

OH Journal



The Newsletter for the Friends & Neighbors of Observatory Hill

April 2004

A Simple Sense of Caring

Barbara Stanton

Someone once said, "without a sense of caring, there can be no sense of community." This philosophy holds very true in a community such as Observatory Hill. Here the residents help to define the direction and vision of the community and are also the volunteers who become the vehicle for driving that vision.

What started out as just cleaning up the litter and trash around his yard on Thursday mornings after garbage pickup has turned into a weekly project and an example of volunteerism around the neighborhood for Jim Seidl. For close to a year, every Thursday morning Seidl has picked up all the litter and trash on Delaware, Chumong, and the stretch of Perrysville Avenue between the two streets.

Seidl is a retiree from Schindler Elevator Company. He and his wife, Gerry, have lived on Delaware for more than 30 years and raised their three children there. His motivation for undertaking this project was simple: to keep the neighborhood clean and nice. He did not plan to be a volunteer; he just wanted to clean up the streets and improve the quality of the neighborhood.

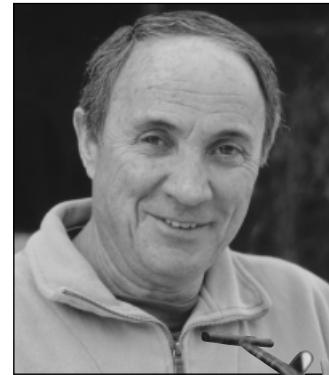
In April 2002, he volunteered for the Riverview Park Clean Up Day and to clean up the streets around the park. In April of 2003, he was not available to attend Clean Up Day,

so he volunteered to clean up the streets the week before. This was the official start of what has now become a weekly project that takes him about two hours.

Since he has been a Northside native his whole life—living farther down Perrysville while he was growing up and then living on Portola until he was married—Seidl has a passion for the area and a reason for keeping it a nice place to live. When asked what the best parts of Observatory Hill are, he instantly replied how well the people take care of their homes and the location of the neighborhood.

Word of his work has also traveled to international circles. Seidl and his wife were on a bus trip in Canada where they met a woman who lived on Orleans. She knew of his project and asked if maybe he could come over and clean her street as well. He says he does get a lot of appreciation for doing what he does. He hopes that people notice his work and are encouraged to also take part in maintaining the neighborhood.

This story further exemplifies how a simple sense of caring for the area you live in helps to create a greater sense of community.



Jim Seidl's cart is simply a cardboard box with wheels that holds a garbage bag, broom, and dust pan, which make it easier to pick up the smaller debris.

Splish-Splash

They weren't taking a bath!

Barbara Pace, Chair-Swim Committee

In spite of the bitter cold outside, the second family night swim held at Perry Traditional High School (hosted by Observatory Hill, Inc.) was a splashing success. Gracious thanks to your neighbors who have volunteered, along with our two certified life guards, to aid in the supervision of the aquatic fun for all from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. each Thursday.

Swim nights will continue this spring. Anyone under eighteen must be accompanied by an adult. Remember if you attend, you will be asked to sign your name, give a phone number in case of emergency, and pay the **small fee of \$1.00**. It's a price well worth paying to forget about this winter's stubborn piles of dirty ice. Skip all the TV re-runs and experience quality time with your friends and "Splish-Splash around!"

Join me in extending **thank-you's** to your neighbors who have enabled this family night to continue: Katrina Brabham, Denise Colbert, Skip McCrea, Glenn Miller, Lynn Schraf, Richard Sestric, and Susan Rooney.

Lifeguards Needed

If you have a current life saving course accredited certificate, you could earn an extra \$20 on evenings when we need a back-up. One of our valued life guards, Howard Bischoff, has already informed us of his "extreme skiing" vacation plans for two of the Thursdays in April. Elizabeth Ungerman is our other life guard who utilizes her training and experience to keep your children safe!

If you, or someone you know, would be willing to act as a back-up life guard, please call Barbara Pace, 412-231-4379, and send copies of certification to Jean, the head secretary for Perry Traditional High School, 3875 Perrysville Avenue.

Snow Cancellations

Due to the extreme cold and icy sidewalks that still existed around the school, the first swim night had to be cancelled. We apologize if anyone was brave enough to come out that February 5th only to find a sign on the door stating cancellation.

Make a note: When the school is closed, swim night will be cancelled.



Sprout Public Art

Sprout Public Art is committed to creating a "museum without walls" throughout the Pittsburgh region. Through a collaborative process, artists and communities develop enduring public art that enhances the urban landscape and considers the people of the community, their history, and their hopes for the future. With your participation, Sprout can continue to paint the town!

Informational "town hall" meetings to introduce the program were held in various locations throughout the Pittsburgh area in March.

The application deadline for artists and communities is Friday, April 16 at 5 p.m.

For more information, go to www.publicart.sproutfund.org, email publicart@sproutfund.org, or call 412-325-0646.



State Rep. Don Walko Reports from Harrisburg

Property Tax Relief and Economic Growth Top Walko Agenda

Property Tax Relief

Reducing property taxes for homeowners has been one of my top priorities since I was first elected to serve as a state representative. I know that too many seniors on fixed incomes and homeowners of all ages are burdened by high property taxes. Much of this burden stems from the state allowing its share of school funding to drop from 50% in the 1980s to about 35% in recent years. I strongly support raising the state's share and cutting homeowners' property taxes.

In 2003, both the House and Senate passed different versions of a property tax relief plan using limited gambling expansion to pay for \$1 billion in property tax reductions. We are close to achieving this victory for Pennsylvania taxpayers and Pennsylvania jobs.

Economic Growth

Our area needs a boost in economic development and so does most of the state. Some reports have ranked Pennsylvania 47th out of 50 states in new job creation. Fortunately, it appears that we are close to an agreement on a major economic stimulus package. We have already doubled the cap on the research and development tax credit from 15 million to 30 million per year. The economic stimulus plan is likely to include initiatives such as the following:

- **Business in Our Sites**, a program to have sites ready for businesses as soon as they want to expand or relocate to Pennsylvania.
- **Elm Street and Main Street programs**, aimed at improving residential areas surrounding downtown and revitalizing commercial areas.
- **Keystone Innovation Zones**, which would encourage economic growth around colleges and universities.
- **Real Estate Development Program**, which would help local developers fill funding gaps to complete construction.

Tax Preparation Assistance

A volunteer accountant will be available in my office, located at 3880 Perrysville Avenue, to assist Senior Citizens and members of Low-Income Households to file their personal income tax forms. Hours are by appointment only. Please call 412-321-5523 to schedule an appointment.



Don Walko
Pennsylvania State Rep.

Northside Office
3880 Perrysville Avenue
Observatory Hill
Pittsburgh, PA 15214
Phone: 412-321-5523

Lawrenceville Office
204 37th Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15201
Phone: 412-621-2818
(Hours by appointment)

Snowman

Clare Athens Chapman, age 7

Snowman, snowman
How nice you are.
You are so cold you
Melt when the sun is bright...
Please don't melt away—
Please stay for one more day!



To be published in the 2004 *Anthology of Poetry by Young Americans*

Clare has lived in Observatory Hill since the summer of 2001. She attends second grade at Linden Academy in Point Breeze.



Baytree For Sale

Observatory Hill Inc. is searching for developers who will work with us to rehabilitate three adjacent properties on Baytree. We are interested in anyone wanting to purchase these three properties and maintain them as single family homes.

Contact Lynn Schraf, OHI Housing Chair, for more information—412-321-5043.

Wanted: Information, Inspiration, and Imagination

Observatory Hill, Inc. is interested in what you have to say or display. If you have home improvement tips, suggestions for dealing with the local government, or other valuable information, share them with the rest of the neighborhood through the newsletter. We are also interested in your creative writing, photographs, or other artwork. We would particularly like to see contributions from children that live in the neighborhood.

OHI Journal is published three times a year – April, July/August, and November. Content can be submitted up to June 10th for the July/August edition and October 1st for the November edition. We look forward to hearing from you!

Please send your submissions (or questions regarding the newsletter) to Brian Chapman via email, becpitt@yahoo.com, or send a disc by postal mail, 3709 Perrysville Avenue.

All documents should be submitted in electronic format.



Riverview Park Trail Maps Now Available

A detailed map of Riverview Park highlighting the trails, pedestrian routes, and park features is available for \$2 at the Schenley Park Visitor Center and the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy office. The map, which follows the publication of Schenley and Frick park maps, has been one of the most frequently requested items from park users over the last five years.

Staff of the PPC, local volunteers, and members of the City of Pittsburgh worked for more than 6 months on the Geographical Information Systems or GIS-based map, which includes the main amenities of Riverview Park and all pedestrian routes and primary trails (with distances). The back of the map includes colorful photos and contact information.

For a copy of the maps, call or visit the PPC offices at 2000 Technology Drive, Suite 300 or the Schenley Park Visitor Center at 101 Panther Hollow Road.



Allegheny Observatory Tours

**for Neighbors on Saturday Night,
April 24th**

Allegheny Observatory in Riverview Park will be giving free tours to Observatory Hill neighbors on the evening of Saturday, April 24th. There are two tour times: 8 p.m. and 9 p.m. Each tour lasts for one hour and includes a slide show, brief lecture, a tour of the historical building, and stargazing with one of the telescopes.

Call the Observatory Hill, Inc. office phone at 412-231-2887 to make your reservation by leaving your name, number of people in your party, which tour you would like to take, and a phone number where you can be reached to confirm your reservation. Tour guides at the Observatory recommend that you not bring children under the age of seven.

Meet Bob Lacki

Riverview Park Foreman Reveals What Makes His Park Special

Bob is a 23-year veteran employee of Pittsburgh's Public Works Department. In 1999 he was promoted to Park Foreman of Riverview Park.

Q: What makes Riverview Park different from the other city parks?

A: The Observatory is unique to Riverview. Also the overhanging trees along the loop road have grown to form a beautiful canopy that shades the road as it winds through the park.

Q: What are the biggest challenges facing Riverview Park?

A: Vandalism is frustrating. Littering and illegal dumping is also a problem, especially after large events such as Cinema in the Park.

Q: What community groups are active in the park and what are their roles?

A: The Friends of Riverview Park, Riverview Park Alliance, and Observatory Hill Inc. have helped in maintaining the flower beds and trails and in keeping the park beautiful. They are also involved in Earth Day and the Day of Caring.

Q: What have the Student Conservancy Association and volunteer crews achieved in the last year?

A: They have planted trees, installed trails and helped with erosion control along the hillsides.

Q: How would a restored Chapel Shelter affect the use of the park?

A: It will encourage more people to come into the park and use the restored facility.

Q: What is the most interesting historical fact about the park that the public doesn't know?

A: When my dad was younger, teenagers would go to Snyder's Point, back then known as "Jinks Hill," to hang out at the Roadhouse that was there. It was destroyed by a fire. He also said that a merry-go-round, at the site of the present day Activities Building, was a popular meeting place. Guys, dressed up in suits and hats, would bring their dates on the weekends.



Report from Councilman Luke Ravenstahl

Summer Update

As I begin my tenure as Councilman in the first council district, I would like to thank the voters of the Northside. Your willingness to support me as a relative unknown was very humbling. You can count on me to work as hard as I possibly can to ensure that you are represented with honor and dignity. I couldn't be more excited to be representing the citizens of the Northside.

There is no doubt that the upcoming months and years will prove challenging, but we as a city council, along with the input from the residents of Pittsburgh, have the opportunity to reshape the fundamental way the City of Pittsburgh operates. I believe that if we approach these challenges with a positive attitude, we can move forward to a new and vibrant City of Pittsburgh.

I would like each and every one of my constituents to know that I will be accessible to them, whether in person, by telephone, fax, mail, or email.

If you have any questions, comments, or complaints related to City services, please feel free to call or write my office.



Luke Ravenstahl
Observatory Hill's City
Council Representative

City County Building
Suite 510/Floor 5
414 Grant Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Phone: 412-255-2135

Fax: 412-255-2129

Email: luke.ravenstahl@city.pittsburgh.pa.us

Quality of Life Center

The historic Anderson Manor, a pre-Civil War mansion built in 1830 by Colonel James Anderson, has been remodeled to house the Quality of Life Center, a hospice operated by Family Hospice and Palliative Care located at 1423 Liverpool Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15233.

Family Hospice and Palliative Care have been providing patient services since 1980, operating in eleven western Pennsylvania counties and two counties in eastern Ohio.

Call 412-572-8800 for more information.



**THE WESTERN
PENNSYLVANIA HOSPITAL**

Employment Opportunities

Job openings are currently available at Allegheny General Hospital and can be viewed at their website, www.wpahs.appone.com/search.asp. Applications for jobs can be completed online. The West Penn Allegheny Health System is an equal opportunity employer.

"To Vote, or Not to Vote?"

Barbara Pace, 11th District Committee Women

It shouldn't be a question! Many of us had a day off from work/school this past February 16th. Regardless of the media's sales pitch to come and take advantage of their reduced prices, this *President's Day* should at least give us *pause* and *cause* to reflect on what our forefathers gave in our behalf—to improve our lives, to increase our safety—to enable us to have the right to vote. How can you not vote?

The 10th and 11th voting districts have been moved from the Byzantine Seminary on Perrysville Avenue to the Assembly of God Church—just a little farther south on Perrysville Avenue located between Marshall Road and Marshall Avenue—very near the new housing construction initiated by Observatory Hill, Inc.

This new location will provide the poll workers and voters with heated, well-ventilated, lighted working conditions. There are three different parking lots and a handicap ramp for those who might need to be dropped off at the door. The Norwood residents can literally walk out their back doors to access these new accommodations.

Whether you enjoyed watching the Grammy Awards or not—the one speech that stuck in my mind was when one of the winners, holding up his coveted gramophone, yelled into the mike, "Make sure you go and vote!"

We are looking forward to shaking your hand at the polls Tuesday, April 27th.

Patti and John Ungerman, 26th Ward– 10th District

Paul Lawrence and Barbara Pace, 11th District

Annual Registration Form for Membership to Observatory Hill, Inc.

Mail to: Observatory Hill, Inc.
P.O. Box 7651, Pittsburgh, PA 15214
412-231-2887

Member's Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Date Paid _____

E-mail address _____

Interests _____

Annual Membership Dues (check one)

☐ Community Member - \$5.00/household (adults over 18)

☐ Business Member - \$50.00

Make Checks Payable to: Observatory Hill, Inc.

About OHI

Observatory Hill, Inc., serves our neighborhood as a member of the Northside Leadership Conference. Call one of the Officers if you'd like more information or to get involved in your community. There are open board meetings the third Wednesday of every month at the Byzantine Seminary at 3605 Perrysville Avenue at 7:00 p.m. All are welcome to listen and participate!

The OHI Board

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Scott Pipitone
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Lynn Schraf
Rich Sestric

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Barbara Glynn
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Barbara Glynn
Richard Sestric

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Denise Colbert
Barbara Glynn
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Rich Sestric

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