



Spruce Hill Community Association

Spring 2009

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

www.sprucehillca.org

215-349-7825

Community Calendar



May Fair Almost Here

Block Clean Ups

What: UCD will provide garbage bags and collect them after the clean up

When: Sat., April 4, 9 am.- 2 p.m.

UCD contact: Dexter Bryant:
dexter@ucity.org

SHCA contact: Rich Guffanti:
richguffanti@yahoo.com

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Spring Plant Sale

What: The Parent Infant Center's annual plant sale. Benefits scholarship fund. Annuals, perennials, bedding plants, herbs, vegetables, hanging baskets (Pre-order deadline is April 13, but walk-in shoppers welcome.)

When: Fri, May 1, 3-6 pm. Sat, May 2, 10 am-3 p.m.

Where: Church, 42nd and Spruce Sts.

Bonus sale: Locust Walk, Friday, May 1, 11 am – 2pm.

Info: www.parentinfocenter.org



Arts League

What: Annual auction

When: May 2. Preview dinner, 6-7 p.m. Auction, 7-10 p.m.

Tickets: \$10 adults, \$5 children

Also: Check out classes for adults, teens and tots

Info: www.ucartsleague.org or 215-382-7811

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Lenten Concert

What: Cathedral Singers and guest musicians perform works by Johannes Brahms, John Taverner, Henri Tomasi and others.

When: Friday, April 3, 7 p.m.

(continued on page 2)

Spring is here and it's time to mark your calendar for the 51st annual Spruce Hill Community Association May Fair on **Saturday, May 9th, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.** As always, it will be in Clark Park on Baltimore Avenue.

Please join us for great food, music, and fun activities for the kids. It's also a great place to do some shopping from local merchants who offer unique goods and services. There's a terrific book sale and bake sale, and a raffle with spectacular prizes.

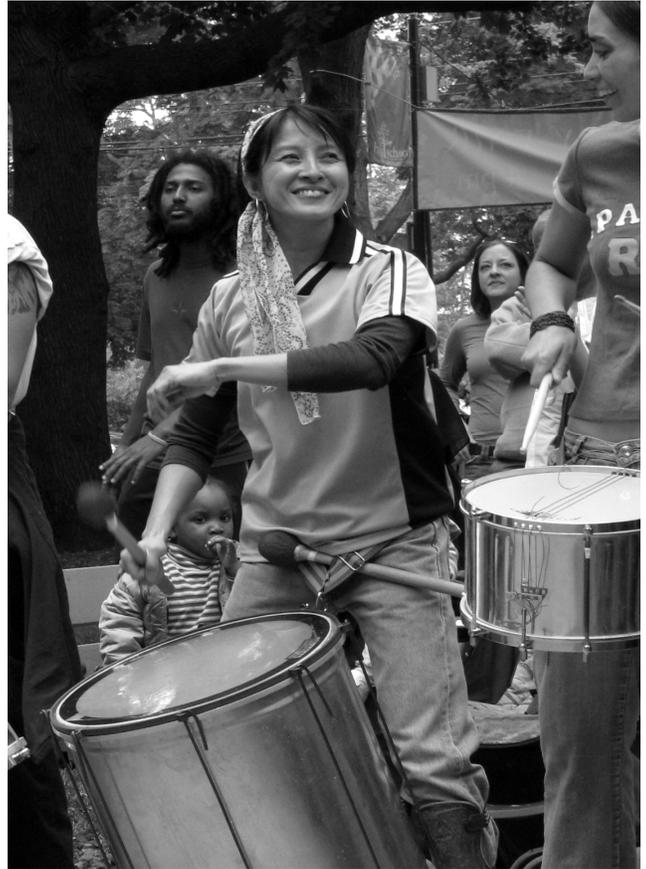
Of course, you probably already know all this, and recognize the special purpose of this neighborhood event: This is the association's major fundraiser and all proceeds go toward activities such as block clean ups, beatification projects, public safety initiatives, and support for neighborhood schools and parks.

The first May Fair in 1958 was an effort by Spruce Hill residents to address what they saw as the beginnings of neighborhood deterioration. These urban renewal pioneers launched a wonderful annual event.

As residents of that same vibrant, diverse, and certainly unique community, please do your part to make this celebration successful.

If you or someone you know would like to be a vendor at the fair, contact Mark Wagenveld: 215-386-8438 or mwagenveld@sprucehillca.org.

If you have a general question regarding the fair, please contact me at



Having fun at last year's May Fair

ehalligan@sprucehill.org or 215-222-2997.

See you at the fair!

Ed Halligan

SHCA President

Books to Go

Here's an easy way to do some Spring cleaning, and donate to the Mayfair book table at the same time: Just put aside old books you want to get rid of (no textbooks, please) and contact me. Don't have a box? No problem. I'll bring containers, load your unwanted tomes, and take them away! Marie McCullough at 215-222-3640 or mmccullough@sprucehillca.org.

Community Calendar



Where: Philadelphia Episcopal Cathedral, 3723 Chestnut St.

Info: 215-386-0234 or www.philadelphiacathedral.org

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Studio 34 Happenings

What: Live music performances by Dan Crook and Emily Bate

When: Fri, April 17, 8 p.m.

What: Movement, yoga and vocalization based on dance therapy

Where: Studio 34, 4522 Baltimore Ave.

Info: 215.387.3434 or www.studio34yoga.com



Gardening Series

What: Learn about gardens for flowers, fragrances and foods

When: April 4, 6, 8, at various times

Where: Various sites

Sponsor: Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, 100 N. 20th St.

Info: 215.988.8800 or pennsylvaniahorticulturalsociety.org

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Spring Into Your Park

What: Cleanups, plus flea markets, plant sales and music festivals in our local parks.

When: Sat., April 18, 9 a.m. – 2p.m.

Info: 215.988.8800 or pennsylvaniahorticulturalsociety.org



What's Rite for this Site?

The Spruce Hill zoning committee is currently involved in discussions about uses for the vacant Rite Aid site at 43rd and Walnut Street.

Soon after the Rite Aid shut down, the site was proposed for a "premium" state wine and spirits shop. Although SHCA endorsed that idea, the city's Zoning Board rejected it. Subsequently, Trader Joe's considered opening a new grocery store at the site, but concluded the area "does not fit our current business model" — whatever that means.

To generate some income from the site, the owners proposed a flea market with indoor and some outdoor vendors as a temporary use until a permanent operation could be identified. The zoning committee held two meetings with the owners and nearby residents and businesses, and concluded that a flea market definitely would *not* be an appropriate use.



The former Rite Aid near 43rd and Walnut

The owners urged neighbors to suggest uses that might find broad community support. Residents on St. Marks Square have been collecting such suggestions. Naturally, the current economic downturn is not helping efforts to fill this and a few other unoccupied business sites in Spruce Hill.

Another ongoing issue is the application of the Mill Creek Tavern, 4200 Chester Ave, to create a second-floor exterior deck fronting on Chester Avenue. The proprietor wants to extend food and bar service to the outdoors, although he says he would not extend the (loud) music that is played on tavern's first floor.

At least a dozen protestors appeared at the tavern's initial hearing before the Zoning Board. The tavern's attorney requested a postponement so he could prepare to cross-examine protestors and other witnesses. A zoning hearing was scheduled for March 25. By the time you read this, a decision may well have been handed down. I'll give an update in the next newsletter.

Nearby residents, the University of the Sciences, and SHCA are united in opposition to any exterior expansion, because Mill Creek's existing late-night music venue has negatively affected the quality of life in that neighborhood. Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell supports the neighborhood, and her office's legal counsel, John Christmas, is representing opponents.

Finally, I should mention the recent demolition of the run-down but architecturally significant house at 4224 Baltimore Ave. After discovering that a demolition permit had been issued, the zoning committee and the University City Historical Society tried to intervene and hold off the wrecking ball. Unfortunately, we discovered that the community had no legal recourse, and all appeals to the "better nature" of the owners fell on deaf ears. Councilwoman Blackwell's office also struck out.

The notion that historically valuable buildings that are not in danger of collapse can simply be torn down without community notice or input seems absurd. One encouraging bit of fallout: my conversations with the city's Department of Licenses and Inspections led the Deputy Commissioner to agree to meet with the zoning committee and some historical society members to discuss the permit process and steps that might be taken to keep history from repeating itself. That meeting is scheduled for March 24. I'll report on it next time.

Barry Grossbach, Chair
Chair, Spruce Hill Zoning Committee



Kids Corner a Blank Spot in UC

The vast, un-neighborly, unattractive brick wall that is the CVS storefront at 43rd and Locust Streets will soon be transformed into a mural designed to honor WXPN's children's radio program "Kids Corner."

WXPN is sponsoring the mural, created by artist David McShane of the city's Mural Arts Program. His design – a retro-looking boom-box with bubbles blaring from the speaker – will incorporate contributions from kids at five public and private schools, including the Penn Alexander School across the street.

The youngsters are painting large panels of polyester cloth that will be glued onto the wall to fill in the bub-

bles. The technology is relatively new, McShane recently told the Spruce Hill board, and it enables much of the mural to be painted on cloth at an indoor location and then "installed" outdoors.

CVS manager Charles Allen and some of his customers were initially concerned that the mural's colors were too dark. But David "brought a more accurate picture of the mural. The actual one is brighter and more vibrant than the picture I received by email," Mr. Allen said.

The mural should be finished in early April, the manager said.

And the neighborhood will be cordially invited to a dedication ceremony!

This rendering doesn't do justice to the mural that will soon appear here



An Update on Bike Sharing

In January, Bike Share Philadelphia (BSP) set up a demonstration of a bike-sharing station in University City and Center City. Despite the cold, quite a few people tried out the bikes, the locking carrels and the payment kiosks.

So when will this city have "public use bicycling," an eco-friendly, low-cost transportation system that Mayor Nutter endorses?

BSP, a coalition of supporters of bike sharing, are awaiting a feasibility study commissioned by City Council last June, said Russell

Meddin, a leader of BSP. The study is expected to be completed in August.

Meanwhile, he said, BSP is working "to keep bike sharing prominent in people's mind."

"We will probably have another demonstration during the summer, but with another manufacturer of bike share equipment," Meddin emailed. "We will have tables with information about public use bicycling at many of the area's Earth Day events" this month.

For more information, check out www.bikesharephiladelphia.org/takeaction



Get a Block Grant!

To improve our "streetscapes," the SHCA offers Block Improvement Grants for planting and maintenance of street trees, front gardens and community gardens.



Grants up to \$500 are awarded for a single block, and up to \$1,200 for cooperating adjacent blocks. The grants must be matched through volunteer "sweat equity," donations of materials and services, cash donations -- or all of these. Funds for the grant program come from the Association's membership dues and fundraising events such as the May Fair.

Start planning now to take part in the next round of awards; applications are due in June.

For more information and an application visit www.sprucehillca.org and look under activities.

Preservation Grants

The Neighborhood Preservation Project is offering grants to support community-driven efforts that recognize and preserve the distinctive historic character of neighborhoods. Two organizations will each be awarded a \$1500 grant to assist in accomplishing their project.

The competition is open to non-profit 501c3 organizations including: community associations, civic organizations, friends' groups and community development corporations.

Possible projects: a brochure promoting your neighborhood; historic research to support a designation effort; or the restoration of a unique architectural feature.

Proposals, due April 24, will be reviewed by a panel of professionals. For information, contact Melissa Jest at the alliance: 215-546-1146 x 6 or Melissa@preservationalliance.com.



Spotlight On...

Southwest Community Enrichment Center

The Southwest Community Center is just outside the border of the Spruce Hill, but it has been a haven and resource for residents in our neighborhood as well as in the city's Kingsessing section.

Founded in 1969 by local residents and clergy, the non-profit human service organization operates out of three adjacent row houses. Among the long list of programs it provides:

- ❖ A homework club for children in kindergarten through sixth grade
- ❖ A community art center for children, teens, adults and seniors
- ❖ Computer training classes for high school juniors and seniors from west and southwest high schools, and workshops on college access, resume writing and interviewing skills
- ❖ Block clean-ups and an annual holiday toy give-away
- ❖ Lunch and nutrition program, emergency food cupboard and holiday food baskets
- ❖ Senior club, transportation to supermarkets, frozen meal delivery to home-bound elderly

Katie R. Cofey, a member of the Center's board of directors, talked about the organization at the March meeting of SHCA. The Center's philosophy emphasizes both the self-worth of each individual, and the importance of community collaboration to tackle problems such as crime, safety and neighborhood revitalization.

The Center welcomes donations of all kinds, from office supplies and non-perishable food to volunteer hours to tax-deductible contributions.

Location: 1341 S. 46th St.

Phone: 215-386-8250 or 215-386-4157



Community Art Center: 215-382-9272

Computer Center: 215-386-0641

Info: www.swcecpghila.org

In each issue of SHCA News, we spotlight a new, unknown or under-appreciated enterprise in our community. Send suggestions to mmccullough@sprucehillca.org.

Does 311 Mean You Have to Call 311 Times?

I can't wait for an update on the new 311 call system.

Mayor Nutter predicted that it would enable residents, businesses and visitors to get information and request services 24/7.

"311 will fundamentally change the way Philadelphians interact with the city government," Mayor Nutter said on Jan. 1, when the call service began operating. "311 will streamline customer service."

I think the changing and streamlining thing needs work.

On Feb. 9, my husband Dan called 311 to report that the stop sign at the northeast corner of 45th and Sansom had been knocked down, presumably by a car sliding down our then-icy street. He was given a "ticket number."

On Feb. 12 -- after seeing several near-collisions -- I called 311 and reported the downed stop sign. Again. I asked the agent if anyone else had reported it. She said no. When I said my husband had done so, she asked for his ticket number. She checked, then said it was "in progress" and should be completed within three days of the original report. (Which would have been that very day.)

To my dismay, she also said the sign was at 44th and Sansom. I corrected her.

Little did I know (until dinner with Dan) that earlier that



day, he had called 311 to check on his ticket number.

"What's a ticket?" asked the agent.

Dan explained that it's a tracking number.

"Hold on," Mr. Johnson said.

A minute later he returned to the phone.

"We have no record of that ticket," the agent said.

"That can't be," Dan said. "Here's the number again."

"Hold on," the agent said.

A minute later he returned to the phone.

"It's been fixed," the agent said.

"I can see it from here," Dan said. "It's still broken."

"Well, they'll be coming today to fix it," the agent said.

"That's the fourth wrong thing you've told me," Dan said.

At that point, the agent got annoyed and began a lecture about "how the process works." He probably didn't hear Dan say: "Thank you. I'm going to hang up now."

The next night, I saw three University City District bicycle police near the still-broken sign. They told me they had reported it to the city Streets Department a week earlier.

Finally, on Feb. 21, I walked outside and, to my elation, saw a Streets Department crew installing a new stop sign.

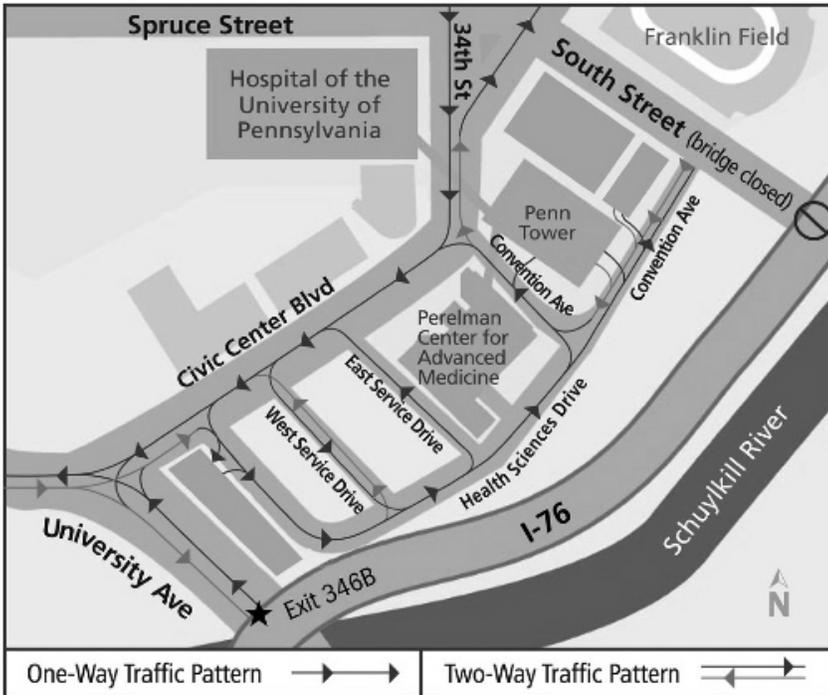
"When did you report it?" one of the workers asked me.

"Twelve days ago," I said.

"That ain't bad," he said.

Marie McCullough
Editor, SHCA News

Get Ready for New Traffic Patterns Near Hospitals



In case you haven't heard, the hellish traffic around University City's hospitals is going to get worse – in order to make it (hopefully) better.

This month, the University of Pennsylvania is creating a new traffic pattern between University Avenue and the closed South Street bridge, in the vicinity of Penn's expanded medical complex and the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

Civic Center Boulevard will become one-way southbound from the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania to "Health Services Drive," the new road behind the new Perelman Center for Advanced Medicine. Health Services Drive will become one-way northbound. "This new traffic pattern was designed to ease the traffic flow and enhance emergency vehicle access to the hospital buildings," Penn says on its website.

Penn suggests that for driving directions and alternatives routes—including public transportation—visit the University's South Street Bridge website: www.publicsafety.upenn.edu/ssbridge.

Green Collar Jobs for Teens

Do you know someone who likes to work hard and might like to join the UC Green Corps?

The Corps, a summer greening maintenance program, offers environmental education and green collar job training for teenagers and adult leaders. The goal of the program is to help ensure that newly planted trees receive care during their first two growing seasons.

Applications are now being accepted from youths in University City, West and Southwest Philadelphia who want to work outdoors and learn more about tree care. The pay is \$8 per hour and employment is part-time.

For information, contact Winnie Harris at wharris@ucgreen.org or 215.573.4684. Or download the application at www.ucgreen.org.



10TH ANNUAL CLARK PARK FUNDRAISER

with support from

THURSDAY, MAY 7, 2009

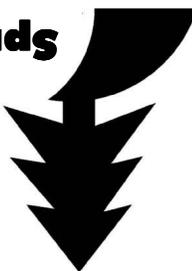
43rd Street & Kingsessing Mall
5:30 to 8:00pm

*Cocktails
Hors d'oeuvres
Entertainment
Silent Auction*

Tickets may be purchased online at
www.PartyForThePark.org or call (215) 243-0555

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257 South 45th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104**



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Check the mailing label for your membership expiration date.

Membership (2 year membership--deduct \$5)

Individual/Family \$20

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Sponsor \$50

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Make checks payable to SHCA and mail to:

SHCA, 257 S.45th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104

