



Spruce Hill Community Association

Summer 2007

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

www.sprucehillca.org

215-349-7825

Community Calendar



Prune Trees on Your Block

What: UCGreen's pruning club will meet Mondays from 6:30-8 p.m. to trim trees. Volunteers should bring eye protection and a sharp saw if you have them.

Where and When: July 16 – meet on SW corner 43rd & Pine Sts; July 30 - meet on SW corner 43rd & Osage Ave.

Information: Call Winnie Harris, 215-573-4684. And if you're interested in becoming a Tree Tender, contact Mindy Maslin at the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, 215-988-8844 or mmaslin@pennhort.org

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Beat the Heat with Jazz

What: Free jazz concert featuring The Nate Murray Band

When: Aug. 24 at noon

Where: SW corner of 40th and Market Sts. Sponsored by: Partnership CDC, Friends of 40th St, West/ Southwest NAC

Information: 215-662-1612



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The Philadelphia Orchestra

What: The Orchestra's free concert. The Spanish-themed music will include Chabrier's Espana, a suite from Bizet's Carmen, and Ravel's Bolero.

When: July 21 at 7 p.m.

Where: Clark Park, 43rd and Chester

Information: 215-893-1988 or www.philorch.org/neighborhood

Saving Single-Family Housing

Spruce Hill's stock of large houses and its proximity to three universities has made it a victim of real estate investors who buy up single-family houses and turn them into lucrative rooming houses.

Recently, the zoning committee successfully fought one aspiring rooming-house operator. But the fight may not be over.

At issue were two outstanding, well-maintained Victorian twins on Spruce Street – one at 4522, the other at 4234. Neither are zoned for multi-family use.

A young woman bought both properties, assuring each of the sellers that she would occupy the houses. When rumors first surfaced about her real intentions at 4522, I

personally contacted her and she assured me that she had no intention of violating zoning laws. She said that she would be living in the house with one or two medical student schoolmates.

Nine students were later renting at 4522, each probably paying several hundred dollars a month.

After the zoning committee complained to Licenses and Inspections, the owner applied to the city Zoning Board for permission to rent the properties as three-family dwellings. This would have allowed up

to nine unrelated individuals to legally occupy each property.

We emphatically urged the Zoning Board to reject the applications. With a home-owning population hovering around 20%, Spruce Hill is trying



desperately to hold on to its single-family housing stock, especially within the enrollment area of the Penn-Alexander School, which is a huge draw for young families. Both Spruce Street properties were within the school's "catchment" boundaries -- with 4234 directly across the street from the school.



Left twin is 4522 Spruce Street

The applicant apparently recognized what she was up against. The application was dismissed because she failed to return to the Zoning Board after it granted her a continuance.

But now, it's up to neighbors to monitor activity at these properties. If current zoning is not being adhered to, we can take action – again.

On a more upbeat note, the zoning committee dealt with a perennially difficult and contentious issue ---

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Thanks to All Who Made the 49th May Fair a Success

Donations of time, talents, raffle gifts, and funding made this year's May Fair in Clark Park a big success. It was a beautiful day in the neighborhood!

If we've left your name off the following lists, please forgive us. You have our sincere gratitude – and we look forward to your help next year as the May Fair marks half a century!

Bob Behr, Barry Grossbach, Ed Halligan, Judy Powers and Mark Wagenveld made up the core May Fair Committee. Joined by Richard King, they made it to the park bright and early to begin setting up tables and organizing the fair. Rose Halligan did a fantastic job with the bake sale; Susana Fattorini helped with all the phone calls and Madelain Romera, Dr. Vaughn Roosevelt and Val Berry all worked at the bake sale table. Special thanks to our neighborhood bakers (Rose was so busy she doesn't have the list!!). Nancy Juergens set up handwashing stations to keep us in compliance with city health codes.

Ben Jacobs and Keally McBride continued our literary tradition with the used books table. Fran Byers continued our culinary tradition with sweet and tangy lemon sticks. Rich Guffanti continued our tradition of youthful delight at the "fish pond." We are especially grateful to Rich for the many years he has handled children's games. He says he is hanging up his toy fishing pole and Mark Young has volunteered to organize the games next year. We don't have all the names, but we appreciate all the efforts of our children's games crew!

Bookkeeper Ursula Bucki and board member Elaine Nelson sold raffle tickets and made change. Honorary treasurer Mark Mills ably assisted SHCA Treasurer Judy Powers as we raised more than \$6,000 to support the work of the association in the coming year. We also distributed 75 large recycling containers to eager "customers" and easily could have given away 100 more. A tip of the hat goes to the University City District for helping with fair security and giving us a ride back to the Spruce Hill Center to pick up more recycling containers!

Angela McIver, Fran Byers, Mark Wagenveld, Marie McCullough, Bob Behr, Jim Lilly, Monica Ferguson, Steve McCoubrey, Ed Halligan, Bill Burrison,

and Judy Powers solicited gift certificates and raffle items.

And we are soooooo grateful to the local businesses who supported us with raffle prizes, especially University Pinball, which donated grand prizes. Thanks to Ben & Jerry's, Best House Pizza, Café Fier One, Colonial Pizza, Fiesta Pizza, Flex-Car, Fresh Grocer, Green Line Café, Hare Brothers, House of Our Own, Last Word Bookstore, Lee's Hoagie House, Marathon Grill, The Marvelous, Metropolitan Bakery, Michael's Custom Cuts, Modern Eye, Monarch Hardware, Nan, Pattaya Grill, Rx, Saad's Halal, Saturn Club, Strikes, and White Dog Café.

Just as the fair was ending, the heavens opened up with a May shower, but it didn't stop our intrepid cleanup crew – Bob, Barry, Mark, Ed, Marie McCullough, Nancy Juergens and Dan Morton. Thanks to Lew Mellman of Friends of Clark Park for supplying trash bags so that we could completely empty all of the trash containers and leave the park free of litter.

And last but not least, thanks for donations to the Spruce Hill Community Trust:

Benefactors (\$250 and above): Campus Apartments, Herman Realty Group, National Amusements Inc., New Horizons Housing LLC, PECO Energy, Holly Pittman, Posel Management Company, The Restaurant School, Chip Staddon & Marcie Robb, University City District, University City Science Center, Vincent Goffredo Plumbing, Kathleen White & Erwin Miller

Patrons (\$100 - \$249): Linda Blythe,

Central City Toyota, Mary Goldman, Mike Hardy & Barry Grossbach, Marja Hoek Smit and Joannes Hoek, HMS School for Children with Cerebral Palsy, Melani Lamond & Brian Fatigan, Andrew & Lynn Lees, Michael Levin, Joseph E. Lowry & Vanessa Albert Lowry, Mr. & Mrs. Joseph S. Moloznik, Louis H. Porter, Cindy Roberts & Dan Biddle, Murray Dubin & Libby Rosof, Larry Starkman, Joan Weiner.

Supporters (\$50 - \$99): Betty Allen, Rose Amendolia, David Othmer & Maureen Barden, Katharine Beals & David Musto, Gary & Fay Beauchamp, Frank & Linda Chance, Scott & Nancy Geryk, Ed & Rose Halligan, Conrad & Lois Hamerman, Frank Innes & Mary Brewster, Amy Johnson & Ed Brady, Nancy Juergens & Bob Behr, Ann Elizabeth Mayer, Jean & Dan McCoubrey, Mark Wagenveld & Theresa Mond, Parent-Infant Center, Patricia Pickup, Judy Powers & Nancy Hanrahan, Scott Reynolds & Melinda Yin, Sissy Rogers & Peggy Stone, Joe & Nancy Ruane, Thomas & Whitney Van Dean.

Friends (\$25 - \$49): Bellweather LLC, Fran Byers, Linda Cook, Mary Daniels, Melvyn Freid, Gusztav & Reiko Gaspar, Bob & Geraldine Giuntoli, Abby & Jacob Gray, Intellectual Pursuit Inc., Deborah Juergens, Dean & Nancy Khan, Joseph H. Knox, David Koppisch & Bridget Lessner, Janis Laurie & Jeremy Steinberg, James Martin, Jackie McCrea, Brian & Dylan Yachyshen, Ruth Mellman, Heiner & Gisela Moehren, Greg Montanaro, Pfefferkorn Family, Michele Richman, Gloria, Jim & Ebonne Ruffins, Jim & Sharon Smith, Jacob Soll, T.J. Stokes, Anne Thomforde, Thomas & Lee Garner, Pauline Yeh, Janet Finin.

Cindy Roberts
SHCA President



President's Corner



PhillyCarShare, the non-profit community-based organization dedicated to reducing automobile dependence and environmental impacts, is offering grants of \$250 to \$500 to eligible groups. These include neighborhood associations, friends of parks, garden clubs and other community-based organizations.

Groups may apply for grants for the purchase of cleaning tools, playground equipment, parking and planning studies, bicycle safety programs, and much more.

For more information and a grant application, email Stephanie Krueel at stepanie@phillycarshare.org. Or call her at 215-730-0988 x 116.



Spotlight On... Apartments on Chestnut

It's a long way from Albania to the 4400 block of Chestnut Street, but fortunately for Spruce Hill, Duka Ramiz and Hysni Sylja are comfortable in both worlds.

Their contracting company, United GC LLC, spent the past year transforming ornate but blighted properties that had been slated for demolition. The rehabilitated buildings, at 4447, 4445 and 4443 Chestnut St., have been turned into 15 rental units – studio, one-bedroom and two-bedroom apartments – with air conditioning, washer-dryers, dishwashers, granite countertops, hardwood floors and a wall of



sealed, exposed brick.

The exterior of the finished properties is now an off-white stucco, with decorative molding around the windows and handsome balustrades along the porches.

The owners are now working to renovate the rest of the complex for commercial use.

A grand opening is still in the works – and the owners welcome suggestions for a fitting name for the edifice. Chestnut Towers, anyone?

What: Rental apartments, priced from \$950-\$1,400 per month.

Where: 4441-47 Chestnut St.

Phone: 800-707-7663

In each issue of SHCA news, we spotlight a relatively new, unknown, or under-appreciated endeavor in Spruce Hill. Send your suggestions to:

mmcullough@phillynews.com

Zoning Matters

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namely, parking – and found common ground.

Usually, we do not approve requests from property owners who want to make curb cuts for off-street parking. Not only do we understand the undercurrent of hysteria that accompanies any discussion of eliminating parking spaces on the street, we're leery of setting a precedent that could lead to other requests for curb cuts.

But the owners of 224 St. Marks Square requested parking on a side yard that faced Locust Street, where neighboring houses already have garages. For that reason, most neighbors were not opposed to the proposal.

We reviewed detailed drawings for an off-street parking enclosure, and were given assurances that certain aesthetics and drainage issues would be addressed. We gave our approval for the off-street parking – as did the city's Zoning Board.

Barry Grossbach, Chair
Spruce Hill Zoning Committee

From the Editor



It's interesting to see how people react when my husband or I ask them not to litter.

Ever since moving to the 4400 block of Sansom Street 18 months ago, Dan and I have waged a civility war against litter and illegal trash dumping.

We fought the same war in an affluent 'burbs where we lived across the street from a dumping ground, also known as a community football field.

In our new neighborhood, litter and trash may seem like trivial problems compared to the guns and drugs that were endemic not long ago. But it's not trivial. So with like-minded neighbors, we have distributed flyers explaining trash collection rules, riffled through garbage bags to find a clue to the owner, filed sanitation violations against contractors, and picked up enough daily doorstep detritus to fill several dumpsters.

This has had a modest but cumulative effect. Trash begets trash, but the converse is also true: lack of trash deters littering, or

at least makes some people think twice.

Confronting a litterbug in flagrante takes tact.

"Excuse me, sir, did you lose this?"

Dan asks as he picks up some ickiness and runs after the slob.

Adults almost invariably mumble, "Oh, yeah, um, sorry." Not kids.

At the tot lot on our corner, youngsters no older than nine asked Dan what planet he was from, or words to that effect, when he suggested they pick up litter at their feet and drop it in a trash can five feet away.

I pondered all this while reading a recent Inquirer story about Mr. Trash, the tuxedoed, 22-year-old mascot of the Camden Riversharks. He dances onto the field, then whips out a garbage bag and goes through the stands. A photo showed a little boy and his mother grinning like lottery winners as they tossed what would otherwise have been left under their seats.

Mr. Trash and whoever thought him up are my heroes. But as a society, it's sad that we need to be entertained into doing the right thing.

Marie McCullough
Editor, SHCA News



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



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**