



# Spruce Hill Community Association

Fall 2007

257 S. 45th St., Phila. PA 19104

www.sprucehillca.org

215-349-7825



## Hark! Bark in the Park

Four-legged and two-legged creatures had fun in the sun at the 16<sup>th</sup> annual Bark in the Park in Clark Park on Saturday, Oct. 7. Sponsored by Friends of Clark Park, the dogfest showed off the best features and talents – or lack thereof – of canines big, small, tall, curly, shiny, old, young, barky, and silly. Ella Serpell and her Australian terrier Kiwi (above) won the owner-dog look-alike contest. Robin, owned by Lisa Bender, won the longest tail, although it was close. David Littlejohn (below), the veterinarian at O’Neal Animal Hospital measures the tail of a runner-up.



## Playground Plan on the Upswing

This summer, the Education Committee made exciting progress on a number of initiatives that would benefit the two elementary schools in Spruce Hill.

Wilson School, at 46th and Woodland Avenue, lacks an adequate play area for its students. For several years, our committee has tried to figure out how to spearhead an effort to design and raise funds for a large capital project.

Realizing we needed advice, our committee enlisted several community members who have experience in building playspaces: Ben Jacobs, board member at St. Mary’s Nursery School; Andrea Mosko, executive director of St. Mary’s Nursery School; and Jeanne Vissa, professor of education at Penn’s Graduate School of Education. In addition, we registered with KaBOOM!, a national non-profit organization that provides guidance and challenge grants to groups building community playspaces.

Next, committee member Mary Goldman and I met with Wilson School principal Sonya Harrison to present our findings and discuss reviving a playground initiative. Ms. Harrison decided to use Wilson’s Back-to-School night to unveil our proposal.

Parents and school staff members greeted it enthusiastically. Some of them volunteered to help with the next steps, as did the Southwest Community Enrichment Center. The formal planning phase of the playground project will begin this month, followed by fundraising

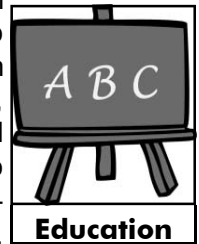
and networking in 2008, and, if that goes well, construction no later than 2010.

The Education Committee is also working to re-open Wilson’s library, which was closed several years ago due to school district budget cuts. We are talking with Drexel University officials about creating an internship that would enable Drexel library science students to staff the Wilson library. Drexel is very interested, and we hope to launch the program by the end of this year.

Meanwhile, at Penn Alexander School, our committee is recruiting volunteers to help head librarian Jayne Downing with clerical duties. We’re also investigating raising funds to create an audio/visual collection and replace the aging Mac computer workstations that run the circulation database. Finally, we are looking for ways to help preserve the school’s art program, which suffered staff cuts over the summer.

Our committee’s agenda is ambitious, and we welcome help. If you have experience in a school library, in playground design, in grant-writing — or want more information about volunteer opportunities — please contact either Mary Goldman (marygoldman@verizon.net) or Ariel Richmond-Parks (arielrp@sas.upenn.edu).

Ariel Richmond-Parks  
Co-chair, Education Committee



## Community Calendar



### Halloween Tot Parade

**What:** Spruce Hill's annual Halloween Tot Parade

**When:** Wed., Oct. 31 at 4:30 pm.

**Where:** Gather at the flagpole in Clark Park. We'll parade along Baltimore Ave. to 44th St., then to Larchwood, and will eventually end up on Little Osage (the 4300 block of Osage).

**Info or to volunteer:** Bruce Andersen at 215-387-3887

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### Fall Block Cleanups

**What:** Sprucing up Spruce Hill

**When:** Sat. Oct. 27 and Sat., Dec. 8

**Supplies:** Contact Rich Guffanti [richguffanti@yahoo.com] at least one week before the cleanup. He will arrange for trash bags and other supplies to be delivered Friday night or Saturday morning and will notify the University City District to pick up the trash.

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### Safety Forum

**What:** SHCA Safety Committee is looking for volunteers to help plan a community forum on safety in the neighborhood.

**Info or to volunteer:** Bruce Andersen at 215-387-3887

## New Green Line Café gets Green Light

The commercial corner at 45<sup>th</sup> and Locust is about to get a facelift that we believe will be a win for the neighbors and Spruce Hill.

The building has been bought by Green Line Café owners Doug Whitmer and Dan Thut and

their partners. On the first floor, they plan to house a new Green Line Café, offering entertainment and the sale of newspapers, magazines, etc. The apartments on the upper floor will be rented.

The zoning committee approved the application on Oct. 2, requesting a stipulation: that the live entertainment be reconsidered after five years. That provision would give the community some control over unforeseen changes, such as the property being sold.

### In other matters, the committee:

❖ Approved the use of a fourth floor as part of a renovation of a three-unit building. The new owner plans to live in this building. We concluded that his architectural design would create more livable space without altering the building's exterior appearance from

the street. A decision is pending at the city zoning board.

❖ Reviewed plans for enlarging the Lubavitch House at 4032 Spruce St. This house, a gathering place for Penn's Jewish students, wants to expand to its twin next door. After rejecting an initial design that altered the façade, we approved drawings that kept the exterior in harmony with nearby houses, while creating interior space for common meals on the Sabbath and religious holidays. The zoning hearing is on Oct. 10.

❖ Reviewed proposed "pods" – reserved parking spaces — for Philly Car Share, a program growing rapidly in Spruce Hill. Based on our research, SHCA president Cindy Roberts wrote a letter of support for these locations: 40<sup>th</sup> and Chestnut, NW corner in front of 4001 Chestnut (2 spaces); 40<sup>th</sup> and Walnut, NW corner in front of Metropolitan Bakery; 41<sup>st</sup> and Chester, SW corner (2 spaces); 41<sup>st</sup> and Walnut, NW corner (1 space); 43<sup>rd</sup> and Osage, SW corner (1 space); 44<sup>th</sup> and Chestnut, mid-block in front of Kaffa Crossing (1 space); 500 S. 45<sup>th</sup> at SW corner of 45<sup>th</sup> and Larchwood.

Barry Grossbach,  
Chair, Zoning Committee



## A Noteworthy Concert

Ahhhh, summer. The Philadelphia Orchestra drew a big crowd to Clark Park on July 21<sup>st</sup> for a free concert sponsored by the University City District. The event was part of the tenth anniversary celebration of the UCD, the non-profit organization that works to provide a clean and safe environment "Left of Center."

Photo credit : University City District/ Conrad Erb

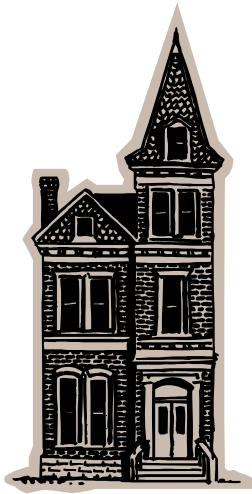


# Apply to Get Expert Advice for Improving Your Old House

Most buildings in West Philadelphia are more than a hundred years old. While architectural character and history help draw many people to the area, older properties can be technically and financially tough to maintain.

For the second year in a row, the University City Historical Society (UCHS) is sponsoring a Technical Assistance Program in partnership with the local American Institute of Architects. The program provides property owners two hours of consultation with an architect or building preservation expert. The expert will evaluate the exterior of the property and offer advice on issues such as foundations and

drainage, roofing and gutters, porch repair and painting. Each consultation is followed by a written report outlining the professional's findings. UCHS also has a referral list of contractors and suppliers who can offer free estimates.



benefit of membership in the University City Historical Society. The annual fee is \$20 for households or \$10 for seniors.

Applications for the assistance program are due by Oct. 15, 2007. If you're chosen, there is a \$25 registration fee. Because the program is limited by the number of participating building professionals, the historical society will select applicants with the greatest need.

For information or an application, go to [www.uchs.net](http://www.uchs.net), or email [info@uchs.net](mailto:info@uchs.net), or call (215) 387-3019.

Greg Donofrio  
University City Historical Society Board

The technical consultation is a

**Have you ever thought "If only I had the right tool for this project" or "I can't buy (or store) another tool"?**

**Then join the West Philly Tool Library, a new non-profit organization located at 4620 Woodland Ave. Community members can borrow a variety of hand, power, and garden tools to fix up homes, maintain yards, build furniture.**

**The Tool Library is modeled on the two dozen such programs that now operate in cities across the country. You can join the library for only \$20 per year and borrow as many tools as you need for up to one week at a time. We're sponsored by the Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition (GPUAC) and are now open on Saturday mornings.**

**For more information, to become a member, or to donate tools, call 215-833-3190 or visit our website, [westphillytools.org](http://westphillytools.org).**





## Spotlight On...

### Kaffa Crossing

Yonas Kebede, 40, grew up in Ethiopia. He came here eleven years ago to attend Temple University and become a software engineer.

He had never run a business when he decided to buy a property and open Kaffa Crossing Café. His dream was to join the Fair Trade movement, which aims to help marginalized artisans and farmers around the world. A “fair” price not only covers these producers’ costs, but includes a profit that enables them to improve their standard of living.

Opened in 2004, Kaffa Crossing

offers fair-trade coffee beans, specialty lattes, spiced teas, and arts and crafts, all from Ethiopia. It’s also a place to enjoy the fusion of old and new. The breakfast menu includes scrambled eggs and Ful (a spiced crushed fava bean dip served with bread). Lunch and dinner include Ethiopian beef, poultry and lamb dishes, as well as grilled chicken Caesar salad and veggie tuna salad.

Kaffa Crossing offers live music, art shows, meeting space, and free WiFi (or 5 minutes of free Internet on the café’s computer).

Wondering where the name came from? As the menu explains, legend has it that coffee was first discovered in 850 A.D. by a goat herder in Kaffa, a region in South-eastern Ethiopia.

**Where:** 4423 Chestnut St.



**Hours:** Mon-Fri, 9 a.m.-9 p.m.  
Sat, 10 a.m.-10 p.m., Sun. 10 a.m.-9p.m.

**Phone:** 215-386-0504

**Website:** [www.kaffacrossing.com/coffeeshop.html](http://www.kaffacrossing.com/coffeeshop.html)

## Is a Mural Better than Historic Preservation?

The city’s Mural Arts Program has transformed many blank, bleak walls into works of art, often fostering neighborhood renewal in the process.

But what if a proposed mural would cover up architectural features that were once beautiful – and could be again? Wouldn’t the planning, networking, and fund-raising that go into a mural project (groups that want a mural may have to contribute thousands of dollars toward the considerable cost) be better spent on historic restoration?

Those questions were at the heart of concerns about a mural that the Ethiopian Community Center proposed for its building at 44th and Chestnut. I live about a block away on Sansom and was a latecomer to the debate, which began last year.

The center envisioned a panoramic painting that would depict

### From the Editor



Ethiopia’s proud and important history. The city’s Mural Arts Program was enthusiastic. The mural was to cover the center’s block-long wall on 44th Street, which is currently an unsightly muddle of partly-painted brick, boarded windows, and America’s favorite cover-up – aluminum siding. (My understanding is that much of this remuddling was done by previous owners of the building, which once housed a pharmacy.)

Neighbors who opposed the mural — including me — pointed out that the building has historically significant brickwork, the same intricate patterns that can be seen on restored

houses on Chestnut and Sansom Streets. They argued that covering up a huge swath of that brickwork with a mural would kill any chance for historic restoration in the future, because the cost of removing so much paint would be prohibitive.

At a neighborhood meeting I attended last month, that argument won out over various compromise proposals. Tilhun Amera, head of the Ethiopian Center, decided to pull the plug on the mural proposal. Mural Arts Program director Jane Golden concurred.

The good news is that Mr. Amera said he’d like to see information on historic preservation that one of the mural opponents offered to send him.

Marie McCullough  
Editor, SHCA News

# Annual Meeting and Board Elections

If you want to talk about community issues and what you can do to make Spruce Hill a better place for all, then join us at the annual Membership Meeting of the Spruce Hill Community Association, 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 13. (The location is to be announced.)



President's Corner

All residents of Spruce Hill and neighboring communities are welcome and encouraged to attend. The annual meeting is a time to brainstorm about neighborhood concerns, while informing each other about important issues. While the meeting is open, only SHCA members may vote in association elections. So come and join or renew your membership!

If you're interested in joining the Spruce Hill board or one of its committees, please contact President Cindy Roberts [cf.roberts@verizon.net]. The nominating committee has begun its work and is seeking recommendations from neighbors.

## Block Representative Network

We're looking for more volunteers to strengthen the block rep network throughout Spruce Hill (38<sup>th</sup> to 46<sup>th</sup> Street, Market Street to Woodland Avenue). What does it take to be a block rep?

- Be willing to introduce yourself to neighbors on your block.
- Distribute flyers for block cleanups or other Spruce Hill activities
- Set up an e-mail list or phone tree for neighbors on your block
- Act as the "eyes and ears" for the community, alerting SHCA both to concerns – and examples of neighbors helping neighbors – on your block

If you would like to be a block rep or find out who your block rep is, contact SHCA Vice President Ed Halligan [Edward.Halligan@courts.phila.gov]

Cindy Roberts, President, SHCA

# Looking Ahead to Block Grant Deadline

You have plenty of time if you get started now! The next application deadline for a SHCA block grant is Jan. 21.

Grants of up to \$500 for a single block (up to \$1,200 for cooperating blocks) are given to improve the encourage the maintenance and renewal of street trees, the creation of community and front yard gardens, and other streetscape improvements. Applicants must match the grant amount through volunteer "sweat equity," in-kind materials or services, or cash donations.

For more information and an application, go to: [www.sprucehillca.org/activities.html](http://www.sprucehillca.org/activities.html)

# Philly Fellows Bid Farewell, and Thanks

Philly Fellows was founded about two years ago to offer one-year, post-graduate fellowships to selected seniors at partnering colleges and universities in the region. Top grads get the opportunity to work at Philadelphia's arts, cultural, educational and social services agencies.

The fledgling program used the Spruce Hill Community Center at 257 South 45th Street as its headquarters until this summer, when it moved to an office on Market Street. Here is a thank-you from the co-directors Tim Ifill and Matt Joyce:

*For over two years, Philly Fellows has operated out of the Spruce Hill Center thanks to the generosity of the SHCA. We are extremely grateful to have had the opportunity to set up a small office here and we cannot overstate how important it has been to our organization. Our time in Spruce Hill has been extremely productive. Last summer we launched the fellowship program with 15 outstanding graduates of area colleges. These fellows have made huge contributions to the Philadelphia community. They each work fulltime at a partnering nonprofit in the city, building capacity and starting up new programs. Our first successful fellowship year is winding down, and in a few weeks the next group of 15 dedicated young people will begin their year of service to Philadelphia.*

*We have enjoyed being part of the Spruce Hill community and will certainly miss having our home base here. Thank you once again for sharing your space with us.*

## Clip 'n Save Clip 'n Save Clip 'n Save Clip 'n Save

- | University City district graffiti removal: 243 0555 x236.
- | UC vehicle assistance: 387 3942
- | Abandoned car removal: 683-2277
- | Sewer inlet cleaning: 685-6300
- | Appliance pick-up or uncollected trash: 686-5560
- | Litter enforcement/ illegal dumping 685-3097
- | Recycling hotline: 685-7329
- | Free anti-graffiti supplies: 685-9556
- | Street lighting: 686-5610
- | Barking dogs: 426-6300
- | PECO emergency services: 800-494-1000
- | Licenses & Inspections: 686-2463
- | Sanitation police: 685-3096 or online: [www.ppdonline.org/rpts/rpts\\_sanitation.php](http://www.ppdonline.org/rpts/rpts_sanitation.php)





**Spruce Hill Community Association  
257 South 45th Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19104**



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## **Spruce Hill Community Association News**

**Spruce Hill Community Association is a volunteer organization of neighbors working together to preserve, protect and improve the area from Market Street to Woodland Avenue, and from 38th to 46th Streets.**

**For more information,  
Call: 215-349-7825  
Visit: [www.sprucehillca.org](http://www.sprucehillca.org)**