



Newsletter of the Center City Residents' Association

Vol. 5 No. 2 Summer 2015

Contents

Town Square

CCRA, OEM Address Oil Train Safety Concerns.....	1
Emergency Management Offers Just-in-Case Advice.....	2
Spring Crosstown Coalition Report	5
Neighbors Helping Neighbors.....	23
JEVS Human Services Turns Lives Around.....	25
New Officers, Directors Elected to CCRA Board.....	28
President's Report	3
CCCulture	
Koresh Come Together Dance Festival	4
Spotlight On...	
Former Bandstand Regular Now Dances Across Oceans	7
It's Academic	
Light to the City: Center City to Santiago.....	9
Freire Charter and Mural Arts Join Forces	10
Crosstown Coalition Hosts Public Schools Summit	11
Judy Heller Honored at City Hall Ceremony	11
Shop Talk	
Pets Rule: the Animal Kingdom That Is Center City.....	12
Merchant Members Discount Program.....	13
Living History	
Center City's Centuries-old Clubs & Societies.....	14
Church Celebrates 110th Anniversary	25
Our Greene Countrie Towne	
Getting Garden-Ready	17
Street Scene Competition.....	28
CCStreetwise	
Now You Know Where You Can Park It.....	19
Feet First Philly Puts Pedestrians' Best Foot Forward	23
Out & About	
Celebration of Center City Living, and a Toast to Joan & Dane Wells.....	21
What's Going On	
Summer Calendar	27

Town Square

CCRA and OEM Address Oil Train Safety Concerns

By Walter Spencer

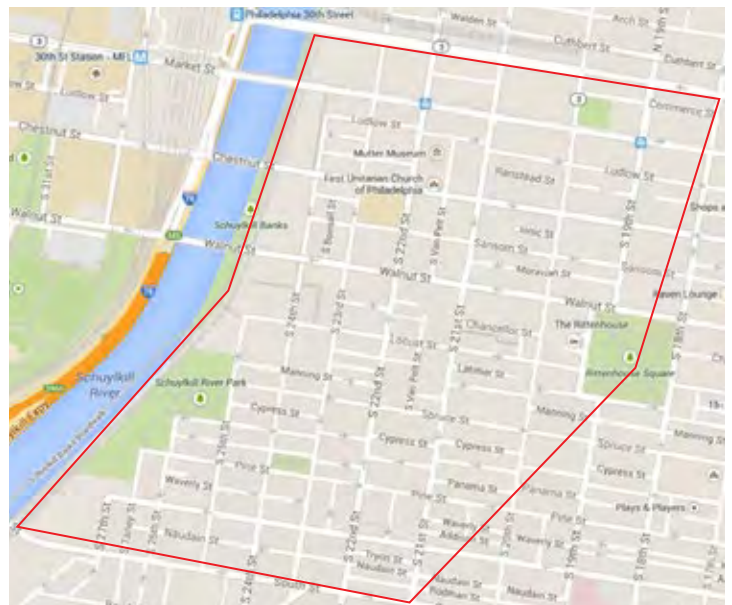
EDITOR'S NOTE: On May 12, I met with our designers at Creative Characters to plan the layout of this issue. For the front page, we usually give priority to articles with eye-catching pictures. But in this instance, I felt strongly that matters addressed in this article were momentous enough that content must trump form. So it was more than a chilling coincidence that just hours later, the very same night we chose this as our cover story, the horrific Amtrak accident occurred, taking the lives of eight passengers and injuring hundreds of others, driving home with even greater urgency the need to confront the problem of rail safety head-on. Inexplicably, the next day, the U.S. House defeated a measure, yet again, to fund long-overdue repairs to aging rail infrastructure along the Northeast Corridor, the most heavily traveled rail segment of the country.

—NKC

Although the City's Office of Emergency Management (OEM) presentation on April 27 covered planning and response to all kinds of emergencies, CCRA President Jeff Braff briefly addressed neighborhood concerns about oil trains in his opening remarks. He reminded the audience that the Federal Railway Administration (FRA)—not the City or the State—regulates railroads. He announced that he had written letters to the State's two U.S. Senators, Robert Casey and Patrick Toomey, and to our U.S. Representative, Chaka Fattah, asking that they arrange an open neighborhood meeting with FRA officials.

- Four to seven oil trains come through our neighborhood each day.
- CSX Corporation, the rail operator, has created a secure website for use by public safety officials that lists the trains

Continued p. 2



Map illustrates emergency evacuation zone within CCRA boundaries.

CENTER CITY RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

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During her talk, OEM Director Samantha Phillips shared this information about the oil trains:

coming through the neighborhood, and the contents of each car. If an accident occurred, this information would be used by the Fire Department to determine the appropriate response.

- OEM has developed a specific plan to respond to a rail accident. It includes a number of City, State, and Federal agencies that would be involved in the response, as well as CSX.

- OEM has conducted exercises to test the plan and made appropriate revisions.
- If necessary, the standard evacuation zone in case of a rail accident is one-half mile. OEM would open an emergency shelter at a public school. Possible locations include Masterman and the High School for Creative and Performing Arts.
- In answer to a question from the audience, Phillips said that citizens observing

persons on the track who look like they don't belong there should call the Police Department Homeland Security Intelligence Unit at 215-686-TIPS.

The FRA is considering a number of regulatory changes to lessen the chance of oil-train derailments and spills. CCRA will continue to monitor this issue. Updates will appear in the weekly e-newsletter and future issues of the *Quarterly*.

Emergency Management Offers Just-in-Case Advice

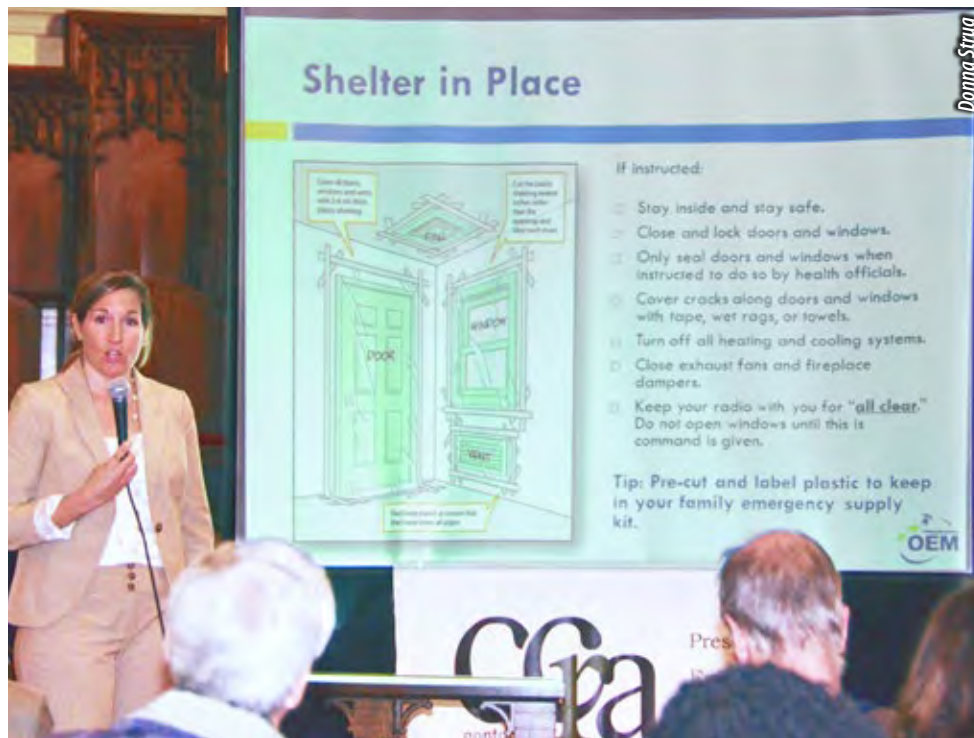
By Bonnie Eisenfeld

At a CCRA-sponsored meeting on April 27, Samantha Phillips, Director of Emergency Management for the City of Philadelphia, spoke about how Center City residents should prepare for any type of emergency, including extreme storms, floods, earthquakes, transportation accidents, terrorism, epidemics, fires, explosions, toxic spills, bomb threats, utility failures, building collapses, and other unknowns.

1. Sign up for emergency alerts by text or email. www.readynotifypha.org
2. If you see something suspicious, call the Homeland Security Intelligence Unit of the Philadelphia Police Department: 215-686-TIPS.
3. In case there is an emergency, get updates from radio and TV news stations, online at Philly311 (<http://www.phila.gov/311>), and Channel 64 (Government Access channel.)
4. Prepare to either shelter in place or evacuate, depending on instructions.

If you are a resident in a high-rise building, you can inform your management about these alerts and ask them to have all staffers, including those on call 24/7, sign up so they can alert residents if necessary. Early alerts could save lives.

The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) has emergency plans in place and experts on call for different types of emergencies. They do not release plans in advance to the general public for security reasons.



OEM Director Samantha Phillips addresses a neighborhood meeting of concerned citizens about how to prepare for large-scale emergencies.

For sheltering in place, Phillips recommends choosing a room in your residence with the least number of windows and a regular phone plugged in directly to a landline. Be prepared to seal windows, doors, and vents. Have food, water, medications, radio, flashlights, batteries, and other emergency supplies in that room. Be prepared to shelter in place up to 72 hours.

For evacuation, have a Go-bag ready with your personal emergency supplies, and listen for instructions. You will be directed to go to the nearest safe area. If you have family or friends in a safe area, they should be your first choice. As a backup, there also will be shelters open, such as public

schools. The High School for Creative and Performing Arts on South Broad Street has been used as a shelter in the past.

For more information about the Office of Emergency Management, go to <http://oem.readyphiladelphia.org/>

For more information about emergency preparedness, see the article in the December, 2012, issue of *Center City Quarterly*, "Documents and Underwear to Go," by Bonnie Eisenfeld, on p. 19. <http://centercityresidents.org/Resources/Documents/december%20newsletter%20for%20web%20from%20CC.pdf>

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

President's Report

Activities, Beautification Campaign, and Moving On



Jeffrey L. Braff, CCRA President

As I have said before, enhancing CCRA's visibility can pay many dividends in supporting membership recruitment, obtaining financial sponsorships, and increasing our political clout. One means of doing this is through the delivery of public programs and activities, as well as promoting those programs and activities. And this route has the added virtue of supporting our mission: the preservation, enhancement, and celebration of urban living. In this fiscal year (07/01/14-06/30/15), our programs/activities have included:

- Oct. 19: 56th Annual House Tour, showcasing 11 neighborhood homes, including rowhouses and high-rises
- Oct. 22: School Fair at the Franklin Institute, presenting 21 area public, charter, independent, and parochial schools
- Oct. 31: Halloween costume contest in Fidler Square
- Dec. 3: Interfaith Thanksgiving Service at First Presbyterian Church
- Dec. 14: Second Biannual Sacred Spaces Open House Tour, featuring 13 neighborhood places of worship
- Jan. 8: David Meketon presentation of "The Psychology of Achievement: Grit, Curiosity, and the Hidden Power of Character"
- Jan. 29: Community Meeting regarding proposed Hudson Hotel, held at Tenth Presbyterian Church
- Mar. 25: Brian Sims Town Hall Meeting at Trinity Center for Urban Life
- Mar. 26: "Thrilla in So. Phila," Second Councilmanic Debate - Kenyatta Johnson vs. Ori Feibush
- Apr. 2: Neil Oxman presentation about mayoral primary at Academy of Vocal Arts
- Apr. 13: Celebration of Center City Living/ Monopoly Party at Freeman's Auction House, honoring Joan and Dane Wells

- Apr. 27: Office of Emergency Management presentation of: "Ready, or Not?" a preparedness workshop triggered by rail safety concerns
- May 6-7: CCRA-sponsored Herb Booth at Rittenhouse Square Flower Market for Children's Charities
- May 20: Annual Meeting at Curtis Institute, featuring presentation by *City Abandoned* photographer and author Vincent Feldman, with post-meeting wine and cheese reception in the historic conference room of Berger and Montague law firm
- May 21: Annual Ladybug Release Party at Schuylkill River Park Community Garden

* * *

After paying for our Executive Director/office support, CCRA's largest expense by far is our \$29,000 contract to pay for sidewalk and ginkgo berry clean-ups following weekly trash collections. By now you should have received a solicitation for the 2015 Neighborhood Beautification Campaign, CCRA's annual giving program to help fund this and other beautification measures. Please make your tax-deductible contribution today by mailing a check to the CCRA office or clicking on "Membership and Support" from the home page of our website (www.centercityresidents.org). And be sure to let your friends know that this service is provided by CCRA. (Many in the neighborhood think this is a City service. We hope that the bright yellow vests being worn by the sweepers, emblazoned with the phrase "CCRA Funded Cleaning, will help to correct this misconception.)

* * *

This is my final President's Report. In the first, almost four years ago, I laid out seven goals:

1. Place CCRA in a position of financial stability.
2. Enhance CCRA's visibility.
3. Increase CCRA's membership numbers.

Continued p. 4

4. Improve fundraising.
5. Reap the rewards of the then-new CCRA website.
6. Explore operating efficiencies.
7. Build a cadre of volunteers.

While our website needs some tweaking, and we can always use more (and more regular) volunteers, substantial progress has been made, in my humble opinion, on each of these seven. I would like to think that my leadership played a role in these accomplishments. But there is absolutely no way this could have happened without the support and guidance

of our Board of Directors; two different sets of Officers; and the extraordinary work of Executive Director Steve Huntington, and his office staff. I extend my deepest thanks to each of them. And I wish my successor the best of luck, and pledge to offer my counsel and services in the future. Though I am moving on, I am not moving out.

CCCulture

Koresh Dance Company Presents 3rd Annual Come Together Dance Festival, July 22-26

By Kate Aid

Connecting established companies, new faces, repertory favorites, and fresh choreography, Koresh Dance Company will present dozens of dance companies in its third annual *Come Together* Dance Festival this summer at the Suzanne Roberts Theatre. From July 22 to 26, its mixed programs will stage modern dance alongside tap and contemporary ballet, juxtaposing distinct styles, from hip hop to acrobatic physical theater, in what the *Philadelphia Dance Journal* has called “serious Philly flava.”

Established in 2013, the festival celebrates the diversity, creativity, and technical excellence of Philadelphia’s dance community. Koresh Dance Company aims to increase access to dance and awareness of the city’s rich movement cultures by assembling numerous unique styles in a single festival. In 2013, the *Dance Journal* called *Come Together* “a rousing success” that “reflected a healthy, diverse Philly dance scene.” The *Philadelphia Weekly* hailed the 2014 festival as “tak[ing] the art to a whole new level.”

Last year, the PNC Foundation supported the festival with a PNC Arts Alive grant awarded to only 21 organizations in the Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey region that year. The William Penn Foundation, which fosters rich cultural expression throughout the Greater Philadelphia area, also supports *Come Together* as part of its goal to promote collective engagement with thought-provoking, creative material. This year, the Knight Foundation has announced its support for the 2015 festival with a \$15,000 grant.

Such support enabled Koresh to attract audiences from 12 states and across the city of Philadelphia in 2014, presenting



“Round the Block,” by Ronen Koresh, performed at the 2014 *Come Together* Dance Festival.

internationally acclaimed companies including Rennie Harris Puremovement, Brian Sanders’ JUNK, Raphael Xavier, and Kun-Yang/Lin Dancers. This spring, more than 60 companies have applied to participate in the 2015 festival. The final roster of performers was to be announced in May. In past years, the combination of long-established companies with up-and-coming choreographers and talented young dancers from the Rock School for Dance Education, the University of the Arts, and the Koresh Youth Ensemble have brought to the stage a wealth of dance styles and voices as diverse as the city itself.

Koresh Dance Company, now approaching its 25th anniversary, constantly seeks new life for Philadelphia dance. Artistic Director Ronen (Roni) Koresh values collaboration with regional companies and choreographers, and launched the *Come Together* festival with his brother, Executive Director Alon Koresh, in order to provide a platform for networking and mutual support in the dance community. Hip hop artist, photographer, and filmmaker Raphael Xavier, who has performed in two previous *Come Together* festivals, calls the festival “a great opportunity” for dancers to motivate each other and learn from one another’s craft. “I was inspired by other artists’ work,” Xavier comments. “It made me

realize I have to keep pushing towards a high standard of performance art and dance.”

Since emigrating from Israel to the United States, Roni and Alon Koresh have been active in the Philadelphia dance scene for nearly 25 years. Both recall the generosity and artistic solidarity that furnished their early opportunities in the city—the foundational steps that formed the basis of the Koresh Dance Company and School of Dance. The brothers feel that it is their turn to contribute performance opportunities to the city’s young and innovative choreographers, and to bring its luminaries together for a week of diverse and excellent performances.

Special Events include an opening night reception, audience Q&As with artistic directors, master classes with visiting artists at the Koresh School of Dance, and a closing night happy hour.

Performances take place at the Suzanne Roberts Theatre at Broad & Lombard: Wednesday, July 22, 7:30pm; Thursday, July 23, 7:30pm; Friday, July 24, 8pm; Saturday, July 25, 8pm; Sunday, July 26, 7pm. Box Office: 215-985-0420. For more information contact: koreshdance.org or 215-751-0959.

Spring Crosstown Coalition Report

By Steve Huntington, Chair

Crosstown Candidate Questionnaire

Incumbents and challengers, Democrats and Republicans, mayoral and Council candidates all answered the 16-item Crosstown Questionnaire in February.

Now that the sound and the fury of election season has passed, the most interesting answers were not those in which the candidates differed, but for which there was wide agreement. All five Democratic mayoral candidates favored making the office of Inspector General—currently held by bulldog prosecutor Amy Kurland—a permanent one, as did all but one Council candidate. The outlier was Council incumbent Bill Greenlee, who sidestepped the question. Similarly, only Council incumbents (and former Councilman Kenney) had issues with reassigning the task of mapping Council districts from Council to an independent commission. Does this like-mindedness mean that these two reforms are forthcoming?

Crosstown to Council: Consider Schools/Taxes Before Election

On April 17, the Crosstown wrote Council requesting that hearings for the proposed 9 percent tax hike and school funding be rescheduled so that voters could learn of Council's positions before the election.

Crosstown Education Summit: 100 Attend from 45 Schools

The Coalition's March 14 Summit for Friends of Neighborhood Public Education drew over 100 people from 45 schools and civic associations to the headquarters of the American Friends Service Committee, which graciously donated the venue. Participants included CCRA President Jeff Braff, Schools Chair Judy Heller, and Schools Committee member Dilek Karabucak. Attendees were offered four workshops:

- “Forming and Building a Friends Group” re: sharing information and best practices among veteran and fledgling groups.
- “What Does Your Principal Need from the Community?” featured three inspirational principals: Nebinger's Anh Brown, Jenks' Mary Lynskey, and Chester Arthur's Kim Newman.
- “Navigating the District” showcased Vicki Ellis, from the School District's Office of Strategic Partnerships, who reviewed resources available from the District.
- “Building a Citywide Voice for Public Education,” in which Donna Cooper of Public Citizens for Children and Youth, and Deputy Mayor for Parks & Recreation Commissioner Mike DiBerardinis discussed influencing decision-makers at City Hall, the School Reform Commission, and in Harrisburg.

Crosstown Weighs in on Government Reorganization

The Crosstown has weighed in on Council President Darrell Clarke's proposal to reorganize the City agencies responsible for land use. The Crosstown noted that the proposed legislation does not address the recommendations of the Corbett Commission's “Safety First And Foremost” report analyzing the Salvation Army store collapse at 22nd and Market, which killed six Philadelphians. When the three leading Mayoral candidates all went on record as requesting that the proposed reorganization be postponed until the advent of a new administration, the Crosstown wrote Clarke on May 5 requesting that the initiative be tabled.

The legislation was held in committee after:

- Crosstown visits to the six members of Council's Law and Government Committee

- A City Hall press conference where Crosstowners spoke as part of an array of community representatives assembled by the Crosstown
- Crosstown testimony in committee hearings

The bill, which had called for a May voter referendum, cannot be placed on the ballot earlier than next November and, per a Crosstown suggestion, eliminated Council's right to approve a Mayoral appointee proposed for the cabinet position. As a followup, the Coalition has requested “an appropriate forum so that all stakeholders may . . . contribute toward a reorganization plan acceptable to everyone.”

To maximize its efforts, the Crosstown initiated alliances with the Building Industry Association, the Development Workshop, representatives of the Corbett Commission, the Design Advocacy Group, the Committee of 70, the Central Delaware Advocacy Group, and families of the Salvation Army Building collapse victims, each of whom participated in the press conference and offered testimony.

The Coalition will continue to pursue its request that Council convene the many stakeholders so that a broad-based consensus can be brokered.

Crosstown Coalition “Citizen of the Week”

Most of us volunteer because the work is a reward in itself. Even so, it is nice to get some recognition, which was supplied by *The Philadelphia Citizen* when it named the Crosstown Coalition “Citizen of the Week” to honor the efforts of **Jeff Hornstein** and the **committee of Crosstowners** who put together the **March 14 Education Summit**.

Why whisper down the lane when you can shout it from the rooftops?

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Former Bandstand Regular Bob Alcorn Dances around the World on Cruise Ships

By Bonnie Eisenfeld

For retiree Bob Alcorn, ballroom dancing is a job and a pleasure. He is a gentleman dance host on cruise ships traveling all over the world. Recommended to him by his barber, this job has no salary, but the cruise lines pay all his voyage expenses including air transport, stateroom, clothing, food, drinks, laundry, dry cleaning, gratuities, and everything he needs on board the ship. In return, he devotes his time to socializing with the single women guests, dancing with them every evening and accompanying them on port excursions during the day. Here is Alcorn's view: "Our mission is to bring dance and happiness to the unattached ladies on the cruise ships of the world, thus encouraging them to return for more fun cruises."

On average, there are five unattached female passengers for every unattached male passenger. Thus there is a need for at least four dance hosts. Each evening for three hours starting at cocktail time, dance hosts, ages 50 to 80, dance and socialize with the single women.

During the day, when not on a port excursion, hosts assist the ladies with ballroom and Latin dance lessons—cha-cha, rumba, tango, salsa, waltz, foxtrot, swing and more. The rest of the time hosts are at leisure and can choose from daytime activities like bridge lessons, lectures, swimming, fitness, foil fencing, deck sports, art classes, concerts, bingo, trivia and movies. Before dinner, the hosts generally take much-needed naps. Identified with special badges, these gentlemen are granted all the same amenities as the guests, but contrary to popular image, do not have all the privileges. There are rules about "fraternizing" with female guests during a cruise. Simply put, it's not allowed. If a host is caught breaking a rule, he is put off the ship at the next port and must get home at his own expense. However, guests and hosts may exchange contact information and get in touch once the cruise is over.

Alcorn has always loved dancing. As a young man in high school in 1955 and 1956, he was a regular on *Bandstand*, the



Bob Alcorn is a dapper dance host for about 2 months a year on many popular cruise lines. (Staff photo: Queen Victoria, Cunard Line)

famed TV dance party hosted by Dick Clark in West Philadelphia. He attended his local parish dances, took group and private lessons, and danced regularly with his sisters. His favorite dance is the jitterbug (also known as swing or jive). In addition, he belongs to The Timoney Irish Dancers, doing Ceili, set dancing and Irish folk dances.

Originally from North Philadelphia, Alcorn earned his bachelor's degree from the Wharton School and his M.B.A. from Temple University, majoring in project management. He worked for DuPont, the City of Philadelphia, the Federal government, Sun Oil, CIGNA, University of Pennsylvania, and First Pennsylvania Bank.

A Center City resident and member of Friends in the City (see article on p. 4 in the March 2014 issue of CCQ), Alcorn now spends about two months a year cruising with Cunard, Crystal, Holland America, Norwegian, Regent, or Celebrity Cruise Lines, or American Queen Steamboat Company (on the Mississippi River.) He prefers to cruise on warm seas in January and February. In total he has been on 75 cruises over the past 17 years,

including two world cruises lasting three to four months each. He's been just about everywhere in the world and loves his retirement job.

As recently as January and February, Alcorn worked as a dance host on a six-week cruise on the Cunard *Queen Victoria*, on the first of a three-part World Voyage. (The total voyage lasts three and a half months.) The ship sailed from England to Hawaii, via the South Atlantic Ocean, the Caribbean Islands, the Panama Canal, along Central America and California, and across the South Pacific into the Hawaiian Islands. Along the way, the ship stopped at ports in the Azores Islands of Portugal, Florida, Mexico, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Alcorn plans to cruise as long as possible. "Doing the cruises makes me feel younger each year. I will keep going until my legs and feet wear out—and when I finally go out, I will go kicking and screaming." His next cruise is scheduled for January and February 2016, most likely to South America. Alcorn says, "Save me a dance on the high seas!"



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Light to the City: Center City to Santiago

By Brandon Van Deinse, Communications Director, The City School

The City School is a college-preparatory Christian school committed to making an excellent education accessible for families in the city. Our mission is to train students' minds, discipline their hearts, and bring light to the city—one child at a time.

Martin Luther King Jr. once declared, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." If we are committed to bringing light to our city, we must learn to pursue justice well beyond the boundaries of Philadelphia. Taking this lesson to heart, The City School sent 14 student leaders abroad for Justice Week, a leadership and service program held by the International Justice Mission. This April, our Prefects-in-training flew to the Dominican Republic to serve schools, churches, hospitals, and communities in need, while cultivating virtues to make them more effective servant-leaders back home in Philadelphia.

This is our second year visiting the Dominican Republic as part of an ongoing partnership with Santiago Christian School. By partnering with students in the D.R., City School students learn to appreciate new perspectives on justice, seeing the world through the eyes of leaders in a city very different from their own. Last year



Desarae is helping a farmer repair a fence, re-packing the dirt around poles they had to replace.

students repaired roads, dug troughs for pig farmers, tutored younger students, and collaborated with Dominican student leaders to invigorate student leadership at The City School.

Senior Prefect Milan says, "This trip changed my life and has continued to transform the way I think about leadership, justice, service, and love in my own city. I am excited for [this] year's Prefects to embark on this journey and return with a renewed sense of direction as they pursue justice here in Philadelphia."

"I'm honored to have this opportunity to learn more about how I can pursue justice in my city," says Ixztel, next year's Life and Culture Prefect. "It will be refreshing to serve a new community in the D.R., and I plan to take everything I learn home with me as I consider how I can bring light to Philadelphia." Ixztel and the rest of our Prefects-in-training were looking forward to learning how their lives can be a force for reconciliation at home and abroad.

This year's trip gave students opportunities to mentor Haitian refugees living in Dominican orphanages, and to assist local laborers with repairing damaged homes and beautifying under-resourced neighborhoods. "In some ways, the Dominican Republic is an entirely new world for our students," noted Student Leadership Coordinator Katelin Jankowski prior to the trip, "but in other ways, it's a place just like our own home, a place that is both beautiful and broken. As we discuss our plans to serve people on this trip, students are already beginning to see opportunities to bring justice to their own neighborhoods." Students also listen in on seminars about global justice issues like human trafficking and systemic racial inequalities.

In addition to these big-picture pursuits of justice, City School students partner up with Dominican student leaders to plan the future of our leadership programs. Throughout the year, our Prefects email and video-conference with Prefects in Santiago, working together to find new ways of pursuing peace in their communities through the power of student leadership.



Enjoying the trip to the Dominican Republic last year are City School students, clockwise from rear: Milan, Jacquelyn, Desarae, Sonia, Gianni, and Jose.

At The City School, students explore leadership responsibilities relating to their unique interests through seven different Student Councils spanning diverse aspects of life at school. This year our Prefects and other leaders raised money for leukemia and lymphoma research, donated hundreds of dollars' worth of clothing to the local Salvation Army, volunteered to serve the homeless in Center City, sent holiday cards to veterans, and gift baskets to cheer up children in orphanages.

With new knowledge gained through a week of service in the Dominican Republic, City School students will carry the torch and continue our sacred mission, bringing light to the city—one child at a time.

Our rigorous program challenges over 300 students in grades pre-k through 12; it is a joy for us to report that our graduating seniors have boasted a 100 percent college-acceptance rate for over a decade. If our mission resonates with you, please feel free to reach out to me at bvandeinse@cityschool.org. I'd love to hear your ideas about how City School students can pursue justice in Philadelphia, and I am happy to find ways you can partner with us in our mission.

Many Routes to Center City: A Collaboration between Freire Charter School and Mural Arts

By Joan Goldstein

Thousands of people live in Center City, and still more travel here to work, shop, eat, play and learn. A year or so ago, as part of an assignment with artist Marcus Balum, students from Freire Charter High School started taking photos of their travel routes to school in Center City.

Balum spearheaded Freire's innovative arts-integration program while serving as lead artist for *Mapping Philadelphia*, a collaboration between Freire and the Mural Arts Program. In his dual role as lead artist of the project and teaching artist at Freire, Balum created a photography-based curriculum that drew on academic disciplines including English, geometry, and history to weave art-making into students' daily academic experience. The result is a consistent framework that supports a variety of academic subjects using public art as an anchor and display of students' creativity and critical thinking.

Freire students come from all reaches of Philadelphia to experience Center City at

Freire's two campuses: the high school at 2027 Chestnut Street and the middle school at 1026 Market Street. Documenting their journeys in the city through photographs, Freire students adopted Balum's fascinating artistic practice of collaging multiple vantage points of the same object. The end result is *Mapping Philadelphia*—an outdoor mural at 2110 Market Street—a stunning collaboration that depicts the diverse experiences of a city we all call home.

The mural was dedicated last fall with the student artists in attendance, as well as several officers from the fire house whose wall hosts the mural. Freire Middle School students in the *Play On, Philly!* music-instruction program provided musical accompaniment; and Jane Golden, Executive Director of the Mural Arts Program; Kelly Davenport, Head of Schools at Freire Charter School; Marcus Balum; and State Senator Anthony Williams all gave speeches honoring the students' hard work and their beautiful final product.

Since 1999, Freire Charter High School has been unlocking the potential of some of Philadelphia's most underserved youth through a combination of rigorous academics, self-discovery and creative programming—all in a safe and supportive environment. Defying statistics and stereotypes, Freire serves a student population that is over 80 percent low-income, while sending more than 90 percent of its graduates to college. Having learned so much in their daily travels to Center City, Freire high school students are prepared for even greater journeys to colleges and universities far and wide.

Recently granted an additional charter, Freire will open TECH Freire in the fall of 2016 at a location near Temple University, replicating the successes of Freire while adding a new focus on entrepreneurship and computer science to prepare students for 21st century careers.



Freire students, faculty and Mural Arts staff celebrate the dedication of Mapping Philadelphia at 2110 Market Street.

Crosstown Coalition Holds First Summit for Friends of Neighborhood Public Schools

By Effie Babb

For five hours on a Saturday morning in March, more than 125 Philadelphians came together at The Friends Center at 1501 Cherry Street for the Crosstown Coalition's first education summit regarding neighborhood public schools. Some participants were parents with kids in the Philadelphia School District, some were new parents, some were residents without kids, some were neighborhood civic-group leaders, and some were education researchers and writers. Over 45 schools and civic associations were represented, including CCRA, with three board members in attendance. The purpose of this meeting was to create a network of people who care about our neighborhood public schools and want to put in the elbow grease to make them flourish.

After brief introductions, the summit broke out into small discussion groups to identify key issues. Far from turning them into griping sessions, individuals generated reams of post-it notes that voiced their experiences, opinions, ideas,

and hopes about public-school issues. Each discussion group appointed facilitators to organize these post-it notes into various categories, from which several large themes emerged. Among them were: the importance of building a diverse coalition that includes schools in lower-income neighborhoods where there is less likelihood of having a Friends group to support them; the desire to improve the image and branding of public schools; the desire to support the public schools; and the need for a collective voice for political and funding purposes.

The meeting then split into workshops on four topics: how to form a "friends of" group; how friends of neighborhood school groups can work effectively with principals; navigating the school district; and building a voice for neighborhood schools through advocacy.

While wonderfully productive and inspirational, the summit was not a once-and-done deal. Out of the summit, working

groups were formed to address three of the key issues identified:

- Fostering Friends of Neighborhood Schools. The aim of this committee is to help form and build individual groups, using the network to enhance capacity, share information, and find leaders in unrepresented schools.
- Building Citywide Political Voice for Neighborhood Schools. This committee aims to engage individuals and groups that wish to work on public education-related issues at City Hall, the SRC, and Harrisburg.
- Building the Brand. This committee's goal is to build a new narrative emphasizing the opportunities offered by neighborhood public education, rather than just the challenges.

While there is work to be done, Philadelphians are rolling up their sleeves.

CCRA VP Judy Heller Honored as a "Woman on the Move" at City Hall

In February, at a City Hall luncheon to honor 30 "Women on the Move," CCRA's own Judy Heller was cited for her tireless and outstanding work as chair of the education and family programs committee.

As our readers know from the many articles written by Judy to describe the school fairs and other events she has organized, CCRA's role in the effort to sustain and improve Philadelphia schools has been enormously enhanced by her work. Here are excerpts from the official Citation honoring and recognizing Judy Heller:

"...Whereas, American women have played and continue to play a critical economic, cultural and social role in every sphere of the life of the nation by constituting a significant portion of the labor force, working inside and outside the home; and...

"Whereas, This year the theme for our Women's History Month Luncheon is 'Women on the Move' set up to inspire women and celebrate the social and economic achievements of women in the community; and...

"Whereas, This honor is extended in recognition of Judy's many years of unselfish commitment in volunteering her love, time and talents for the growth and wholeness of others and the betterment of the community. Her efforts may sometimes seem overwhelming but that does not stop her from fulfilling the mission to be helpful when and where needed. The community is a better place because of her great work in the neighborhood.

"Therefore, By virtue of this Citation, the Council of the City of Philadelphia is pleased and proud to join SEPTA in



From left, City Councilman Kenyatta Johnson, Judy Heller, and Frances Jones, Assistant General Manager of Government Affairs for SEPTA

honoring and congratulating Judy Heller for her phenomenal work and leadership in the community during the 'Women on the Move' Luncheon for Women's History Month. With appreciation, we extend to her the sincere respect and admiration of this legislative body. Congratulations!"

We couldn't agree more.

Pets Rule: the Animal Kingdom That Is Center City

By Bob Weiss

More pets than people? According to the latest US Census, about 22,000 people reside in 17,000 dwellings in Zip code 19103, which roughly corresponds to the CCRA district. A quick calculation: if 60 percent of US households own 83.3 million dogs and 95.6 million cats (American Veterinary Medical Association), then 10,200 of our local households contain one or more pets—that's roughly 11,650 dogs and 13,375 cats. In town? Is this incredible or what? And where are they?

Very visible every day are the mostly small and sometimes larger dogs that come to Rittenhouse Square to exercise and more, led or pulled by their owners or dog-walkers or high-rise employees paid to take them for a stroll. Many avail themselves of free “doggie bags,” courtesy of Friends of Rittenhouse Square, at conveniently located posts. Further west, at Schuylkill River Park, we find dozens of off-leash dogs of all sizes romping freely inside the dog-run enclosure, a portion of which is fenced off for small breeds to play in safety.

Less frequently we can see a cat on leash. But invisible are thousands of cats that never experience the outdoors, except through windowpanes.

Impressed by how many furballs our area supports, I decided to investigate and found that we sustain numerous pet-oriented businesses—five veterinary practices, five pet stores, and several other services—in just under two-thirds of a square mile, not counting the drugstores and markets that carry pet merchandise. Not surprisingly, animal-related commerce thrives here.

We humans serve our animal masters with adoration, food, health care, exercise, and entertainment. To give them all of this we spend heavily: \$55.53 billion annually, or \$762 per pet-owning household (American Pet Products Association 2013-14 Pet Owner Survey). And if we calculate for the CCRA-area pet-owning households, that comes to \$7.75 million locally, not counting other services or veterinary care, which itself may range from \$200 to \$1000 per year per pet.

With an environment ripe for growing local businesses catering to pets and their

owners, I began to scour the area for such establishments, and here are my findings.

Doing Their Business: The Stores

Before entering **Rittenhouse Square Pet Supply** on 20th Street north of Walnut, you may see one or more kittens in its front window. They are seeking homes; one year, proprietor Wendy Schnaars proudly notes, 76 of these street cats were adopted out. Established 15 years ago, her friendly store stocks foods and supplies floor to ceiling, mostly for cats and dogs but also other animals, including a rabbit that sometimes visits with its owner. NOTE: CCRA members receive a discount. 215-569-2555; RittenhousePet.com

Just Dogs and Cats Philadelphia (formerly Just Dogs Gourmet) recently moved from Chestnut St. to 1700 Sansom, where it offers a full line of products, and even home delivery. Owner Marianne Charbonneau takes pride in the store's specialty: house-baked and decorated personalized dog birthday treats and kitty tuna birthday hearts. She also strives to sell products made in the US and locally. 215-988-9876; jdgp Philly.com

Two **Doggie Style** stores are in our CCRA neighborhood (17th and Spruce; 2101 South). Both typically have a dog or two available for adoption in the front window. A franchise operation with multiple locations in Philly, and corporate offices in Old City, Doggie Style offers a large product line, home delivery, and adoption services. Cute: They keep resident rescue cats at their stores even though they're dog people. 215-545-5900; www.doggiestylepets.com

Most recently opened, **Unleashed by Petco** (23rd and South) is a spacious store with neat shelving and broad aisles, catering to both dogs and cats. In addition to many foods and products, Unleashed offers dog training, vaccinations, worming, testing and even a \$10 “Self-Wash” where you can clean up your animal. General Manager Alex Cannon notes that special events and giveaways are announced on the store's website. 215-732-1267; <http://unleashedby.petco.com/pet-stores/5822/PA/Philadelphia-Fitler-Square>. Or just go to unleashedbypetco.com.



Liberty Vet Pets/Boutique Fancy Fluff are easily “spotted” by the iconic life-size leopard clawing at the side door.

Pet foods and products are also offered by the neighborhood's newest pet-related store, **Boutique Fancy Fluff**, 20th and Manning, on the ground floor of Liberty Vet Pets (more about this operation below). Here you find a selection of earth-friendly items, including special foods, and both western and Asian herbs. 888-412-9233; www.shopBFF.com

The Vets

Animal owners in the neighborhood have multiple options for their pets' medical care. We are home to two veterinary practices serving cats exclusively, and three others serving a mix of small animals. Some veterinary services are even offered by the Petco-related store.

Liberty Vet Pets, the newest arrival, occupies the rear upper level shared with the aforementioned Boutique Fancy Fluff, easily “spotted” by the life-size leopard clawing at the side door. Dr. Bonnie Valiente, a veterinarian who grew up nearby, founded the practice with her husband, Rob Wright, as Practice Manager (when he's not serving with the National Guard); it began in 2010 solely as a home-visit service, and still offers that option, sparing animals and owners the stress of a trip to the vet. Adding a brick-and-mortar facility enables

Continued p. 13

a fuller range of traditional and integrative veterinary services, including dentals and surgeries. Resources include an up-to-date website and a newsletter. NOTE: CCRA members, seniors, and military receive discounts on care and boutique items. 888-458-8587; www.libertyvetpets.com

Well established and well equipped as a veterinary practice exclusively for cats, **VCA Cat Hospital**, 226 S. 20th, has served our area since 1974, and is currently under the direction of Drs. Jennifer Babineaux and Aimee Simpson. Babineaux is one of only three specialists in Pennsylvania certified in feline medicine through the American Board of Veterinary Practitioners. Because of the increasing costs of care, VCA now offers wellness plans with monthly payments that make many routine cat medical services more affordable. 215-567-6446; www.vcahospitals.com/cat-hospital-of-philadelphia

World of Animals Veterinary Hospital in Rittenhouse (408 S. 20th) is a multi-purpose facility, with branches in Mayfair and Frankford. This sizable practice offers medical, surgical, and dental care for small animals, in addition to wellness and preventative care; a full-service in-house laboratory that can give quick results; and a digital x-ray machine. The vets see dogs and cats (more dogs) and the occasional rabbit and guinea pig. Practice Manager Connie Griffin points with pride to the practice's involvement with the Red Paw Emergency Relief Team, a charity that helps people with their pets when disaster strikes their home (fire, flood, building collapse). 215-732-7321; www.vetcentercity.com

Cat Vet of South Street (at #2210) practices integrative medicine, employing the best of both Western and Eastern veterinary knowledge. In addition to traditional veterinary training, Dr. Elizabeth McKinstry is certified in Veterinary Acupuncture, Tui Na medical massage and Veterinary Food Therapy, and she is currently studying Chinese Herbal Therapy. The office maintains a website with helpful information for cat owners. 215-545-2287; www.catvetofsouthstreet.com

Rittenhouse Veterinary Medical Center at 1618 Pine has served the area for many years under the direction of Dr. Justin Soli. Well liked by area residents, the Center treats both dogs and cats and gets high marks from clients. 215-732-9909; (no website)

While researching, I discovered other niche pet-related businesses. One was devoted to pet styling—a step up from grooming, perhaps? How suitable for a neighborhood housing so many hair and nail salons.

Most of the businesses and practices I contacted were eager to provide information. And everyone I spoke with expressed a special pleasure in working with animals and their owners. (Interestingly, most of the establishments I visited are staffed with many more women than men.) The only major problem mentioned was the difficulty in receiving shipments because of parking in Center City. I completed my inquiry fully confident that pets and their owners are well treated in our neighborhood.

Condos, Apartment Buildings: Divergent Pet Policies

Buildings permitting no pets are William Penn House and The Dorchester; others have limited restrictions, and some are downright friendly to pets and their owners. One cat per apartment is allowed at the 2101 [Walnut] Cooperative. Wanamaker House's tower is also cat-friendly; only its townhomes are dog-friendly. According to their publicity, The Carlyle on Locust Street, the Riverloft Apartments at 23rd and Walnut, and Kennedy House on JFK Boulevard all are pet-friendly.

Yet “pet-friendly” may mean many things. The website for The Drake on Spruce Street welcomes spayed and neutered dogs (in some apartments) and cats (if

declawed). AQ Rittenhouse, currently under construction, will have a dog-wash facility and accept two pets per apartment, with breed restrictions. Parc Rittenhouse requires a pet registration form but allows two pets per unit, with some caveats. According to its leasing manager, 2116 Chestnut accepts both cats and dogs (85-pound maximum, with breed restrictions), no more than two per apartment, with a \$300 non-refundable fee and a \$30 fee per pet per month; the building provides a backyard area with a dog run. Both a dog run and a pet washing room are available at the Aria at 15th and Locust.

—RW

Shop Talk

CCRA Merchant Members Discount Program

Support our local merchants and save money too. Just present your current CCRA membership card and personal identification to these local merchants, who will provide a discount, described here, in the case of new merchants to the program. (Check the CCRA website at www.centercityresidents.org under the “Merchant Member” tab for descriptions of other merchants’ discounts; Di Bruno Bros. has its own CCRA card.)

Koresh Dance Company
2002 Rittenhouse Square Street
267-687-1769

PhotoLounge
1909 Chestnut Street
267-322-6651

Rim's Dry Cleaners & Tailors
2203 South Street
215-546-1889

Rittenhouse Hardware
2001 Pine Street
215-735-6311

Rittenhouse Pet Supply
135 South 20th Street
215-569-2555

Computer Troubleshooters
108 South 20th Street
215-825-2101

Di Bruno Bros.
1730 Chestnut Street
215-665-9220
The Market at the Comcast Center
215-531-5666

Dom's Shoe Repair
203 South 20th Street
215-972-0098

Eye Candy Vision
218 South 20th Street
215-568-3937

Uber - Limo service
10% discount for CCRA Members using code CCRA14
www.uber.com

Philly Foodworks
Use the code “CCRA” when signing up for home delivery and receive a \$20 discount on delivery charges
www.phillyfoodworks.com

Center City's Centuries-old Clubs and Societies Create, Perform, Preserve, Promote Arts and Sciences

By Bonnie Eisenfeld

Center City's centuries-old clubs and societies boast many "America's firsts" and "America's oldests"—oldest men's singing group, first women's club, oldest amateur opera company, oldest professional theater company, first art club for women. Some lay claim to being the oldest continuously operating club in their category, or one of the oldest. What follows is a tour of historic clubs and societies dedicated to the arts, literature, science, and preservation, with some highlights about each one, organized by areas of Center City—West of Broad, Midtown, and Independence area. For information about membership and public hours, please contact the organizations.

West of Broad Street

The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, 1827

Established to promote horticulture, the society originally had 80 members and now has 23,500. The first Flower Show, held in 1829, introduced the poinsettia, and has continued annually to the present. PHS has involved thousands of city residents in restoration of public landscapes and neighborhood parks. 100 N. 20th St. #5; 215-988-8800 <http://phsonline.org/>

The Orpheus Club of Philadelphia, 1872

This club is the oldest men's singing group in America. The Euredice Chorus, a choral group for women formed in 1886, sang many concerts with the Orpheus Club. Currently membership consists of 80 singers, and performs three concerts a year at the Kimmel Center. Their repertoire includes classical, jazz, and pop. Members perform upon request for hospitals, retirement centers, schools, and charitable events in the Delaware Valley. 254 S. Van Pelt St.; 610-644-9125 <http://www.orpheusclub.org/>

The Acorn Club, 1889

The first women's club in America, its purpose was to promote art, literature, music, and social enjoyment. Today, members are active in the arts, culture, medicine and non-profit organizations. 1519 Locust St.; 215-735-2040 <http://www.acornclub.org/>

Colonial Dames of America, 1891

This is a national organization that promotes

our country's heritage through historic preservation, patriotic service, and educational projects. The Pennsylvania Headquarters, completed in 1921, hosts numerous programs, events, and private functions. 1630 Latimer St.; 215-735-6737 <http://nscdapa.org/>

Pen & Pencil Club, 1892

A place for writers and editors to socialize, this is the oldest continuously operating press club in America, and the second oldest in the world. It maintains a strict "off the record" policy on its premises. At the time it was founded, Philadelphia had seven morning and six evening newspapers. Pen & Pencil combined the Stylus Club, the Journalist Club, and the Reporters Club. 1522 Latimer St.; 215-731-9909 <http://www.penandpencil.org/>

The Savoy Company, 1901

The oldest amateur opera company in the world dedicated to Gilbert and Sullivan, Savoy has a large volunteer chorus and crew, and has performed on professional stages and with professional orchestras. The company also performs for charitable organizations and has social events for members. P.O. Box 59150, Philadelphia PA 19102-9150; 215-735-7161 <http://www.savoy.org/>

Plays and Players, 1911

Founded as a social club devoted to new theater experiences for and by its membership, Plays and Players is one of the oldest professional theater companies in America. Originally called Little Theatre of Philadelphia, it opened in 1913, and the company bought the building in 1922. In the 1960s, productions were opened to the entire community. At present, the mission of Plays and Players is to support and nurture the work of local artists, as well as to provide rehearsal space, workshops, classes and events



Plays and Players

to members. Other local companies also use the space. 1714 Delancey Pl.; 215-735-0630 <http://www.playsandplayers.org/>

The Print Center, 1915

Originally known as The Print Club, this was one of the first venues in America dedicated to the appreciation of prints. The Annual International Competition is the oldest of its kind in the country. In 1942, The Print Club donated its collection to the Philadelphia Museum of Art. In 1996, the name was changed to The Print Center to indicate its commitment to the community. The Print Center mounts solo and group exhibitions in its galleries, in public locations, and in traveling shows, and provides educational programs to artists and art enthusiasts. The Artists-in-Schools Program brings visual-art education to disadvantaged populations in underserved Philadelphia public schools. Open to the public. 1614 Latimer St.; 215-735-6090 <http://www.printcenter.org/>

Midtown area

The Library Company of Philadelphia, 1731

Founded by Benjamin Franklin, this was the first lending library and oldest cultural institution in the nation. Preserving a collection of rare books, documents, photographs, and art works, the Library Company is a research institution specializing in American history and culture from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. It served as the Library of Congress from the Revolutionary War until 1800. Before the Civil War, this was the largest public library in America. The Library presents exhibits, lectures, symposia, and other programs, and publishes a semi-annual newsletter and a monthly e-newsletter. Open to the public. 1314 Locust St.; 215-546-3181 <http://www.librarycompany.org/index.htm>

Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1824

Among the oldest historical societies in America, it houses documents and graphic items spanning over 350 years of American history, including one of the country's largest family-history libraries. Holdings were added from The Balch Institute for

Continued p. 15

Ethnic Studies and The Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania. The museum collection was transferred to the Philadelphia History Museum (then known as the Atwater Kent Museum). Open to the public. 1300 Locust St.; 215-732-6200 <https://www.hsp.org/>



The Pennsylvania Historical Society

The Photographic Society of Philadelphia, 1860

Founded as an amateur society, for the purpose of sharing new knowledge and technologies, and to promote improvements in the art of photography, this is the oldest active photographic society in America. The club offers courses, lectures, demonstrations, and exhibitions. In 1868, in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA), the Society held the world's first salon devoted exclusively to exhibiting pictorial work with the camera. Members have created important documentary, artistic, and scientific works. The Society holds exhibitions and monthly meetings at the Plastic Club (see below). 247 S. Camac St. <http://www.phillyphotosociety.org/>

The Sketch Club, 1860

Founded by six students from PAFA, this is America's oldest continuing club for artists. The club supports and nurtures working visual artists by providing studio space, exhibitions, networking, a meeting place, a forum for ideas, and a vital bridge between creators and supporters of art. Founded as a men's club, it is now open to both men and women, and many prominent artists have been members. Exhibitions are open to the public. 235 S. Camac St.; 215-545-9298 <http://sketchclub.org/>

New Century Trust, 1876

The Trust is the oldest continuously running women's organization in America still in its original site. For the 1876 Centennial Exposition, in Fairmount Park, Trust founder

and women's rights activist Eliza Sprout Turner and other women held tea parties to raise money to build the Women's Pavilion, the first world showcase for women's work and contributions to society. More than 9 million people visited the Exposition. "Visitors to The Women's Pavilion were met by a woman operating a steam engine that operated a printing press that printed the *New Century for Woman*, a newspaper for which Eliza Turner wrote and edited" (from New Century Trust website). Today, the Trust focuses on improving the educational, economic, and social status of women and girls. 1307 Locust St.; 215-735-7593 <http://www.newcenturytrust.org/>

The Mask & Wig Club of the University of Pennsylvania, 1889

The oldest all-male collegiate musical-comedy troupe in America, its members have performed for Penn and audiences nationwide. In the early twentieth century, productions were lavish, with full orchestras and sets in professional theaters, and the Club even had its own train. Since the '60s, Mask & Wig performs comic revues in its historic clubhouse, home to a collection of early Maxfield Parrish artwork and murals. 310 S. Quince St.; 215-586-3729 <http://www.maskandwig.com/>

The Plastic Club, 1897

Founded by female professional illustrators and established painters, it was the first art club for women in America. The name refers to any unfinished work of art and to the changing and tactile sense of painting and sculpture. Now open to both women and men, the club promotes art, shares information among local artists, and encourages members' artistic works and careers. Members collect art supplies for needy children and award two-year memberships to graduating seniors from local art colleges. Exhibitions are open to the public. 247 S. Camac St.; 215-545-9324 <http://plasticclub.org/>

The Franklin Inn Club, 1902

The club was founded by a group of writers as a private men's dining club. In the early 1980s members voted to admit women, making it the first co-ed private club in the city. In addition to writers, current members—called "Innmates"—are also active in the arts, sciences, education, politics, law, and other intellectually stimulating fields. Members gather for discussion of current issues and for regular, relevant presentations by representatives of these fields. Early members wrote and produced plays, masques, musicals

and other theater productions. Recently, this theatrical tradition was revived in connection with the Philadelphia Fringe Festival. 205 S. Camac St.; 215-732-0334 <http://thefranklininn.com/>

Independence area

American Philosophical Society, 1743

Founded by Benjamin Franklin for the promotion of useful knowledge, this scholarly organization is the oldest learned society in America. Early members included our country's founders, doctors, lawyers, clergymen, merchants, artisans and tradesmen. In the eighteenth century, the study of nature was called natural philosophy, hence the Society's name. In the nineteenth century, the Society's interests turned toward American paleontology, geology, astronomy, meteorology, and Indian ethnology. Currently the Society promotes knowledge in the sciences and humanities through research, lectures, professional meetings, publications, library resources, grants and fellowships, prizes, exhibitions, and public education. 105 S. 5th St.; 215-440-3400 <http://www.amphilsoc.org/>

The Athenaeum of Philadelphia, 1814

This member-supported library and museum houses a collection of books, manuscripts, architectural drawings, photographs, and historical objects. The organization provides members, scholars, and the public with historical, literary, and educational activities and events. Its collections attract thousands of readers including students, scholars, architects, designers, curators, and private owners of historic buildings. Open to the public. 219 S. 6th St.; 215-925-2688 <http://www.philaathenaeum.org/>



A number of historic clubs line the 200 block of S. Camac St.

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Getting Garden-Ready...

Spring planting/cleanup in Fidler Square, May 3



Photos: Donna Strug

Neighbors and volunteers lend elbow grease to their efforts to enhance plantings around the Fidler Square fountain

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



Photo: Barbara Halpern

From left, CCRA Board nominee Ellen Chapman, Board member Michele Langer, and Board officer (and frequent contributor to CCQ) Virginia Nalencz help out at CCRA's Herb Booth at the Rittenhouse Flower Market for Children's Charities in May.



Photo: Maggie Mund

Sheila Cossie, happy winner of the Street Scene window-box raffle, showing off her prize.

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Now You Know Where You Can Park It

By Mike Axler and Bill West

Editor's Note: CCRA recently asked the authors to conduct an inventory of parking spaces in the CCRA area. What follows is their report.

We divided our inventory into three categories: on-street, curbside parking; off-street parking in garages or lots with more than 30 spaces (> 30); and off-street parking with fewer than 30 (< 30). (Interestingly, it seems there are no facilities with exactly 30 spaces).

Off-street > 30

Every five years for the last several decades, the Philadelphia City Planning Commission has inventoried off-street parking in Center City. Its survey is limited to garages and lots with a capacity greater than 30. The most recent inventory dates from 2010. We are hopeful that another inventory will be conducted this year.

In all of Center City, the 2010 survey counted 68,000 parking spots in these large garages and lots. The planning commission also calculates an occupancy rate. This is measured mid-day on a weekday and, for garages in the central business district, may be considered a peak occupancy rate. For garages in residential neighborhoods, peak occupancy may well occur in the evening.

Center City's 2010 occupancy rate was 74 percent. The occupancy rate has hovered in the mid-seventies for a number of years: 75 percent in 2005, 77 in 2000, and 76 in 1995. Occupancy in 2010 may have been

depressed because of the recently ended recession, but clearly occupancy has been at these levels for a long time.

Seventy-four percent is a very low rate. Optimal peak occupancy is generally considered to be 85 percent, at which a garage is neither too empty nor too crowded. There's room for at least 7,000 more cars in the city's big garages, and much more than that at night.

Focusing on CCRA's area, we calculated approximately 12,000 places in large garages and lots. Using the planning commission's capacity data, which we were largely able to validate, gave us greater confidence overall in the commission's report.

Occupancy data proved trickier. Garages were reluctant to share such data, perhaps viewing it as proprietary. Even the commission's report presents only aggregated occupancy data.

As a further complication, this aggregate data is presented in such a way that CCRA's area falls into four different zones. One of these, called Rittenhouse Square, lies entirely within the CCRA area. It stretches from Broad to the Schuylkill, but on its northern border excludes



Yellow: 30 - 100 Car Spaces, Orange: 101-300 Car Spaces, Red: 301 - 1,175 Car Spaces

certain areas of the central business district. Rittenhouse Square has 2,021 spaces in > 30 facilities and an occupancy rate of 65 percent.

Off-street < 30

We knew our area had off-street parking not counted as part of the planning commission's inventory: the one-car spot on a concrete pad behind the back door; another house's one-car garage in front, with accompanying curb cut.

Since no one else had counted them, we went out and did it ourselves. And we were surprised by how many we found, mostly in ones and twos, and occasionally in larger groupings.

We found a total of 1,930 spots in the < 30 off-street category—a low estimate. You can't see through a closed garage door. With the door open, what looks like a two-car garage might be a four-car garage. If we didn't know, we went with the low estimate.

On-street parking

In the CCRA area, we counted 3,161 curbside spots—again, an estimate. For instance, the number of cars parked on a block can vary according to the size of the cars.

Of this total, 1,584 spots were placarded for Zone 1 stickers. All Zone 1 spots are in the southern part of the CCRA area. Zone 1's northern boundaries are Spruce Street east of Rittenhouse Square, and Walnut Street west of Rittenhouse Square.

Two surprises

Our two big surprises were the 74 percent occupancy rate in the > 30 garages and lots, and the fact that < 30 off-street parking spots actually outnumber Zone 1 spots (1,930 to 1,584).

Looking for an off-street parking spot?

Here's a random sampling of neighborhood garages offering monthly parking.

LAZ Parking

1500 Locust St.
215-735-8750
\$265/month

Warwick

1710 Chancellor St.
215-735-2900
\$350/month

Parkway Parking

1845 Walnut St.
215-569-8400
\$350/month

The Rittenhouse Hotel & Condominium

210 W. Rittenhouse Sq.
215-563-4890
\$350/month

Academy House

251 S. 15th St.
215-915-9311
\$275/month

Classic Parking

414 S. 16th St.
215-545-9678
\$280/month

Penn Medicine at Rittenhouse

1700 South St.
215-985-2277
rizwan.khan@uphs.upenn.edu
\$250/month

Classic Parking

2031 Lombard St.
215-545-2474
\$280/month

Acorn Parking Garage

334 S. 22nd St.
215-985-4604
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Celebration of Center City Living, and a Toast to Joan & Dane Wells

CCRA'S annual Celebration of Center City Living on April 13, at Freeman's Auction House at 1808 Chestnut, boasted a Monopoly game theme that captured the festive mood. Joan and Dane Wells, announced earlier as this year's Lenora Berson Community Service Award honorees, were on hand to collect their award and acknowledge well-wishers. Our neighborhood would be hard put to find more deserving recipients.

For 23 years, the Wellses restored, owned, and operated the four Victorian buildings that make up The Queen Victoria Inn in Cape May. In 2004, they sold the Inn, moved to Center City, joined CCRA, and became actively involved in the neighborhood, using many of the skills they had honed "down the Shore." Joan got a plot in the Community Garden, joined the Steering Committee, and became Garden Chair. Now on the waitlist, she works on the Parkside Plantings around the Garden, plants and prunes trees as a Tree Tender, and helps with CCRA's Street Scene competition. She is Recording Secretary for the Cosmopolitan Club, and cooks weekly at MANNA.



Donna Strug

CCRA Pres. Jeffrey Braff, left, presents the Lenora Berson Community Service Award to Dane and Joan Wells at April's Celebration of Center City Living.

At First Unitarian Church Dane serves on the Property Committee, gives tours, and sings in the choir. With Philadelphia Tour Guide Certification, Dane leads tours for the Preservation Alliance and City Hall. As a former CCRA Board Member, Dane served as Asst. Secretary, and Chair of the Preservation Committee.

Finally, while "retiring" might sound like the last word in their vocabulary, Joan and Dane plan on doing so in Center City: they are founding members of Friends in the City (FitC), for which Dane serves on the Community Committee, and runs two programs—the Current Events Luncheon and "Morning Joe at the Market."

CCRA especially wants to thank and acknowledge the following individuals and businesses for their support in making the 2015 version of this annual fundraiser one of the best yet.

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- Vivian Seltzer

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- Dr. Vivian Seltzer
- Duke and Winston 1822 Chestnut Street
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- Effie Babb
- El Rey Restaurant
- Friday Saturday Sunday
- George Dimitruk Photography
- Gran Caffè L'Aquila
- Jonathan Stoler, DC
- Linda Katz
- Matt Schreck
- Michael & Susan Axler
- Morgan Lewis
- Nature Gallery Florist
- Ned Levi, Photographer

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- Philadelphia Film Society
- Philadelphia Flyers
- Philadelphia Museum of Art
- Philadelphia Theatre Co.
- Philippa "Pip" Campbell
- Porcini Restaurant
- Roberta Gross, Visual Artist
- Shake Shack
- Square 1682, Hotel Palomar
- Sue & Stephen Huntington
- TOP Overnight Camps/Jenny Swerdlow
- TransAmerican Office Furniture
- TRIA
- Twenty Manning Grill
- Vernick Restaurant
- Vetri Restaurants
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- World of Animals Rittenhouse
- Yeonmi Ahn, Artist

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Neighbors Helping Neighbors Thrive, Connect & Engage

By Kristin Davidson

Atul Gawande was inspired by many stories to write *Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End*. The most personal was that of his parents, both physicians, as his father faced frailty and illness. At their home in Ohio, they were reassured by the option to join the Athens Village, an organization founded by neighbors to provide support systems for those with chronic illness or infirmities in the familiar surroundings of their own homes.

Gawande's book, which chronicles the stories of many families and individuals as they confront debilitating illness, is a *New York Times* bestseller. In the course of the book he outlines the important role so-called Villages can play in giving members the independence they treasure while also providing a sense of purpose, so important at every age.

The Village—a traditional concept—is an innovative solution for a U.S. population that is growing older, as Gawande discovered. In addition, *CBS Sunday Morning*, *AARP*, *Forbes Magazine*, *The New York Times* and *Consumer Reports* are among the many leading media outlets that have presented an in-depth look at this flourishing movement.

Penn's Village, a non-profit network of neighbors serving residents of Central

Philadelphia, is one of 150 such villages across the globe. This network includes four categories of membership. "Neighbors"—fundamental to the vibrancy of our community—participate in the wide variety of educational, cultural and social programs, and donate to Penn's Village. "Villagers" need some assistance to maintain their independence. *Volunteers* donate their time and compassion. *Local businesses* support the Penn's Village mission in a variety of ways. All are vital to the organization, and sometimes their roles are interchangeable.

Penn's Village is a volunteer-first organization: We offer a long list of support services including, but not limited to, driving members to medical appointments or the grocery store, running errands, making friendly visits, carrying boxes up stairs, and setting up computers or lamps.

Our newest program, Health Pals, pairs specially trained volunteers with members to help them navigate the healthcare system. A Health Pal volunteer will work with a member to formulate questions, fill out forms, be a "second set of ears" and assist with follow-up instructions such as scheduling appointments and picking up prescriptions. Penn's Village is also partnering with Centennial Health Services,



Penn's Village member and volunteer driver on their way to a medical appointment

an independent pharmacy, to offer one-on-one medication counseling by a registered pharmacist, home delivery of prescriptions, and other health-related services.

Penn's Village members and volunteers appreciate the powerful sense of community that builds as we learn, have fun and help one another, developing strong personal connections along the way.

To learn more about Penn's Village, check out the website <http://www.pennsvillage.org/>, call the office at 215-925-7333, or email info@pennsvillage.org. (See Penn's Village article in June 2014 issue of CCQ, p. 25.)

Feet First Philly Puts Pedestrians' Best Foot Forward

By Bonnie Eisenfeld

One of Center City's greatest attributes, according to residents and visitors alike, is the ease of its accessibility on foot. But while Philadelphia is almost universally praised for its human scale and its "walkability," the popularity of walking in the city means there are challenges and issues for pedestrians. **Feet First Philly** is a pedestrian advocacy group sponsored by the Clean Air Council. The organization works on various initiatives to raise awareness of issues facing pedestrians, to improve the pedestrian environment, to protect the rights of pedestrians, and to encourage walking as a mode of transportation, exercise and recreation.

In 2012, Feet First Philly conducted an online survey of pedestrians, and received over 400 responses. Among respondents' concerns were: cars failing to yield to pedestrians in a crosswalk; vehicles running red lights; drivers with cell phones and other distractions; construction sites taking over sidewalks; damaged sidewalks and sidewalk obstructions; and conflicts with bicyclists. Most respondents walk to work or school, to do errands, and for recreation. Other reasons for walking include getting to doctors' appointments, walking dogs or babies, and getting to the many cultural, culinary and social destinations nearby. Many in Center City do not have cars, and use a mix of

walking and public transit. According to the survey, the four streets that presented the greatest difficulty were the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, Market Street, Broad Street, and JFK Boulevard.

There are many ways to help Feet First Philly succeed: by participating in organized walks or walk audits to gather data and document walking conditions; volunteering at events; representing Feet First Philly at community meetings; and documenting obstacles with your camera phone. <http://feetfirstphilly.org/>

One reason some churches have all the answers is that they don't allow any questions.

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JEVS Human Services Turns Lives Around

By Bonnie Eisenfeld



Graduates from JEVS E3 Power Center City celebrate graduation and GED completion.

Substance abusers, people with disabilities, job seekers, high-school dropouts, immigrants and refugees, prison inmates—19,000 individuals in the Delaware Valley needing help last year received support through JEVS Human Services, a private, not-for-profit organization headquartered on Rittenhouse Square. Focusing on counseling, training, and assistance to individuals with physical, developmental, and emotional challenges or adverse socio-economic circumstances, the organization employs 900 staffers in multiple locations, and runs more than 30 programs providing skill development, job readiness, career services, vocational training, recovery services, residential services, and in-home personal assistance.

Jay Spector has been President and CEO of JEVS Human Services for 19 years, and a more devoted CEO cannot be found. He is dedicated to maintaining the organization's standard of excellence even in the face of funding challenges.

"JEVS is there for our community," Spector says. "Whether you are looking for a job, managing a disability, need new skills, need help with an addiction—the list goes on—we are there at countless pivotal points in the lives of the people we serve. We offer hope and support independence."

In the area of training for careers, JEVS helps unemployed workers, seniors, military veterans, high-school students and dropouts, former offenders, refugees, and welfare recipients by providing them with skills assessment, training, counseling, job search and placement. Each client gets an individualized plan. One division, the Orleans Technical College, provides training for the building trades, telecommunications, and court reporting.

Based on the Jewish principles of social justice and repairing the world, the Jewish Employment and Vocational Service (JEVS) was founded in 1941 by 25 concerned Jewish citizens to help displaced

European Jewish refugees adjust to life in Philadelphia and become self-sufficient. Over the years, the organization expanded its scope to help people of all needs and ethnicities. It continues to offer several programs for Jewish people, and partners with the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia.

Funding comes from federal, state, and local governments, and private, foundation, and corporate contributions. JEVS Human Services is a United Way agency and is on the list of Donor Choices. Staffers' expertise encompasses education and training, health care, information technology, social services, skilled labor, and accounting. Some speak foreign languages. The annual budget is nearly \$92 million.

Over the years, JEVS Human Services has helped me find home-healthcare workers for my parents and career-switching interns for my department. I learned that when you hire through JEVS, you get motivated employees with a good work ethic. But don't just take my word for it. Go to jevshumanservices.org/ and watch the video, with testimony from staffers and clients, to get the real story of what JEVS Human Services means to the community.

Living History

Historic Philadelphia Church Celebrates 110th Anniversary

By Marsha Hurst

May 3 marked the 110th Anniversary of the New Central Baptist Church at 2139 Lombard Street in Center City. This historic milestone was celebrated with a three-day revival, two Sunday services, and a banquet. Between services, the culinary ministry provided dinner to more than 150 members and guests in the fellowship hall.

Services were conducted by two distinguished guest preachers: Bishop George Jackson of the Citadel of Faith Fellowship Church, Thomasville, NC, for the morning service; and The Reverend Robert Paul, pastor of the Piney Grove Baptist Church, at the afternoon service.

Like most African American Baptist churches, the New Central Baptist Church had humble beginnings. In February 1904, Charles A. Blackwell set about founding a church, with seven people at the first meeting in the home of Sister Mariah Trent.

Soon their numbers grew; larger quarters were needed. The prayer group had grown substantially, but with only seven cents, the treasury had not. On March 30, 1904, Brother Blackwell used \$30 of his own funds to rent a storefront at 21st and Market Streets. There the church became officially organized, on May 5, 1905.

The present site at Lombard and Van Pelt Streets was purchased in 1922. During construction, services were held in the garage of the pastor's home at 2300 Lombard Street. The church was nicknamed "The Sawdust Pile" for the sawdust covering the cement floor of the garage. In 1925, the church began holding services in the basement of its present structure. The optimistic congregation anticipated an early completion of the sanctuary. However, the Great Depression made that impossible, so the church became known as "The Subway Church."

Continued p. 27



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With finances still precarious through the ensuing years, faithful members pulled together to ensure the completion of the structure. Some went so far as to put their homes up for mortgage. Under the leadership of The Reverend Augustus Habershaw, the building was completed. A “Thanksgiving and Mortgage Burning” service was held on May 3, 1963.

Throughout its remarkable history, New Central has played an active role in the community in its many ministries. One of the most noteworthy and unique was the first African American radio ministry in Philadelphia, broadcast Sunday evenings on WPEN.

The church sits at the juncture of one of Philadelphia’s wealthiest (19103) and

one of its poorest (19146) zip codes, in a neighborhood almost entirely gentrified. Many members travel great distances for Sunday services. As the church seeks to adapt to the times, it is reaching out to the surrounding neighborhood more and more.

The wellness ministry is among New Central’s latest, with a kick-off event in the form of a community-wide block party/wellness festival on the 2100 block of Lombard last fall. A screening of the movie *Fed Up* followed this spring. The Philadelphia School at 2501 Lombard partnered with the church on both events; church and school look forward to future partnership opportunities. The church has plans for a weekly wellness-support group and educational programs about heart disease and diabetes, among others. All wellness events will be open to the entire community.



New Central Baptist Church

The New Central Baptist Church is led by Bernard J. Reeves; Sister Marcella Reeves is First Lady. The church’s mission is to serve the community, and to approach all its endeavors with passion, purpose and principle. Sunday services are 11 a.m. All are welcome.

What’s Going On

CCRA Calendar—Hot Fun in the Summertime

Bloomsday

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

Little Friends Festival

Rittenhouse Square
Wednesday, June 17, 5:30 p.m.
Tickets required
<http://friendsofrittenhouse.org/events/all/>

Ball on the Square

Rittenhouse Square
Thursday, June 18, 7 p.m.
Tickets required
<http://friendsofrittenhouse.org/events/all/>

Young Friends Ball on the Square

Thursday, June 18, 8 p.m.
Tickets required
<http://friendsofrittenhouse.org/events/all/>

Discovering the Impressionists: Paul Durand-Ruel and the New Painting

Philadelphia Museum of Art
(Only American museum on this international tour)
Wednesday, June 24 to Sunday, September 13
www.philamuseum.org

Tall Ships Challenge

Delaware River Waterfront
Thursday, June 25 to Sunday, June 28
www.tallshipsphiladelphia.com

Bastille Day Festival at Eastern State Penitentiary

Reenactment of the Storming of the Bastille
2027 Fairmount Ave.
Saturday, July 11, 5:30 p.m. Free.
(VIP tickets online.)
<http://www.easternstate.org/bastille-day>

Sky-High Block Party

Pyramid Club
1735 Market St.
Tuesday, July 14, 6 to 8 p.m.
Free to CCRA members, but must pre-register
Check weekly eNewsletter for details

Summer Restaurant Weeks

Sunday, August 2 to Friday, August 7
Sunday, August 9 to Friday August 14
<http://www.centercityphila.org/life/RestaurantWeek.php>

The Philadelphia Young Pianists' Academy

Sponsored by Yun-Hsiang International Foundation
Curtis Institute of Music
Sunday, August 9 to Sunday, August 16
Concert schedule: <http://www.pypa.info/home-en.php>

Rittenhouse Square Fine Art Show

Friday, September 18, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Saturday, September 19, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Sunday, September 20, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

World Meeting of Families Congress

Tuesday, September 22 to
Friday, September 25
Pope’s Visit, Benjamin Franklin Parkway
Saturday, September 26 to
Sunday, September 27
<http://www.worldmeeting2015.org/>

Ongoing...

One Liberty Place Observation Deck opens

57th Floor, 16th & Chestnut Sts.
Summer 2015 – watch for news
www.montparnesse56usa.com

Boat to Bartram’s Gardens River Tour

Walnut Street Dock,
east bank of Schuylkill River
Beneath Walnut Street Bridge
<http://www.schuylkillbanks.org/events/boat-bartrams-garden-river-tour-0>

Architectural Tours

Philadelphia Center for Architecture
<http://philadelphiaca.org/architecture-tours>
Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia
<http://www.preservationalliance.com/what-we-do/architectural-walking-tour/>

DATES TO REMEMBER:

Tuesday, June 30

Street Scene Garden Contest Entries due
 (See below for other Contest dates/deadlines)

Tuesday, July 14, 6 to 8 pm

Sky-High Block Party
 Pyramid Club
 1735 Market St.
 Free to CCRA members, but must pre-register
 Check weekly eNewsletter for details

Monday, October 5, 5 to 7 pm

Elementary School Fair
 Franklin Institute

Sunday, October 18, 1 to 5 pm

57th Annual CCRA House Tour

Town Square

**CCRA Annual Meeting Welcomes
 New Officers & Directors**

At the Annual Meeting May 20, held at the Curtis Institute's Lenfest Hall, a new slate of officers and directors was elected, along with those whose terms were up for renewal. Taking over the reins as Board President from Jeffrey Braff, who served four years, is former Executive VP Maggie Mund. Pictured are: (kneeling) Frank Montgomery, Effie Babb; (middle) Dilek Karabucak, Pip Campbell, Judy Heller, Maggie Mund, Janet Bender, Ellen Chapman; (back) Harvey Sacks, Michael Axler, Wade Albert, Dan Keough, Mark Travis. (Not pictured: Walter Spencer, Barbara Halpern, Charles Goodwin, David Rose, Victoria Harris, Jacob Markovitz.) Following the vote was Vincent Feldman's fascinating slide presentation, based on his stunning and startling book *City Abandoned*, documenting Philadelphia's lost architectural heritage. Afterward, members enjoyed socializing over desserts and cheeses provided by Di Bruno Bros., at the beautiful, art-filled offices of Berger & Montague nearby.



Donna Strug

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GARDEN COMPETITION
 Separate residential and commercial categories

DIY - or do it yourself - done by the individual property owner or renter

Professional - done by a landscaping service or garden center

Gardens must be within CCRA boundaries and visible from the street, i.e. windowboxes, containers, street tree wells

PHOTO COMPETITION
 Open to all ages and experience levels

Promotional - photos that reflect the mission and purpose of CCRA and the Street Scene project

Artistic - maximum room for artistic expression and composition. These can include extreme close-ups and computer-generated effects to create compelling artistic compositions

June
 Garden contest
 Entries due by June 30

July
 Flower
 Photography Workshop
 July 11 - 10:00am at Schuylkill River Park Community Garden

Garden Judging
 People's Choice voting
 Notify Photographers of entries

August
 Photo contest
 Entries due by August 15

September
 Awards Ceremony
 Schuylkill River Park Community Garden

For more information or to register, go to centercityresidents.org



Artwork By Deena Flanagan