

**VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION, CONFERENCE SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE**  
**RECOGNIZING UNSUNG HEROES AT**  
**THE NSLC DINNER ON JUNE 7TH**

The Northside Leadership Conference is planning their annual Dinner Banquet on Thursday, June 7th with doors opening at 5:30 and dinner served at 7pm. The dinner is an opportunity to honor volunteers from across the Northside and to celebrate the spirit and energy that make our community so appealing and interconnected. The theme for the dinner this year is 'Northside – is there any other?'

The dinner takes place at the Northside Institutional Church Of God, CNBE Center at 302 West North Avenue [same location as in past years], with catering provided by Bistro To Go. Jack Hunt, better known as 'Johnny Angel' to his fans, will be MC for the evening.

**Seeking 'Neighbor of the Year' Nominations**

We are looking for a few good neighbors to be nominated for Neighbor of the Year from Observatory Hill. If you know of an Unsung Hero from your street, from your church community or organization we would be glad to consider them for an award from the community in appreciation of their service and caring ways. We don't know the names of every neighbor who organizes the local food bank, helps shut-ins, or organizes community clean-up projects. Therefore, your input is very important. Please send a letter / recommendation describing the community projects the person is known for in 3-5 paragraphs to ohipgh@gmail.com or phone 412.231.2887 or a board member for more info. Deadline for your letter of recommendation is April 12th.

**Scholarship application deadline March 16th.**

Each year at this spring dinner, the Conference recognizes deserving high school seniors who volunteer their time to improve the Northside community with a \$1,000 post graduate scholarship. The Conference awards 9-12 scholarships each year.. **ANY** Northside resident in the 12th grade, who performs volunteer service in their community and who is planning to attend a college or a training program after high school may apply. Candidates will be recruited through neighborhood groups and high schools, both private and public. **The individuals must reside on the Northside, but they need not attend a Northside high school.**

Interested students should prepare an essay of 500 words or less, which describes his or her volunteer activities and future educational plans. You'll find important information about requirements such as letters of recommendation to qualify for the scholarship and an application form at the NSLC site <http://www.pittsburghnorthside.com/> Please follow the link for "Scholarship Application" on the right sidebar under "Recent News and Events". Deadline for receipt of the application is March 16th.

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**Annual Registration Form**  
**for Membership to Observatory Hill Inc.**

Mail to: Observatory Hill Incorporated.  
3888 East Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15233  
412-231-2887

Member's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Date Paid \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Contribution: (check one)

☐ \$5 ☐ \$10 ☐ \$15 ☐ Other ☐ \$50 (Business Member)

☐ Please include me on the email list that provides information on local activities and important community notices.

☐ Do not include me on any email notifications

Make Checks Payable to: Observatory Hill Inc.

**Observatory Hill Journal Credits**

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March 2012

# OHI Journal

Observatory Hill, Incorporated

The Newsletter for the Friends & Neighbors of Observatory Hill

March 2012



**TEAMWORK FOR STUDENT SUCCESS,**  
**SCHOOL COMMUNITY GROWTH**  
**HIGH SCHOOL**  
**TRANSITION: YOUR**  
**INPUT WELCOME**

On November 22, 2011 the Board of Public Education approved the closing of Pittsburgh Oliver High School and the transition of Oliver students to Pittsburgh Perry. OHI joins the Perry administration in seeking community partners who are willing to share their time and talents with the students and staff at Pittsburgh Perry High School. During meetings on January 31st and February 7th, parents, Northside civic organizations, public education supporters and staff members joined forces to help the transition preparation this year and implementation next year be successful.

As Principal Nina Sacco writes: "We have many great ideas from students, staff and parents and welcome your feedback and input. Some highlights of upcoming transition activities identified by students and staff of both schools are included below. We will also be posting monthly newsletters detailing plans and successes so the broader Northside community is well informed and aware of how to be involved."

<b>February</b>	Staff and student transition team meetings Student clubs and organizations weekly "Meet and Greet" dinners
<b>March</b>	Steelers basketball game on March 7th Transition team meetings Grade level meet and greets and activities
<b>April</b>	Students will experience Pittsburgh Perry for a day through shadowing and meet and greet activities Transition team meetings

The Northside Community Transition Team met on February 7th to chart steps in this process and discuss school visits and special events to support the transition process. On March 7th, the Pittsburgh Oliver and Pittsburgh Perry faculty played the Pittsburgh Steelers Footballers Basketball Team to support school transition and foster Northside Pride. The Perry and Pittsburgh Board of Education Administration are hopeful that all programs can be maintained. Perry will be the Northside neighborhood feeder school, and should have space for the magnet programs now in place including Math/Science and the Traditional Academy

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To learn more about transition efforts and offer your ideas or assistance, please contact Principal Nina Sacco at 412 323 3400 or Mrs. Christine Travaglino, English Teacher and Activities Director at <mailto:ctravaglino1@pghboe.net>. You may also contact neighbors Joan Zito at 412-931-4536 or Jane Sestric at [jmsestric@verizon.net](mailto:jmsestric@verizon.net) or OHI board members listed on the back page of this Journal.

**OHI BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**GOALS FOR 2012**

By: Glenn E. Miller, OHI President

The OHI Board of Directors met early this year to set a series of goals and objectives for the coming year. We are, as always, looking for any help you can give in achieving these goals. As each one is accomplished, our neighborhood becomes a better place.

**Safety**

A high priority of OHI has always been to help make our neighborhood safe. To this end we have committed to having at least one set of security cameras installed in our neighborhood. The camera has a wide field of vision and the records of activity can be viewed by law enforcement in the event of an incident. These cameras are made available to us through a special program of the City and facilitated by the office of Councilwoman Darlene Harris. If we become successful in this endeavor, a second set of cameras may become available to us. In addition to this, we continue to help organize and coordinate effective block watches. We have designated a Board member to lead this effort by enlisting Block Watch Captains and providing updates to the community.

**Neighborhood Communications**

It is essential for any community organization to effectively communicate with its residents, and admittedly we can do a better job. We have designated a member of our Board to establish a new website that we can maintain ourselves to keep information fresh and relevant, to provide transparency by publishing our meeting minutes, the OHI Journal, and other Board business, and to encourage communication back from the community. Look for this website to come soon, and be sure to check it out when it arrives. We also maintain and are committed to grow an email contact list for anyone in the neighborhood who would like to receive a monthly Calendar of Events. The OHI Journal will be sent to the households in Observatory Hill, and soon posted online.

**Our Business District**

The heart of any community is its business district and ours is no exception. We are committed to organize an effort that will improve communication between OHI, the community, and the business district. We continue to stay informed as to which businesses move into our neighborhood and then to assist and welcome them. We have in the past worked with the City to bring new trash receptacles to the district, and we are currently working with Darlene Harris' office to get new streetlights. We are compiling a list of the businesses and will better engage them in our process and events.

**Community Involvement and Outreach**

We are committed to host two more Community Dinners, which give residents from all over Observatory Hill the opportunity to share in fellowship and a great meal. We are planning to host a House Tour this year that brings our whole neighborhood together and showcases our stock of historic homes to people from across the Pittsburgh region, who come for the Tour. We are instituting a new program that will identify and recognize a "Good Neighbor" every month. Lastly, we invite you to community meetings to hear the latest on local developments, ask questions, and let us help you resolve neighborhood issues. You can meet representatives of City government, police, local leaders. Meetings held the third Wednesday of the month, 7p.m. Byzantine Seminary 3605 Perrysville Ave.

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## Springing Into Action!

In January I went to New York City with members of the administration to advocate on behalf of Pittsburgh. Council and the administration, by speaking with one voice on how well Pittsburgh is doing financially despite the current economy, led to a recent bond upgrade. We successfully negotiated a strong bond rating, one that demonstrates the vibrancy of our city's local economy.

As a result of our improved bond rating Pittsburgh will reap savings and is on stable footing, which allows us to continue the development and completion of neighborhood projects.

I welcome the fact that spring is right around the corner. This season wakens our desire to be outdoors, rediscovering the natural beauty of our neighborhoods. Enjoy Riverview Park to the fullest in all of its rebirth and splendor and re-discover Observatory Hill's events, its natural beauty and its greatest resource – the friendliness of neighbors.

I am looking forward to two of Observatory Hill's upcoming events including the House Tour on June 3rd and Heritage Day in Riverview Park scheduled for June 9th. Sometimes it's good to pause and take stock in the accomplishments we have achieved. Only four short years ago I attended the ribbon cutting for the Riverview Park Chapel after its successful remodel.

North Side offers an array of greenspace and many types of unique housing stock, local business corridors and interesting architecture. Take a drive or walk through our neighborhoods and get reacquainted with the rich history of our community and the assets and charm that enticed you to make North Side your home.

As always, I can be reached at 412-255-2135, please do not hesitate to call if I can be of assistance.

### LIVING ON THE STREETS OF OBSERVATORY HILL

## House Tour Slated for Sunday, June 3rd



On Sunday, June 3rd we are hosting a House Tour focused on the varied streets of Observatory Hill. If you drive down side streets such as Delaware, Orleans, Norwood, Marshall Road, and Perryview, you see a varied collection of smaller homes. Large homes on Perrysville Avenue have unique character as well.

Visitors will enjoy houses with large porches and roomy lawns on Perrysville Avenue and cozy 'Not So Big' houses on tree lined side streets. The tour runs from 1:00 to 5:00, and ticket donation is \$15.00 per person.

Won't you share your ideas or participate as a home-owner host, docent, or public relations specialist? This June event brings visitors from around the city, and it's a time for our entire neighborhood to shine. We need you as a homeowner who opens their house that day, or as a docent greeters on tour day. We welcome any homeowner who is interested in participating, or neighbor who has new ideas to share.

The house tour brings visitors from around the city to our community. It's a time for our entire neighborhood to shine. If you would like to learn more about the tour or volunteer, please contact Joann Pomietto, 412-931-7729; jopomietto@comcast.net. Joe Skoski at joeskoski@gmail.com or Katrina Brabham at baatty@gmail.com.

## Local Author Publishes Haunting True Crime Story

By Jane Sestric

Observatory Hill's own Jim Hollock sat at the table of Rich Sestric's home one December afternoon enjoying a cup of tea and talking about his experiences as a writer. Jim's book *Born to Lose: Stanley B. Hoss and the Crime Spree that Gripped the Nation* has already been likened to American crime classics such as *Helter Skelter* and *The Executioner's Song*.



Indeed, FBI Supervisory Special Agent, Ret. Larry Likar states, "James Hollock's book is the best creative non-fiction novel since Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood*. Once I opened the book and read the Prologue, I could not put the book down. It is that good." Pittsburgh's Dr. Cyril H. Wecht says, "*Born to Lose* is a fascinating read, an extraordinary book. The amount of work that went into compiling this account of a criminal madman is staggering, yet it reads like a fictional suspense thriller. Well done!"

Jim spent over ten years writing the story, including five years of research. He understands that being raised in the story's locale, of the same generation as multiple murderer Stanley Hoss and his victims, and with a 30 year career at Western Penitentiary, he has a unique vantage point.

**OHIJ:** What motivated you to write the story told in *Born to Lose*?

**JH:** I've always wanted to be an author and you've heard "Write what you know." I constantly heard his name, 'Hoss' when I worked at the Western Penitentiary. After all, it was the most infamous crime of this region – maybe ever. Well, I know criminals, at least. I know the system. And here it is, one of the most outrageous crime stories of all times in Pennsylvania, and no one's written this?

**OHIJ:** Was it difficult to gather the background and forensic details?

**JH:** Collecting the data was very detailed and time consuming. At the same time, it provided opportunities for me to speak with fascinating people who were true to life characters in my book. I was determined to 'leave no stone unturned' during research. Hoss's victims of assault and rape, police and prison personnel, victims' families, prosecution and defense attorneys, judges, the wife, the mistress – have all talked for the first time on record. In a large sense, I put down the words but they have written the story.

**OHIJ:** What was it like to interview such a wide variety of people?

**JH:** Interviewing sixty individuals who contributed their own perspectives to the story was a fascinating journey back in time. On more than one occasion, I was walking on egg shells, just hoping to get to speak to some of those most close to Hoss. I recall the time I went to see his former mistress. I could not call ahead for fear she would not speak to me. It took a few minutes after I pressed the doorbell for an answer. And it was tough to talk through a closed door, but I knew she would know things about Hoss that nobody else could. After she opened the door, I was relieved when she said, "I always knew one day someone like you would show up here. Come in."

*Born to Lose* can be ordered at any bookstore or online at Amazon.com. Jim can be contacted at j23hollock@comcast.net.

Read more about Jim's book *Born to Lose* via online links here:

From the Penn Hills Progress:  
<http://www.yourpennhills.com/node/10371>

From the Pittsburgh City Paper:  
<http://www.pittsburghcitypaper.ws/gyrobase/Content?oid=oid%3A96852>

## Conference Seeks Your Ideas for Quality Educational Options

The Northside Education Committee, sponsored by the Northside Leadership Conference, meets on the Second Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. in the Mezzanine Conference Room at the NSLC office building, 4 Allegheny Center. Through this effort, civic leaders join forces to seek equal opportunity and varied program options in all Northside schools. Please contact Mark Fatla at 412-330-2559 or Walt Nalducci at wnalducci@nsm.com for more information on the Northside Education Committee.

## Going Country at Riverview Park on June 9th



If you're ready for some rough and tumble fun and enjoy the green open spaces, the Riverview Heritage Day is the place for you! To kick off the 2012 summer season, Citiparks is preparing for the annual Riverview Park Heritage Day Festival scheduled for Saturday, June 9 from noon until 4 p.m..

Please save the date and plan to join your neighbors from across the Northside as we celebrate with a COUNTRY IN THE CITY theme. Wear your chaps, boots and cowboy gear as we live it up in the sunshine and green spaces of Riverview! Austin has the City Limits concerts and we have Stars of Jazz at Riverview, our park near the Pittsburgh City Limits!

Although still in the planning stages we are looking forward to activities such as

- art cart activities
- performers from Perry High School
- activities from the National Aviary
- Warhol Museum
- RiverQuest
- Pittsburgh Zoo and Aquarium
- Frick Nature Center
- Sarah Heinz House
- Special guests include mascots McGruff the safety dog, and representatives from the Pittsburgh Pirates

There will be activities for young people and their families such as pony rides from the Chiyou Corral, as well as for adults including health screenings from the Allegheny General Hospital, a display of Classic Cars and tours of the Allegheny Observatory at 1, 2 and 3pm [limit of 50 people per tour].

You don't want to miss this opportunity to meet and greet your neighbors from all over the city. Plan to bring your dog for the dog strut, enjoy the Observatory Tours or learn more about park events and concerts. The Venture Outdoors Climbing Wall will once again stand strong behind the Activities Building so the young and young at heart can try their climbing skills.

More activities and services are being confirmed, so please stop at the park office Information Booth for a schedule of events for the day. If you can lend a hand, please call Moses Carper at 412-583-5290 or Jane Sestric at 412-231-8134 to help serve a light picnic lunch and direct folks to areas of interest.

You can be sure that your family and friends will enjoy the afternoon.

### Riverview 5K Run Set for Friday, June 8th

Riverview Park is full of colorful, rolling trails as well as being home to a challenging paved 5K course. Kick off your weekend in the healthiest possible way – by running or walking a 5K in a lavishly forested Riverview Park. Run past the Observatory and through the park to the finish line as the crowd of on-lookers and spectators cheer you.



More information and registration details will be available soon. Please see the Riverview 5K site at the Citiparks race web page: <http://www.riverview5k.com/>



## Sharing in City's Latest Renaissance

Dear Neighbors,

Pittsburgh's Third Renaissance is fueled, in part, by community redevelopment and citizen service.

This year, I hope that everyone is looking forward to what 2012 has in store for Pittsburgh's Northside. I, personally, am excited about the projects and developments that are on the horizon for Observatory Hill.

Riverview Park is a few steps closer to receiving the much-anticipated soccer field. We are well into the process and I anticipate construction to begin this spring. The addition of the soccer field will help Riverview Park remain a wonderful, safe and welcoming place for Observatory Hill residents and surrounding communities.

In an effort to continue making our streets safer, we are making moves to improve lighting throughout the City. In December, we began replacing streetlights in over 30 business districts, converting the bulbs to brighter, cleaner, more energy-efficient LED bulbs. The business district at Perrysville and East Streets should see improved lighting by summertime.

Observatory Hill is rich in history, with picturesque homes, the Allegheny Observatory and a quaint business district. There are many reasons for residents and visitors to visit the neighborhood, whether it's to take a look around or to mingle with neighbors and friends. This year's Heritage Day at the Park will take place on Saturday, June 9, 2012. I know that the Observatory Hill community, as well as many Pittsburgh residents and City staff, looks forward to this event each year. I encourage everyone to attend this year's event. Also, don't miss the opportunity to tour the beautiful historic homes during the Annual House Tour, scheduled for Sunday, June 3rd, 2012.

Pittsburgh is in its Third Renaissance, and it is close-knit, hard-working communities like this one that help Pittsburgh continue to shine on the national forefront. I thank each of you for everything you do to improve and restore your community. As always, it is important to me that residents have a voice and know that they are welcome to share their thoughts, concerns and requests. Please be sure to attend community meetings or contact your neighborhood representative, Holly McIntosh at <mailto:holly.mcintosh@pittsburghpa.gov>. We're always here to help. With your help, we will continue to work to improve and restore Observatory Hill, while we look forward to its continued development.

Sincerely,

Luke Ravenstahl  
Mayor, City of Pittsburgh

## Venture Street Update, Community Gardeners Welcome

Jan Moreland, who has lived on Venture Street for 30 years, enjoys the park and greenery of the neighborhood here and likes to garden. Last spring she thought of a plan to make Venture Street look great for the neighbors who lived near her and those who travel Venture Street each day. During the summer and early fall, she put her plan into action and was able to replace the unsightly weeds with heavy plastic and a neat mulch surface.

But Jan did not complete the project alone. Over three sessions during the summer and early fall, Jan and her neighborhood friends pulled on garden gloves and pulled weeds from the planting strip below the high wall on Venture. Jan says "I thought it would take a long time, but it was light work, and made more fun with the help of neighbors who worked whenever they could. One day I left for work wishing I had completed more, and came home to see the weeds pulled by Venture Street friends who were glad to dive in where I left off." Direction from Council President Darlene Harris' office provided added help in cutting down the trees above the planting strip and disposal of over 30 bags of debris collected.

With spring around the corner, she plans to transplant perennials from her own yard and those of neighbors who want to make a donation of extra plants that they can spare. If you can help Jan and her friends with this community beautification project, or if you have flowers such as day lilies, hostas, or black-eyed susans to contribute please let Jan know at [mrsjan1103@verizon.net](mailto:mrsjan1103@verizon.net)

