people, families, and caregivers. In case of emergency, people can call the Food Help Line and get an emergency food box containing 30 pounds

of shelf-stable food, to supply a family of four people with three meals a day for approximately three days. A non-profit supermarket in Chester – *Fare and Square* – is due to open in the next couple of months.

The organization also helps provide food in case of large-scale national disasters. After Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf area, Philabundance was the

fourth largest provider of food to the Gulf residents in need.

Individuals are the financial mainstay of the organization, contributing more than 60% of all funds donated. Additional support comes from corporations, foundations, and religious and civic groups. For more information and to learn how you can help, go to www.philabundance.org.

18th and Delancey Eye Sore: Neglect in Our Neighborhood, on Several Levels

By Laura McMunigal

With the June 5 collapse of the Salvation Army building at 22nd and Market Streets, which killed six people and injured 13, there has been heightened discussion about Philadelphia buildings that are in disrepair and the efforts of the Department of Licenses and Inspections to make those buildings safe. One unsafe property in our own neighborhood is the house at 325 South 18th St., at the southeast corner of 18th and Delancey. Anyone who has lived in the area during the past 15 or more years has seen the steady deterioration of the building. In a June 14 article in *The Philadelphia Inquirer* titled “A Struggle Over Decaying Properties,” Inga Saffron describes it as a “weed-choked wreck with bricks popping out of the façade. Upper windows hang slack-jawed, like a drunk who just passed out. Graffiti dances across a side wall. A family of possums has colonized the interior.” For a number of years, wood planks propped up the north side of the building, and stickers warning “Danger - Do not Enter” were posted on the front windows. These have been removed, but the property remains a huge eyesore.

It is only within the past two years that L&I has made progress in taking the owner, Theresa Isabella, to court to force compliance with building codes. Certain safety violations have now been corrected. During the past year, for instance, the front brick façade has been repaired, and it is no longer in danger of falling. Part of the interior floor system has also been restored. But work is sporadic. Although the planks are no longer visible, all of the exterior windows remain in rotted condition. The rear of the property has not been touched. Star bolts need to be attached, and all of



The property on the Southeast corner of 18th and Delancey has long been a victim of neglect and a source of frustration.

this work requires the approval of the Historical Commission.

In addition to being out of compliance with L&I codes, the property is also harmful to the City’s financial wellbeing. It is one of 102,789 parcels listed as delinquent on the City’s tax rolls in April 2012 – a figure which amounts to 17.6% of Philadelphia’s 579,000 properties (*Delinquent Property Tax in Philadelphia*, The Pew Charitable Trust, June 2013). Presently, the back taxes exceed \$40,000, and have been accumulating since 2009.

In August 2011, when the tax lien totaled approximately \$26,600, the City commenced collection proceedings. Some delay occurred because title to the property became entangled in an ownership scam but, after a series of hearings, Isabella’s

ownership interest has been confirmed. Court filings suggest that the City intends to place the property for tax sale, but as of press time, a hearing had yet to be scheduled. The last hearing was in February 2013.

There are choices here. We can all go to sleep each evening secure in the knowledge that the City administration and the judiciary have the problem well in hand. Or, in a city which raised property tax rates 17.3% over the three years 2010-2012, we can join our neighbor and *Inquirer* columnist Inga Saffron and ask how to explain “the dozens, if not hundreds, of empty structures on vibrant blocks bubbling with people and new businesses.” Could the explanation be governmental inefficiency, or a do-little judiciary, or both?





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SPECIAL THANKS TO RECOGNITION-LEVEL MEMBERS

CCRA thanks all of you for your membership support. Membership dues are critical to our activities, accounting for approximately 45% of the Association's annual revenue. At this point, we would like to especially acknowledge those many resident members who in the recently completed fiscal year (07/01/12 - 06/30/13) joined or renewed at our recognition levels. (In the Spring Quarterly, we will formally acknowledge the recognition-level contributors to our Annual Beautification Campaign.)

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Watch, Listen, Learn, and Taste at COOK

By Bonnie Eisenfeld

Katie Cavuto-Boyle, a popular Philadelphia chef/nutritionist, played to a sold-out audience of diners at COOK, 253 S. 20th Street, on Thursday evening, July 11. Chef Cavuto-Boyle's version of a barbeque is a celebration of refreshing summer foods. The menu included five courses: scallop, watermelon, and ginger ceviche; kale salad with grilled figs and smoked gorgonzola; chorizo, shrimp, and clam "bake" (really a stew); seared flank steak with chimichurri (traditional Argentinean condiment) and green bean salad; and a dessert of grilled cantaloupe, ricotta, and honey. While Cavuto-Boyle worked she talked about what she was preparing and her thoughts about food in general. Diners watched, listened, and ate, and asked questions throughout the evening.

Cavuto-Boyle's demonstration of healthy barbeque food was one of over 20 culinary events each month, sponsored by Audrey Claire Taichman's COOK, in partnership with *Philadelphia Magazine*. A chef or expert, sometimes a cookbook author or celebrity chef, conducts a demonstration about two hours long in COOK's state-of-the-art, fully-equipped kitchen-classroom, with space for a maximum of 20 learners. Each event focuses on a different subject, including ethnic and regional cuisines, restaurant signature dishes, desserts, brunch, cocktails, wine, beer, baking, holiday favorites, canning and preserving, specific foods and more. COOK posts a list of demonstrations on its website the first week of the month before they will be held. Prices vary. The price for the Katie Cavuto-Boyle event was \$140 per person. Though relatively pricey, this was a full-course, soup-to-nuts meal, with bountiful wine.

Highlights of upcoming fall events include Michael Santoro of The Mildred, Lucio Palazzo and Marco Espinosa of Shiprock Popup (Navajo tacos), South African cookbook author Mary Rolph Lamontagne, and Lithuanian chef Michael Laiskonis, according to Lily Cope, Executive Director, who plans the demonstrations in conjunction with Audrey Claire Taichman, proprietor, and Michelle Flisek, Director of Operations.

As the guests entered, Cope and Flisek greeted them hospitably, showed them to their seats, and served water and bread.



Katie Cavuto-Boyle conducting a demonstration at COOK.

Guests reviewed the food and wine menus for the evening, posted on a chalkboard. When all guests arrived, the hosts served wine, choice of white or red, and asked guests to introduce themselves and answer an icebreaker question, "What is your favorite thing to bring to a barbeque?" Cavuto-Boyle started to talk and work, assisted by Hayley Kurtz. Cope and Flisek served each course gracefully and graciously. When food was served, everyone got quiet. During clean-up between courses, guests conversed and the atmosphere became more lively and congenial as the evening progressed.

Katie Cavuto-Boyle is an expert in nutrition and president of Healthy Bites market and café, offering food services including nutritional consulting, personal chef, and meal delivery. She promotes farm-to-table fare and the use of seasonal, local ingredients. Her philosophy is "Eat real food." Cavuto-Boyle is the dietitian for the Philadelphia Phillies, teaches nutrition at West Chester University, writes food blogs, and has been featured on national TV shows. She holds a master's degree in clinical nutrition from Tufts University and degrees in culinary arts and nutrition from Johnson and Wales University in Providence, RI.

Cavuto-Boyle loves simple cooking, focuses on nutrition, flavors, and seasonality, using recipes that take little time and few ingredients. She doesn't like to bake -- it's too exact. She gave the audience general tips about ingredients she used, such as: eating kale is like taking a multivitamin and mineral supplement; kale from the fall harvest is sweeter than the early summer harvest; there are many figs trees around Philadelphia that are accessible to the public; eat small amounts of rich, flavorful cheese; if you are not supposed to eat salt, substitute citrus in recipes to brighten and balance the flavors; zest is an antioxidant; make a batch of a different grain each week and then use it as breakfast cereal, in salad, as a side dish, or added to soup; roasting is the easiest form of cooking; and colorful vegetables, and fruits and raw nuts and seeds, are the healthiest foods.

COOK also sells cookbooks and kitchen supplies and hosts private events. For more information and to see the list of demonstrations each month, go to www.audreyclairecook.com or call 215-735-COOK. For more information about Katie Cavuto-Boyle and Healthy Bites, go to www.healthybitesdelivery.com.

Traffic Flow Near 24th and South: Food for Thought

by Klaus Krippendorff

Editor's Note: On June 14, some 60 people gathered at The Philadelphia School in a meeting co-sponsored by CCRA, SOSNA, and the South Street West Business Association, regarding a Streets Department proposal to temporarily reverse 24th Street from Grays Ferry Avenue to Lombard Street to relieve congestion anticipated as a result of sewer and pipe work this Fall on the 2100 and 2200 blocks of Kater Street, and on 22nd and 27th Streets between Bainbridge and South Streets. The author, who purports to speak for a number of neighbors in the 24th, Naudain, and Lombard area, presented another option, to be instituted on a permanent basis, which is discussed below. After this article was written, CCRA was advised that, at least in connection with the sewer and pipe work, there will be no road reversals.

Let me start with a bit of background. Most of the present and expected congestion we are facing has its origin in a decision made a long time ago to stop two-way traffic on Grays Ferry Avenue between Bainbridge and South Streets, forcing all of its north-bound traffic east on to Bainbridge Street. This decision created a “Notoriously Problematic Intersection” (NPI, circled in diagram on p. 15) of Grays Ferry Avenue, Bainbridge, and 24th Streets. Drivers are uncertain about which traffic lights apply to them. Bainbridge Street traffic has no stop sign when crossing 24th Street. Even pedestrians encounter problems.

I have seen three traffic studies. The most recent one was commissioned by “the Triangles Project,” conducted by Traffic Planning and Design, Inc. (TPD), and completed in 2011. It examined bicycle traffic and pedestrian crossings, but focused mainly on the NPI, and made five recommendations. One concerned the timing of traffic signals. Two suggested restoring two-way traffic on Grays Ferry Avenue to South Street, of which one version would lose parking on one side of the street; the other would place traffic lights on 23rd and Bainbridge Streets. The remaining two recommendations envisioned a traffic circle at the NPI, and turning 24th Street north to South Street (in one version retaining access to Bainbridge Street; in the other blocking it).

In my opinion, the TPD study takes a distinctly myopic view. TPD's



Bainbridge St. facing west.

recommendations focus on improving the NPI, without addressing larger traffic issues. Even these “improvements” are not without problems. Fire trucks and buses would have difficulties navigating the narrow space around the roundabout. And while three of TPD's recommendations would give northbound drivers a choice among two streets at this intersection, the fourth recommendation – blocking access to Bainbridge Street – would leave no choice and force all northbound traffic on 24th to South Street, instead of east on Bainbridge. The latter would increase the already heavy traffic volume on South Street. And for residents on the 2200 block of Bainbridge Street, driving home would become rather cumbersome.

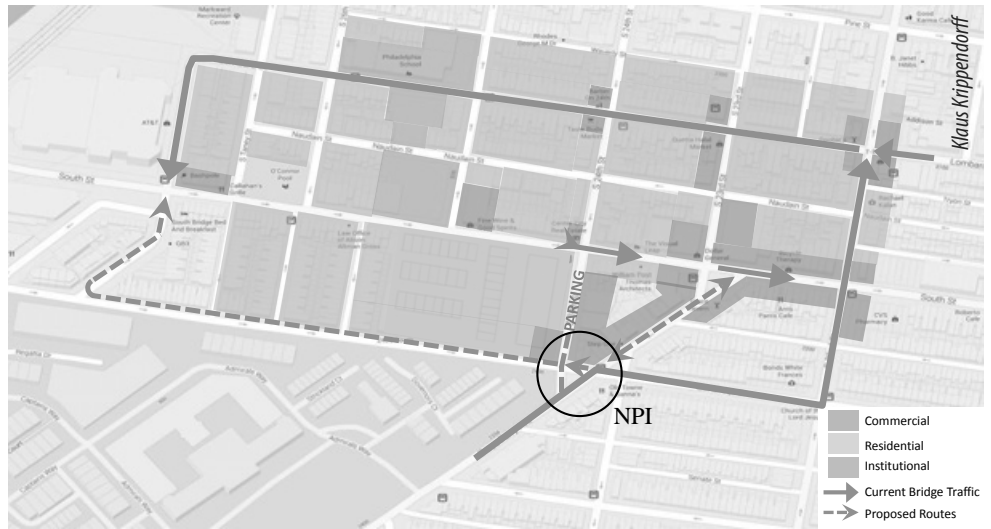
Let me make two points before coming to our proposal. First, the traffic that is currently forced east on Bainbridge Street actually consists of two kinds:

- (1) Traffic without business in Center City, going to the Schuylkill Expressway and West Philadelphia, is now forced on a convoluted path east on Bainbridge, then north on 22nd, west on Lombard, and finally south on 27th (the solid path in the diagram). For vehicular traffic, Lombard is a one-lane street with lots of school children crossing. It also contains a parking lane and a bike lane. Getting onto Lombard from the two-lane 22nd Street often blocks “the box” and causes long traffic lines.

- (2) Traffic with business downtown is forced east on Bainbridge Street as well, but can then either continue or disperse over South or Pine Streets.

Second, taking a bird’s eye perspective encourages exploring all available options, including opening access to streets currently unavailable, and not forcing all traffic on one path. In particular, this includes the possibility of allowing traffic from Grays Ferry to the South Street Bridge to turn westward on Bainbridge to 27th Street and directly to the Bridge. Besides adding choices for Grays Ferry traffic at this intersection, reversing the one-way traffic on Bainbridge is the most important part of our proposal (dashed lines in the diagram).

Turning Bainbridge westward from Grays Ferry offers an array of benefits. First, it gives north-bound drivers coming to this intersection four options instead of one, allowing traffic to become more evenly distributed. Second, it relieves Lombard Street of traffic that has no business in Center City. Third, it cuts the current travel distance from Grays Ferry to the Bridge in half, and passes only one, not eight traffic lights. Moreover, Bainbridge Street, being walled on one side, has no pedestrian crossings. Its reversal would not adversely affect the safety on that street. Fourth, it no longer requires residents who live within walking distance of the Bridge south of South and east of 27th Streets to negotiate their way to the Bridge via Lombard Street. They could now turn west and be right there. Fifth, it gives visitors of the planned Children’s Hospital facility on Schuylkill Avenue a more direct access from Center City. Finally, it would correct



Long term proposal after completion of water repairs

a striking traffic imbalance. Currently, traffic from the Bridge into Center City can use nearby Bainbridge and Pine Streets as alternatives to South Street. However, traffic leaving Center City via the Bridge has no alternative, but is forced on to the single-lane and overcrowded Lombard Street. Making Bainbridge west of Grays Ferry available for westward traffic gives both directions the same number of alternatives.

This proposal emerged in meetings of residents of 24th, Lombard, and Naudain Streets who found themselves faced with the prospect of carrying the burden of a traffic reversal of 24th Street beyond South to Lombard Streets. This would transform a quiet residential street into an exclusive access road to the South Street Bridge. These residents object to this plan not only because it would make their neighborhood less safe for children who live there and/or attend The Philadelphia

School; not only because of the inevitable traffic congestion at the intersection of 24th and Lombard streets where three traffic streams from north, south, and east would have to compete for access to the already crowded one-lane Lombard Street; but most importantly, because a safer, shorter, less travelled, and less disruptive route westward on Bainbridge Street is readily available.

There is another idea. After reverting Grays Ferry Avenue back to two-way traffic to South Street (per TPD recommendations), whether by sacrificing parking on one side or not, the business community around that triangle would greatly benefit from turning 24th Street between Bainbridge and South Streets into a public parking street. By reducing sidewalks to dimensions similar to those of the South Street Bridge, this street could easily accommodate about 20 cars, parked 45° on one side, metered during business hours.

Mystery Building: A Key Milepost on the Information Highway

By Joseph Divis, AT&T External Affairs

The big building on your right at the foot of the South Street bridge as you are heading toward the University of Pennsylvania. You’ve driven, bicycled, or walked past it countless times, and likely wondered: What do they do in there?

The AT&T facility adjacent to Schuylkill River Park is a high-tech hub that connects AT&T’s customers to each other and their world. Inside, an array of switches, wires,

routers, and other high-tech equipment hums around the clock, keeping “a massive river of data” continuously flowing. The AT&T network has extensive wireless and wired access capabilities, as well as one of the world’s most advanced and powerful Internet Protocol (IP) backbones. In fact, the AT&T global network carries 18 petabytes of data traffic on an average business day—the equivalent of more than 2.6 megabytes of data for every man,

woman, and child on the planet—to nearly every continent and country with up to 99.999 percent reliability.

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Continue on page 17



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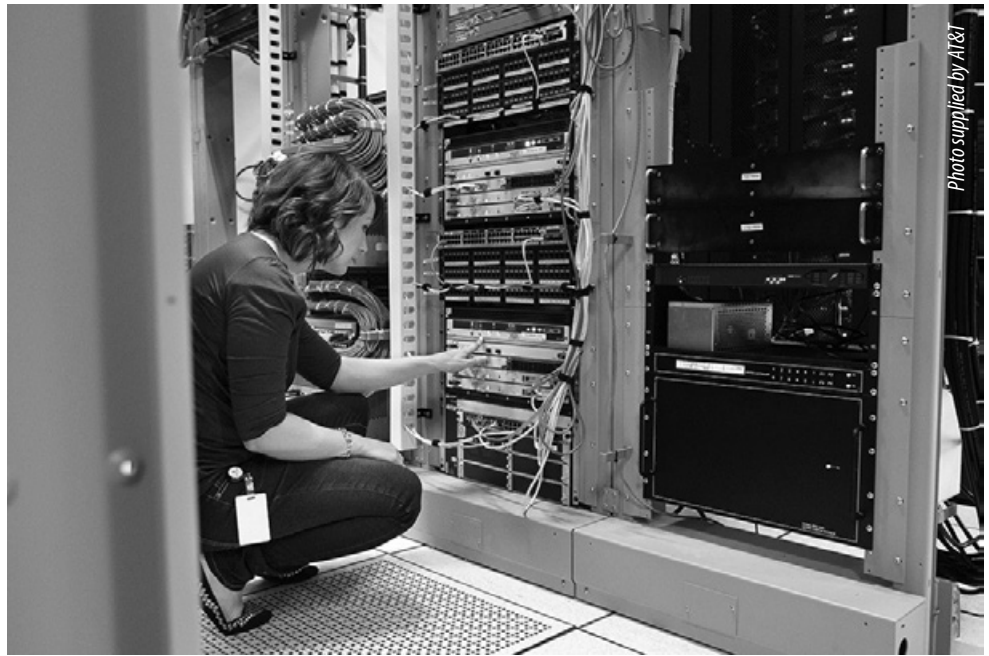


Residents and visitors in the greater Philadelphia area increasingly dependent on mobile Internet connections for communication; entertainment; and productivity at work, at home, and everywhere in between. This facility is one part of a large, worldwide network that keeps customers connected 24/7, whether through a wireless-enabled tablet, a smartphone, or a business's virtual private network.

The company's network carries a wide range of IP-based services, including wireless data, like the web sites customers access via their smartphones or tablets; business video that connects businesses with their customers across town or around the world; and voice services. AT&T also has nation's largest 4G, mobile Internet network for a widespread, ultra-fast and consistent experience. AT&T's mobile Internet service covers more than 80 percent of the U.S. population, including Philadelphia and much of the region.

Between 2010 and 2012, AT&T invested \$1.0 billion across Pennsylvania to further enhance its wireless and wireline networks, including the roll out of 4G LTE service in Philadelphia and several other communities across the state. 4G LTE is the latest generation of wireless technology and provides faster mobile Internet speeds and improved performance on a variety of mobile smartphones and tablets.

During 2012 alone, AT&T made nearly 2,150 wireless network upgrades in key categories in Pennsylvania, including Philadelphia, such as activating new cell sites, adding capacity, upgrading cell sites to provide fast 4G LTE mobile Internet speeds, and deploying high-capacity Ethernet connections to cell sites.



A server room in AT&T mystery building.

The technology and equipment in the AT&T facility, some of which was deployed as part of the company's recent billion-dollar state investment, makes the faster speeds and improved performance possible.

Good neighbors, giving back

AT&T supports programs and initiatives where its employees live and work. Across the city, AT&T has placed an emphasis on high school success and workforce readiness, supporting programs such as the Netter Center at the University of Pennsylvania, Girl Scouts of Southeastern Pennsylvania, and the Southeast Philadelphia Collaborative, among others. AT&T employees also have hosted Philadelphia students for Job Shadowing events as part of the company's AT&T Aspire initiative, with an eye toward

reducing dropout rates and preparing students for success in school and on the job. And, AT&T is proud to support the Center City Residents' Association.

In 2010, the company stepped in to help the Friends of Schuylkill River Park make improvements to Taney Field. AT&T's contribution helped revitalize the field, including improvements to the turf, a new backstop, and a new sprinkler system.

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Naudain Street Artists' Colony Open Studio Tour

By Bonnie Eisenfeld

Artists' studios west of Broad Street will be open to visitors on Saturday, October 19 and Sunday, October 20, starting at noon, as part of the annual fall Philadelphia Open Studio Tour (POST) sponsored by the Center for Emerging Visual Artists (CFEVA). Artists' studios located in Center City West are listed at www.philaopenstudios.org/post/neighborhood/center-city-west.

Naudain Street, the artists' colony of the Rittenhouse Square neighborhood,

contains at least eight artists' studios clustered in the blocks between 21st Street and 25th Street. Naudain Street artists that will be participating in the 2013 Philadelphia Open Studio Tour are Bhavisha H. Patel, Karen Stabenow, Ed Bronstein, Lauren Sweeney, Burnell Yow! and Betsy Alexander. Raymond Ercoli and Liz Goldberg, a collaborative team, have participated in the Philadelphia Open Studio Tour in the past.

Bhavisha H. Patel's impressionist oil paintings include many varied scenes of Rittenhouse Square, as well as recent landscapes of Kenya, where she was born. Educated in England, Patel became interested in photography, oil painting, and water colors. Patel believes that art is a universal form of expression, and her motto is "Pour your soul into a canvas." She offers painting parties and lessons to people of all ages at her home studio. You can see

Continue on page 19

Trinity at 22nd

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At TMC I've found a fulfilling place of worship and a truly welcoming community. ~ Rachel

Community OutReach Partnership

Communicare gave me the chance to set up a computer for Ms. J., who is 82 and blind. She was excited by her new toy and I was inspired – I hope that I'm still eager to take on something new when I'm 82! ~ Sharon

Trinity Center for Urban Life

Trinity Center is a beating art-heart. I love it for bringing our neighborhood a world of artistic variety, expression and inspiration. ~ Sue

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her work by appointment at Twenty-Two Gallery, 236 S. 22nd Street, and on her website, Art and The Ageless Gardens: www.artandtheagelessgardens.com.

Karen Stabenow, environmental planning consultant for the U.S. Green Building Council, has been painting all her life. Stabenow was inspired by the artist Sterling Strauser, a modernist painter who lived in East Stroudsburg where she grew up. Stabenow's current work includes her series "The World is Ours," paintings based on global maps. She explains: "By stretching and compressing land mass features that are familiar, one is confronted with new insights and emotions about our world." A series called "Seascapes" is about the interface of land and sea and its "powerful influence on settlement patterns and emotional sense of place."

Ed Bronstein, a former architect, is best known for his "en plein air" modern impressionist oil paintings of urban scenes, particularly in the Rittenhouse Square neighborhood, as well as industrial relics and vehicles, landscapes, still life, and portraits. Bronstein began painting in 1989 and attended courses at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and Fleisher Art Memorial. In recent shows, Bronstein donated half the proceeds from sales to Greenfield School's art program and Rebuilding Together Philadelphia. His paintings in gouache, oil, and pastel will be on exhibit in September at the Cosmopolitan Club. www.edbronstein.com.

Burnell Yow! and **Betsy Alexander** at Raven's Wing Studio are best known for their colorful and unusual collages and assemblages made from found objects. Yow! paints, sculpts, photographs, and composes digital art. Alexander paints, knits, photographs, makes jewelry and will be showing paintings of Alaskan sunsets. www.ravenswingstudio.com.

Lauren Sweeney, inspired by a lifetime of scientific observation during her career as a scientific illustrator and biologist, paints serene watercolor portraits of animals, vegetables, and humans as well as domestic interiors, streetscapes, and seascapes. She holds a PhD in biology and has studied at the University of Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, and Johns Hopkins University. Sweeney has done



Bhavisha H. Patel.

Bonnie Eisenfeld



Karen Sabenow.

Bonnie Eisenfeld

commissioned works for individuals and institutions including the University of Pennsylvania. www.inliquid.org/complete-artist-list/sweeney-lauren.

Raymond Ercoli and **Liz Goldberg** work independently and collaborate on paintings, animation, and graphics. Recently, their Op Art film, Divomenco Pop, a hand-drawn animation based on the Argentinian Tango, was chosen for the MiniArtVideo Fest in Budapest and was shown at the Philadelphia Independent Film Festival. Ercoli is a fashion designer and marketing instructor at the Art Institute of Philadelphia. He works in oil, mixed

media, print, and watercolor. www.raymondercoli.blogspot.com.




Liz Goldberg works primarily on paper. Puppets inspire much of her Diva work because of their free-form, color, and gestures: "mischievous, egotistical, erotic, magical exaggerations of human behavior." She teaches fashion drawing at Drexel University and drawing for fashion and architecture at Philadelphia University. Her animated films, all hand-drawn and painted, received four international awards. She holds a Master's Degree in Fine Arts from Pratt Institute and a BFA with honors from York University. www.lizgoldberg.com,



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The City School: A Christian Institution Emphasizing Excellence and Accessibility

By Brandon Van Deinse, The City School Development Manager

In her groundbreaking autobiography *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Maya Angelou writes, “The city became for me the ideal of what I wanted to be . . . friendly, but never gushing, cool but not frigid or distant, distinguished without the awful stiffness.” With a poet’s mind and activist’s heart, Maya Angelou was uniquely able to understand, and even celebrate, the tension of the city. The city we love is alive with many rhythms, customs, cultures, and points-of-view. Philadelphia is a place where charming historical districts are not far from ghettos; it is home to a prestigious Ivy League university and a high school graduation rate barely above fifty percent; it is a place of joy and jubilation, disparity and despair. The city is a place of tension.

The City School is a college-preparatory k-12 Christian school, with three campuses in Philadelphia. Our high school campus is located at 17th and Spruce Streets, across from Tenth Presbyterian Church. Our elementary and middle school campuses are located in University City. For 35 years, we have served the children of our city. Our mission is to train students’ minds, disciple their hearts, and bring light to the city—one child at a time. To succeed in this mission means we must know our city and embrace its tension.

This tension is exemplified in our commitments to excellence and accessibility. Many schools believe they must decide between excellence and accessibility: they can make an elite program available to a privileged few, or they can offer an unexceptional education to the masses. At The City School, our program is rigorous enough to challenge the brightest straight A student, but flexible enough to accommodate students who struggle in any subject. Our program is excellent enough to attract the children of doctors and architects, and accessible enough that we can serve children living in homeless shelters. Students from such diverse backgrounds learn side-by-side as friends and peers.

At The City School, excellence begins by viewing our city as a classroom. The city is an expansive, nearly endless cultural resource. Our students joyfully immerse themselves in the life of the city, eager to



Head of School Jake Becker with some elementary school students.

explore new avenues of learning. Excellence means offering a rich diversity of electives and extracurricular activities, ranging from photography and film classes to afterschool debate, track and field, or Bible study. We offer challenging AP courses, advanced classes in Latin, and we hired an M.D. to teach our biology class. Excellence means that in a city plagued by academic failure, our high school students have boasted a 100% college acceptance rate for the past ten years.

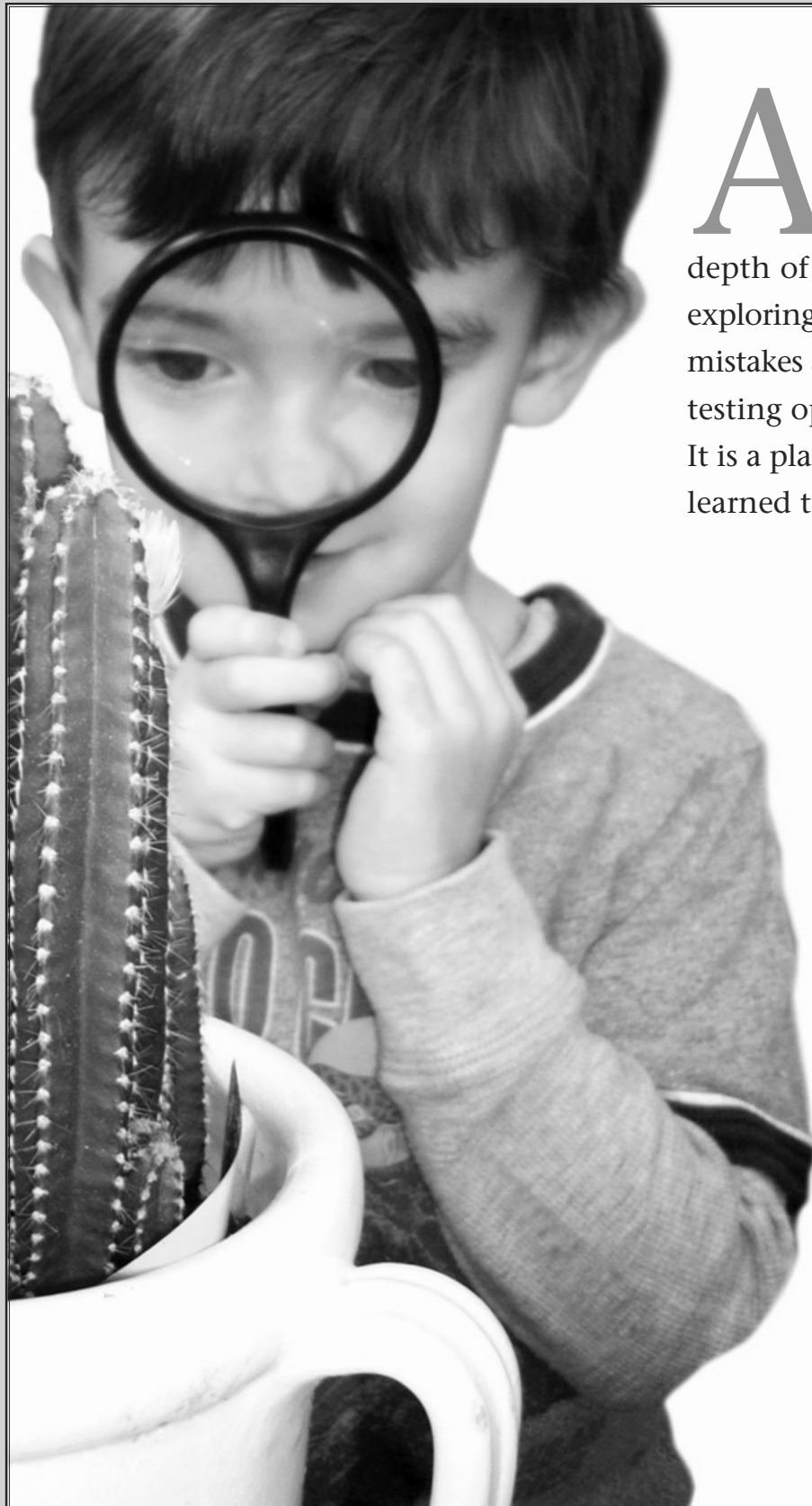
To be truly accessible, we must open our doors to a student body as vibrantly diverse as the city itself. This means we welcome students from a spectrum of economic backgrounds, academic abilities, and religious faiths. Approximately two-thirds of our students rely on need-based scholarships to attend our school. Our commitment to accessibility means partnering with families of limited financial means to ensure their children are able to pursue the education they deserve. Accessibility means welcoming and encouraging students who are not scholars by nature, and teaching them to work hard to receive a college-preparatory education. Accessibility means that while we boldly proclaim the name of Jesus, we gladly welcome students from all religious backgrounds.

Our many partnerships in Center City help our students thrive. Our high school campus was founded by Dr. James Montgomery

Boice, renowned Bible scholar and former pastor of Tenth Presbyterian Church, and we have been fortunate to partner with Tenth Presbyterian in ministry for over 30 years. We have also begun forging new relationships with businesses in the area, providing our students rare opportunities to learn from local entrepreneurs like Chef Nick Elmi of Rittenhouse Tavern, and Elixir owner Evan Inatome. Our partnership with The Curtis Institute of Music allows their students to complete core academic courses at our school. Partnerships such as these make the richness of Philadelphia culture accessible to our diverse student population.

The City School’s commitments to excellence and accessibility honor the tension of life in the city. We celebrate the beauty—and strive to heal the brokenness—of the city we love. In these two commitments, in our mission, and in everything we do, we hope to honor Jesus. Jesus said all of our moral duties can be summed up in two commandments: to love the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. The City School’s mission is an attempt to honor these life-giving words.

To learn more about our school, please visit cityschool.org. For admissions questions, email Lynda at lmcclyar@cityschool.org. For all other inquiries, email Brandon at bvandeinse@cityschool.org.



At The Philadelphia School depth of understanding comes from exploring and discovering, from making mistakes and achieving success, and from testing options and generating ideas. It is a place where students say, “Here I learned to be the best possible me.”



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Philadelphia2035 and Central District Plans

By Michele Langer

In June 2011, the Philadelphia City Planning Commission (PCPC) adopted *Philadelphia 2035*, a blueprint for public and private investment in the City's physical development. The Plan was created by PCPC staff, and introduced during the 11th hour of the four year zoning code revision process, so that the input of the City's civic associations was not optimal.

Documents like these may seem abstract academic exercises, but the history of planning in Philadelphia has been anything but boring. For example, Ed Bacon's 1963 Plan contained many good suggestions that have sprung to life such as Schuylkill Banks Park, but it also called for a South Street Expressway, galvanizing opposition, ultimately successful, from CCRA and other groups which at times approached intensity levels more characteristic of disputes in the Middle East.

As part of the 2035 effort, the PCPC divided the City into 18 Districts and set about fashioning District Plans to guide land use and development in these smaller areas. Our neighborhood was included in the Central District, an area roughly from Poplar Street to Washington Avenue, river-to-river. (View the Central District Plan and CCRA's comments at phila.gov/cityplanning.) After three public meetings regarding the Central District and a comment period during which CCRA submitted suggestions, the Central District Plan was adopted in June.

2035 contains concrete recommendations, some of which echo ideas in CCRA's 2009 Neighborhood Plan and our joint planning exercise with Logan Square Neighbors Association in 2007 but, overall, 2035 is as much aspirational as it is prescriptive, and emphasizes three general themes – Thrive, Connect, and Renew. The Thrive theme spotlights neighborhood liveability, a competitive economy, and responsible land use. The Connect portion focuses on improved transportation and utilities, while the Renew theme emphasizes open space development, improved air and water quality, historic preservation, and the pursuit of excellence in the built environment.

These three themes may seem gauzily abstract, but the Plan suggests how they



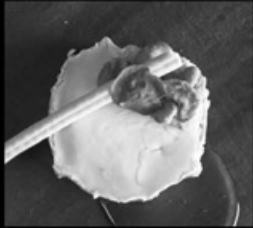
South side of 2100 block of Market St. targeted for large format retailers in Central District Plan.

might impact day to day life. For instance, the Thrive chapter advocates “growth” in Center City – a directive that, on the upside, means a more vibrant downtown with enhanced employment, cultural, and retail options but, on the downside, entails more traffic, less parking, and more intensive use of park space. Similarly, on the eastern side of our neighborhood, the Connect chapter calls for remodeling the City Hall station, an ill-maintained stepchild in the SEPTA system designed in a style that was fashionable for one week in 1910. For the area just beyond our western borders, another Connect suggestion is the conversion of 30th Street station, an island palace surrounded by a sea of automobiles, into a pedestrian haven. The Renew portion of 2035 recommends that all residents should be situated within a half mile of a neighborhood park or recreation center. The northern and western sections of the CCRA area are within walking distance of Rittenhouse, Fidler, and Schuylkill River Parks. Accordingly, from our parochial perspective, the implementation of this priority would, at best, mean that any open space development in our neighborhood should serve the southeast corner, i.e., Lombard and South, around 15 and 16th Streets; at worst, it would mean no further open space investment because the report reveals that neighborhoods in south Philadelphia, west Philadelphia north of

Market, and north Philadelphia are far more underserved by Parks and Recreation facilities.

Turning from the generalities of the 2035 Plan to the Central District Plan dealing with our neighborhood, the recommendations that seem likely to draw CCRA's particular attention are:

- Erecting a new combined 6th and 9th Police District building north of City Hall;
- upgrading the 19th and 22nd Street trolley station entrances;
- developing West Market Street to include large format retailers, currently missing from Center City's retail mix, including home goods, home improvement, and electronics;
- reorganizing bus routes through Center City to accommodate current and new riders;
- removing on-street parking spaces at select corners to increase pedestrian space and accommodate bike corrals;
- and parking space maximums in mixed-use construction zoning districts labeled CMX-3, -4 and -5.



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CCRA Neighborhood Fall Events

Rosenbach Museum and Library

Hands-on tours, Fridays and Sundays,
September 6 to 29, 3:00 to 4:00 p.m.
2008 Delancey Street
For tour subjects and dates, please go to
<https://www.rosenbach.org/learn/programs/all/2013>

Free at the Kimmel Center

“Sittin’ In”, free monthly jam sessions,
Wednesdays at 8 p.m.
September 11, October 9, and November 13

Rittenhouse Square Fine Art Show

Friday, September 20, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Saturday, September 21, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Sunday, September 22, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.
www.rittenhousesquareart.org

CCRA/LSNA/SOSNA School Fair

Wednesday, September 25
5:00 to 7:00 p.m.
Franklin Institute

Schuylkill Banks

Kayak tours, Boat to Bartram Gardens
Riverboat Tours, and Secrets of the
Schuylkill Riverboat Tours, day and
evening. For dates and times, go to
<http://www.schuylkillbanks.org/events>

CCRA Member Mix & Mingle

Thursday, October 3, 5:30 to 7:00 p.m.
Urban Enoteca
Register by September 27
see back page

Philadelphia International

Dragon Boat Festival

Schuylkill River, Saturday, October 5
For more information, please go to
www.philadragonboatfestival.com
Or call 610-642-2333

Philadelphia Film Festival

Thursday, October 17 to Sunday,
October 27. For schedule, please go to
www.filmadelphia.org/festival or call
267-239-2941

Philadelphia Open Studio Tour

Artists’ studios west of Broad St.
will be open to the public
October 19 and 20
www.philaopenstudios.org

Center City House Tour

Sunday, October 20, 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.
see back page

Head of Schuylkill Regatta

Saturday, October 26 and Sunday, October 27
For more information, please go to
www.hoscr.org

Fitler Square

Each Halloween, the weekend before
October 31st, Fitler Square Improvement
Association welcomes neighbors and friends
for the Pumpkin Hunt and Costume Party.
<http://www.fitlersquare.org/events.html>

Friends of Schuylkill River Park

Fall Festival

Saturday, October 19, 2013
11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
<http://www.fsrp.org/festival.html>

Curtis Institute of Music

*Alumni and student recitals take place in
Field Concert Hall, 1726 Locust Street.*
For dates and times of performances,
please go to the new Curtis events calendar
at <http://www.curtis.edu/performances/> or
call (215) 893-7902

Eastern State Penitentiary

Terror Behind the Walls:

a haunted house inside an abandoned prison,
September to October. For dates and times
go to www.easternstate.org
Or call 215-235-3300.

Philadelphia Marathon

November 24. For more information, please
go to www.philadelphiamarathon.com or
call 215-683-2122

Zoning Committee Report

Brian Johnston and Kevin Dunleavy, Co-Chairs
May, June, and July 2013

2033 Rittenhouse Square, (RM-1)

Application for the erection of a rear
second story steel deck and roof deck with
communicating spiral stairs accessory to an
existing attached single family dwelling.
Size and location as shown on submitted
plan. *Refusal: The proposed use, a deck
at the second full story above grade is not
permitted; Not opposed*

1901-1919 Lombard (NWC of 19th Street & NEC of Uber Street) (RM-1 / CTR

Residential Parking Control Area, Abutting
RSA-5) Application for the subdivision of
one (1) existing lot (1901-1919 Lombard) to
create ten (10) new lots (Lot A thru Lot J); for
the creation of a shared easement (to be used
by Lot A – Lot J and to be located on Lot A-
Lot H); and for the complete demolition of
all existing structures. **Opposed**

Lot A & Lot H: For the erection of an
attached structure with three (3) decks,
two (2) roof decks, a pilot house (used
only for roof access and mechanical
equipment) and a green roof; for use as a
single family family dwelling with three
(3) interior, accessory parking spaces.

Lots B, C, E, F & G: For the erection
of an attached structure with three
(3) decks, one (1) roof deck, a pilot
house (used only for roof access and
mechanical equipment) and a green
roof; for use as a single family family
dwelling with two (2) interior, accessory
parking spaces.

Lots D: For the erection of an attached
structure with two (2) decks, one (1) roof
deck, a pilot house (used only for roof

access) and a green roof; for use as a
single family family dwelling with one
(1) interior, accessory parking space.

Lots I: For the erection of an attached
structure with two (2) decks, one (1)
roof deck and a green roof; for use as a
single family family dwelling with one
(1) interior, accessory parking space and
three (3) open-air, accessory parking
spaces located in the rear yard.

Lots J: For the erection of an attached
structure with two (2) decks, one (1) roof
deck and a green roof; for use as a single
family family dwelling with one (1)
interior, accessory parking space and two
(2) open-air, accessory parking spaces
located in the rear yard.

Continue on page 26

Refusals: 1901-1919 Lombard (NWC of 19th St & NEC of Uber St)

	Required	Proposed
<i>Rear Yard Depth at Parking</i>		
Lot I	19.72 ft	0 ft
Lot J	17.84 ft	0 ft
<i>Minimum Aisle Width</i>		
Lots A-J	24 ft	21 ft
<i>Minimum Lot Area</i>		
Lot D	1440 sq ft	1168 sq ft
<i>Min. Open Area</i>		
Lots A & H	20% (525 sf)	0%
Lots B,C, E,F & G	30% (438 sf)	0%
Lot D	30%(350 sf)	0%
<i>Rear Yard Depth</i>		
Lots A-H	14.6 ft	0 ft
<i>Rear Yard Area</i>		
Lots A-H	144 sf	0 sf
<i>Total Height</i>		
Lots A-H	38 ft	44.5 ft

1828 Delancey Place, (RM-1)

Application for the demolition of rear portion of existing structure, erection of a one (1), two (2), three (3) story addition with roof deck on each floor, addition of an elevator mechanical room and skylight (53'10" top edge of skylight) on the existing four (4) story portion of the structure and creation of two (2) off-street parking spaces access thru rear from Panama Street for use as a single family dwelling. **Not opposed with provisos**

	Required	Proposed
Open Area	30% (495) sf	0 sf
Rear Yard Area	9 feet	0 ft
HT of the structure	38 feet	53'10"

1901-1919 Lombard (NWC of 19th Street & NEC of Uber Street)(RM-1 / CTR Residential Parking Control Area, Abutting RSA-5)

Application for the subdivision of one (1) existing lot (1901-1919 Lombard) to create ten (10) new lots (Lot A thru Lot J); for the creation of a shared easement (to be used by Lot A – Lot J and to be located on Lot A-Lot H); and for the complete demolition of all existing structures.

Not opposed with provisos

Lot A & Lot H: For the erection of an attached structure with three (3) decks, two (2) roof decks, a pilot house (used

only for roof access and mechanical equipment) and a green roof; for use as a single family family dwelling with three (3) interior, accessory parking spaces.

Lots B, C, E, F & G: For the erection of an attached structure with three (3) decks, one (1) roof deck, a pilot house (used only for roof access and mechanical equipment) and a green roof; for use as a single family family dwelling with two (2) interior, accessory parking spaces.

Lots D: For the erection of an attached structure with two (2) decks, one (1) roof deck, a pilot house (used only for roof access) and a green roof; for use as a single family family dwelling with one (1) interior, accessory parking space.

Lots I: For the erection of an attached structure with two (2) decks, one (1) roof deck and a green roof; for use as a single family family dwelling with one (1) interior, accessory parking space and three (3) open-air, accessory parking spaces located in the rear yard.

Lots J: For the erection of an attached structure with two (2) decks, one (1) roof deck and a green roof; for use as a single family family dwelling with one (1) interior, accessory parking space and two (2) open-air, accessory parking spaces located in the rear yard.

Refusals: 1901-1919 Lombard (NWC of 19th St & NEC of Uber St)

	Required	Proposed
<i>Rear Yard Depth at Parking</i>		
Lot I	19.72 ft	0 ft
Lot J	17.84 ft	0 ft
<i>Minimum Aisle Width</i>		
Lots A-J	24 ft	21 ft
<i>Minimum Lot Area</i>		
Lot D	1440 sq ft	1168 sq ft
<i>Min. Open Area</i>		
Lots A & H	20% (525 sf)	0%
Lots B,C,E,F & G	30% (438 sf)	0%
Lot D	30%(350 sf)	0%
<i>Rear Yard Depth</i>		
Lots A-H	14.6 ft	0 ft
<i>Rear Yard Area</i>		
Lots A-H	144 sf	0 sf
<i>Total Height</i>		
Lots A-H	38 ft	44.5 ft

1919 – 43 Market Street (CMX-5)

For the erection of a detached structure with decks throughout and a roof deck on a portion of the 28th floor (with a swimming pool). For use as a vacant commercial/retail space on the 1st floor, business and professional offices on the 2nd floor, a total of 278 dwelling units on the 3rd-27th floors with accessory residential amenities on the 28th floor and an accessory parking garage on part of the 1st – 5th floors and a 5th floor roof with a total of 223 parking spaces, and 108 bicycle parking spaces on an accessible route, 80% of the parking to be private and 20% available to the public. Two loading spaces and enclosed trash storage located on the 1st floor. No signs on this application. **Not opposed**

Referral:(1) In this zoning district, any portion of a parking garage located above ground level requires special exception approval.

Refusals: (1) Vehicular ingress and egress is prohibited to/from parking garages in the Market Street Area Overlay. (2) Side yard width - Required: 8', if used; Proposed: 1.5' & 2'

1716 Spruce Street (R-15)

****Application under the old code

Opposed Use; Not opposed

Height/Fence

Application is for the legalization of an existing third floor deck, the legalization of three(3) existing additional accessory open air off street parking spaces (for a total of six (6) accessory open air off street parking spaces) and the legalization of existing fences and gate (8'10", 8' and 7'6") for an existing six family dwelling with an existing second floor roof deck at 1714 Spruce St.; for the legalization of existing fences and gate (8'10" and 7'), the creation of five (5) non-accessory open air off-street parking spaces, and the creation of non-accessory meeting rooms, class rooms (religion class room during church) and play rooms for an existing non-accessory church office (all non accessory uses are accessory to a church located at 1700 Spruce St.) along with an existing one (1) family dwelling and an accessory one (1) car garage at 1716 Spruce St. ; and for the memorialization of an existing common driveway easement with gate , both spanning 1714 and 1716 Spruce St.), to provide access to and from the open-air off-street parking spaces located on each of the respective properties.

Refusals: (1) Proposed uses, non-accessory parking and non-accessory uses are not permitted in the zoning district; (2) Height of

the fence - Required: 6'; Proposed: 8'10"
254 South 24th Street, NWC of Manning Street (ICMX) For the erection of a four (4) story attached structure (maximum height 40 feet) with a cellar, terraces including elevator penthouse and a masonry

fence 6 feet high. Use as a single family dwelling with two (2) off street parking interior garage. **Not opposed**

Refusals: (1) Proposed use as a single family dwelling is not permitted in this zoning

district; (2) Proposed use off street parking/interior garage, vehicular ingress and egress is prohibited in this zoning district; (3) Proposed zoning is refused for fences-corner lots - Allowed: 4 feet; Proposed: 6 feet

September 25 School Fair at Franklin Institute

By Judy Heller, VP for Education and Family Events

Last year, CCRA, Logan Square Neighborhood Association, and South of South Neighborhood Association jointly sponsored their first School Fair. We knew there was an increased number of young families wishing to raise and educate their children in the city, but who were overwhelmed by the educational options available to them. The School Fair was designed to help parents research grade school options. The event was so popular, with over 110 families in attendance, we overflowed our space. In an effort to avoid the congestion and guarantee you'll be able to talk with all the schools and organizations you wish to explore, we're excited to announce that the second annual School Fair, sponsored by Penn Medicine, Prudential Fox

& Roach Realtors, and the Franklin Institute, will be held at the Franklin Institute on September 25 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

We invite all families of preschool and elementary age children to attend. Knowledgeable representatives from a cross-section of 16 public, charter, independent, and parochial elementary schools which serve our community will be available to answer your questions and share pertinent enrollment information. You'll have the opportunity to compare individual school philosophies and accomplishments, as well as chat with other parents. In addition, six organizations dedicated to providing quality education for our children will have personnel on site to explain their


mission and allow you to explore ways you might wish to get involved.

As a bonus, light refreshments will be served, and the Franklin Institute has made two generous offers: (1) admission to the museum will be free for Fair attendees on the day of the Fair; and (2) a reduced parking rate of \$6.00 will be available.

Please check out Facebook, Twitter, or the CCRA website for updated information.

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/CCRA-LSNA-SOSNA-School-Fair/423909310978293>

<https://twitter.com/SchoolsFair>



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DATES TO REMEMBER:

Wednesday, September 25, 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.
CCRA/LSNA/SOSNA School Fair at the Franklin Institute

Thursday, October 3, 5:30 to 7:00 p.m.
CCRA Mix & Mingle at Urban Enoteca

Sunday, October 20, 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.
Center City House Tour

55th ANNUAL CCRA FALL HOUSE TOUR

Featuring the Jewel of Rittenhouse Square – the McIlhenny Mansion!

Sunday, October 20, 1 to 5 pm

Don't miss the 55th Annual Center City Residents' Association (CCRA) Fall House Tour, **Sunday, October 20th from 1 to 5 pm**, rain or shine. This once-a-year open house tour of 11 spectacular townhouses, condominiums, and historic Rittenhouse and Fitler Square houses is highlighted by one of Philadelphia's most storied mid-nineteenth century homes, made up of six properties on the southwest corner of Rittenhouse Square - the **McIlhenny Mansion**. Long time the center of Philadelphia's social activity, drawing high profile guests from artists and royalty to Elizabeth Taylor and Marilyn Monroe, the Mansion, after having been vacant for nearly 30 years, is undergoing a two-year redesign and renovation. In addition, you will have the opportunity to enjoy another Philadelphia treasure on the other side of Fitler Square, the colorful home of dumpster diver and found-object artist Betsy Alexander and her world-famous, piano-playing cat, Nora.

The self-guided tour begins at Trinity Center for Urban Life, 2212 Spruce Street in Fitler Square or Beth Zion Beth Israel (BZBI) at 18th & Spruce Streets (½ block from Rittenhouse Square). Participants receive a booklet with complete tour information, house

descriptions, and route map which entitles them to a day-of-tour 15% discount on food for dinner at area restaurants (reservations are suggested), including: D'Angelo's Ristorante Italiano, Friday Saturday Sunday, Square 1682, and Twenty Manning Grill.

Tour tickets are \$30 each (\$25 before Oct. 17). Tickets are available: by calling **(215) 546-6719**; with a credit card through the CCRA web site (www.centercityresidents.org); mailing a check to CCRA (1600 Market St., Suite 2500, Phila. 19103); and beginning Oct. 1 in person at the following locations:

- Rittenhouse Hardware, 2001 Pine Street
- Jomici Apothecary, 273 S. 15th Street
- Pure Florist Design, 500 S. 22nd Street

On the day of the tour:

- 18th & Spruce Streets, Temple Beth Zion-Beth Israel (BZBI)
- 22nd & Spruce Streets, Trinity Memorial Church

CCRA MIX & MINGLE THURS, OCT 3, 5:30 – 7:00 PM, 17th & WALNUT (9/27 DEADLINE)

Meet your neighbors at Urban Enoteca, 17th and Walnut, and enjoy generous hors d'oeuvres - \$10 for members and \$15 for non-members - with a cash bar at happy hour prices, including selections from the Enoteca's unique cruvinet which stores white and red wines for peak freshness as well as a wide assortment of beers (dollar off)

and cocktails for two dollars off. Interested in a signature Italian dinner afterwards? Urban Enoteca is offering a post 7 pm \$10 discount for Mix and Mingle participants. **We need a final count by Friday September 27** so go online at www.centercityresidents.org to make a credit card payment or call the office at 215 546 6719.