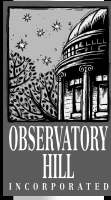


OH Journal



The Newsletter for the Friends & Neighbors of Observatory Hill

August 2003

A Neighborly Day In Your Neighborhood

Barbara Pace, Co-Chair of Earth Day 2003

The spirit, warmth and camaraderie of the near 190 "workers" defied the cool, damp rainy weather on Earth/Community Day this past April 26th, 2003.

Riverview Park was full of activity as the young and old alike laid mulch, cut down weeds, and identified invasive species to eliminate their growth. Trash was picked up in the neighboring streets, as well as in the park. Industrious scouts planted a Christmas tree and others hiked deep into "Snyder's Point" to reclaim a field deemed to become a wild flower reserve. There was even a family of four who traveled all the way from New Castle to participate in our neighborhood event. Scott Pipitone Design, with a total of 26 volunteers sporting lime-green SPD Ground Crew T-shirts, spent the day cleaning up trash on the sidewalks and roadways in the business district.

T-Shirts capturing the image of "Snowflake," the albino deer that Skip McCrea, School Board, so beautifully reproduced was distributed to all of the volunteers. Bob Lacki, Park Manager; Denny Myers, Partners in the Park; Phil Gruszka, Director of Management, and Mary Beth Steissinger, Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy; and Moses Carper, Jim Doncaster, and Will Fordenbacher from the Riverview Park Alliance supervised the groups and projects.

Catering by Andy Biliant's Crying Onion lived up to its wonderful reputation with tasty hot dogs and all the fixin's, and freshly popped corn. The children thrilled to their experience on horses, courtesy of Moses Carper's Chiyou Corral. The Aviary, again outdid itself with its diversity of fine feathered friends.

All and all, the dear friend and neighbor we lost this past February 27, 2003, Mister Rogers, would have been very proud of our altruistic endeavors to make it a beautiful day in our neighborhood. A quote from WQED's tribute edition by PNC to our Pittsburgh hero after his death from stomach cancer stated: "He not only made the world his neighborhood. He made it a better place." A M E N, and in our own way that Saturday in the park—we did too. Let's endeavor to continue to emulate him and his wonderful goals by improving our neighborhood in Observatory Hill.



Thanks to the following!

Barbara Burns
Boy/Cub Scouts Pack 327
Breadworks
Campfire Girls
Chatham School Children
Chiyou Corral
The Crying Onion
Duquesne Light Company
Giant Eagle / McIntyre
Incarnation School Children
Kuhn's Market / McNight Rd.
Jenny Lee Bakery / McKees Rocks
The National Aviary
Observatory Hill, Inc.
Perry Traditional Academy
Pittsburgh Parks: Duane Ashley, Bob Lacki, and Denny Myers
Presley Ridge
Riverview Park Alliance
Salinetto Family
Scott Pipitone Design

*See you next year with
a new agenda!*



Home in the Hills for Nearly Two Decades

Third in our History series of Observatory Hill

Barbara Pace

“ART 4. Skill, dexterity, or the power of performing certain actions, acquired by experience, study, or observation.” Webster’s New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language, unabridged.

That quote clearly defines the talented couple of Lynn Schraf and David Gilbreath. This Observatory Hill couple met and fell in love at the Art Institute. Their talents developed, as did their relationship, which led to marriage and the birth of their lovely, equally gifted daughter, Morgan. Their house on Perrysville Avenue, called “Big Red,” is the second home they have purchased and totally remodeled for this family of three. Both of their uniquely, authentically restored Victorian homes have been rightfully featured numerous times during Observatory Hill, Inc.’s annual house tours.

Lynn recalled getting lost on Perrysville Avenue nearly twenty years ago while out “antique shopping” and being very impressed with the beauty of the older homes and the green space of Observatory Hill. Soon after, they bought their first home. After completing the restoration of that home, Lynn and Dave purchased the house next door. Undertaking the huge task of converting the six apartment complex back to a single family home, as they have beautifully done, was made just a little easier for the first three years by living next door—until they moved in to their work in progress!

They first got involved in Observatory Hill Inc. when OHI Board members came knocking on their door one evening asking if they had any concerns for the neighborhood. The new playground in the front of Riverview Park’s Activities Building, as well as creating a Block Watch, were early projects they both take pride in. They have received the Northside Leadership Conference “Neighbor of the Year” for their commitment and leadership roles.

They equally take pride in improving the business district, including the parking lot and attractive signs denoting our Observatory Hill community. Their tenacity in staying with the Watson Boulevard – Venture Street apartment complex project is finally bearing the fruit of their spear heading the Housing Initiative Committee. The abandoned, vandalized eight-unit apartment complex has been torn down and two brand new townhouses will begin construction this August. The Housing Initiative has two houses on Marshall Avenue, which have been renovated, and a mix of renovated homes and new construction along Perrysville Avenue. Reclaiming and restoring these abandoned homes, and tearing down those that were not redeemable, is a source of pride for all involved and the community at large.

Lynn and Dave’s artistic talents and spare time have been given to Incarnation Academy, a small elementary school in Observatory Hill, and Incarnation of the Lord Parish. After a fire in the parish sanctuary last year, they along with other devoted church members restored the original decorative painting on the wooden beams of the church.

Their altruistic character has benefited our Observatory Hill neighborhood immensely. Their dining room table has hosted enough meetings to legally call it a “Town Hall.” Lynn and Dave both believe this is a good way to enlist the involvement of community members. The environment of a home meeting is “friendlier” and less structured than the monthly meetings. The couple said that gaining a consensus is a potential key for a successful committee or venture.

For their tireless efforts in restoring the grandeur of historic homes, working for greater community involvement, and volunteering to help their neighbors in need, we thank Lynn and Dave. Just like the grand homes they have so lovingly restored, Lynn Schraf and Dave Gilbreath are true works of art.



Lynn Schraf and
David Gilbreath



Morgan



Lynn and Dave’s Chateausque style mansion was built in 1896 by George Eisenbeiss as his family home. Mr. Eisenbeiss was a prominent businessman who owned Pittsburgh Printing Company, ran an insurance business and was treasurer for Provident Bank and a steel company.

State Rep. Don Walko Reports from Harrisburg

Walko bill to provide funding option for mass transit

I have introduced legislation that would propose an amendment to the Constitution permitting gasoline taxes and motor license fees to be used for the development, construction, reconstruction, maintenance and repair of mass public transportation systems and costs and expenses related to them.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania needs a dependable and consistent funding source for mass public transportation systems, which is important for many reasons. It provides access to jobs for working persons who do not own cars. Our highways and streets are less congested and are subjected to less wear and tear when there is a dependable mass transit system. Mass transit also reduces pollution and eases the demand for parking facility construction. A viable public mass transit system is vital for economic growth and is extremely important to the quality of life in our Commonwealth.

At a recent House Appropriations Committee in Pittsburgh, the Director of Standard & Poors commented about the importance of a viable public mass transit system to economic development, stating that it is "critical."

In the short term, I am urging Governor Rendell and Republican Leadership to restore funding for public mass transit in the 2003-2004 budget. While I am fully aware of the Commonwealth's financial plight, I believe cutting transit will only make matters worse. In the long term, my legislation will provide one great potential source of funding for a public mass transportation system.

If you would like more information on the above or any other state-related issue please contact one of my district offices.



Don Walko
Pennsylvania State Rep.
North Side 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)

A View of Our Neighborhood

Cassidy Flaherty

Hey from the Burgh, my name is Cass Flaherty and I live on Observatory Hill. My parents bought a house here two years ago after coming to Pittsburgh so they could attend college. I grew up as a military brat and have lived in six different states before settling here. My Mom is originally from the border of Ohio, so this was like coming home for her.

Being a brat, I've seen most of America, so I feel like I can speak about why Pittsburgh is a great place for a teen and his family to live. First, let me talk about Observatory Hill. I live on the terrace side of Perrysville Avenue directly across the street from Riverview Park. Besides the park being a great place to hang out, the Pitt Observatory is located there. If you haven't been, it's a great place for a family activity or date. They give very interesting tours (for free too!). The neighborhood is pretty quiet, and the people are great. Most of neighbors are interested in fixing up or restoring their homes – just like us.

Now as far as Pittsburgh as a whole, you have to know first that growing up my Mom didn't let us watch TV. We had a TV but were only allowed to watch videos that Mom picked out or had her friends tape, like Sesame Street, Discovery and History channel shows, and of course Mister Rogers. She was always so proud and would embarrass my brother and me by bragging to our friends that "SHE" was from Mister Rogers' neighborhood. I thought she was goofy...

But, after a month here in Pittsburgh, I e-mailed back to our friends and titled it "It's a beautiful day in this neighborhood." I bragged about all the things to do here and how I now lived in "Mister Rogers Neighborhood." There is a sense of pride that comes with that association. Pittsburgh, like any city, has its positives and negatives; but for me and my family, it's home now (and hopefully from now on.) I even plan to attend college here.

So remember,
It's a beautiful day in this neighborhood,
A beautiful day for a neighbor.
Would you be mine?
Could you be mine?
Please won't you be my neighbor?



New and Used Book Drive for Clayton Elementary School

Clayton Elementary School Headstart Program serves students preschool through fifth grade. Clayton is proud to have a strong literary focus in all academic and related arts. We focus on the importance of reading, but research has shown the positive effects of increasing students' availability to books in the home.

With this in mind, we are requesting that the community donate gently used children's books that will be made available to Clayton's students and their families during Open House in October.

You can donate books at the following locations:

- Riverview Park in the box labeled "Summer Book Drive" during the Jazz concerts and before the movies
- On the front porch of 3709 Perrysville Avenue
- At Clayton Elementary, 1901 Clayton Avenue, during the first week of October between 3:00 and 4:00 p.m.

If you have any questions, please contact Nancy Repko or Laura Evans at the school (412-323-3450).

Visitor Center Restored

Abbey Pauley

The Visitor Center at the entrance to Riverview Park is getting a new lease on life following restoration work that will provide a new office and meeting space.

The improvements, paid for by the City of Pittsburgh, include a new slate roof, copper gutters, downspouts and sidewalk. The exterior stonework has been cleaned and repaired. Inside, an ADA accessible bathroom will be available to the public.

"The restoration of this historic park structure is another step in our community's long-range goal to complete the projects of the Regional Parks Master Plan," says Meg Cheever, president of the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy. "It will be an important focal point for the community and we are looking forward to partnering with the City and the community to make it a vibrant center for the park."

PPC and Landmarks Historic Tour

This spring, more than 25 people hiked through the woods and learned about the park's rich history in a tour sponsored by the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy and Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation.

The tour, offered to members of the organizations, introduced newcomers to the ecological and cultural history of the park and ended with a two-hour tour of the Allegheny Observatory.

Another tour is scheduled for the fall. For more information about the tour or to become a member, contact the PPC at 412-682-7275.



Center Point Convenience

Barbara Pace

Mahatma Gandhi's birthplace in Gujarat, India was also home to the Parikh family until three years ago. Now, they reside above their new convenience store, Center Point Convenience, located in the old Kuhn's Market, 4061 Perrysville Avenue, at the intersection of Bascom and Vinceton.

The Parikh's opened their neighborhood grocery store in June and are planning a grand opening. The friendly clerk behind the counter, Rupa, is the mother of two boys. Raunaq will be attending Community College on the Northside and his younger brother, Shaunaq, will be attending Perry Traditional Academy. Their father, Deepak, has proudly displayed two American flags above the bright orange marquee. Stop in, introduce yourself and take advantage of their reasonably priced goods.



OHI Housing Initiative Update

Leanne Onorato

This year's OHI House Tour allowed visitors to tour the newly renovated and almost completed Victorian mansions along Marshall Avenue. The visitors were in awe over the layout and interior design of both homes. Some were so impressed that they later inquired about purchasing the units. In fact, 103 Marshall Avenue is currently under agreement!

There are only weeks left until these homes are complete. 103 Marshall Avenue is receiving its final finishing touches. 133 Marshall Avenue is not far behind. It has recently received a brand new concrete parking pad and its last coat of paint. 3000 Perrysville Avenue is completely framed and being painted. All three units have received new windows and the Marshall Avenue units have received new doors. Landscaping on all properties will commence once the interiors are finished. It won't be much longer until the streetscape of Marshall and Perrysville Avenues are transformed.

Safety Contacts for Observatory Hill

Barbara Pace

There are several officers assigned to sector #1 (*Observatory Hill*) on a permanent basis. They will remain in sector #1 unless they are dispatched to another sector. All officers in the Bureau of Police are considered Community Problem Solving Officers. If you have any questions or problems that need attention please call and speak to one of the Lieutenants or Sergeants listed below.

Zone One Police Station

1501 Brighton Road - (412) 323-7201
Zone Commander, Edward Kelly

Zone Crime Prevention Officer

Robin Brandt Road - (412) 323-7248

AM Lieutenant: Steve Gardner

PM Lieutenant: Daniel Herrmann

Night Lieutenant: Christopher Ragland
(Temporary)

The Community Problem Solving Sergeants

Sgt. Daniel Silinski - (412) 323-7201
7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Sgt. Robert Jurich - (412) 323-7201
3:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.
Pager (412) 560-5463

Pager Operation: Call pager number, then key in the telephone number you want the sergeant to call you back on, followed by the # symbol.

Block Watch Committee

A Block Watch Committee is an excellent way to deter crime in your neighborhood. Would YOU be willing to reactivate this sadly missing neighborhood program? Many of the former block watch members are part of the current OHI Board and would be elated to participate to reactivate these individualized street block watches. Together we can make this a safer neighborhood!

If you'd like to be on the mailing list for the Northside Public Safety Council meetings, call 412-323-7248.

Councilwoman Burns Legislative Report

Summer Update

Outdoor swimming pools are now open through September 1, 2003. Citiparks pools will remain open through Labor Day. Pool Tags can be purchased on the Fourth Floor of the City-County Building, Parks Department, between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. You can also purchase your pool passes at the Oliver Bath House, Senior Citizen Centers and the following Citipark pools: Highland Park Pool, Moore Pool, Riverview Park Pool, Schenley Park Pool, Sue Murray Pool and Westwood Pool.

Hours:

Monday – Friday

Open Swim: 1:00 p.m.–4:45 p.m.

Lap Swim: 5:00 p.m.–5:45 p.m.

Adult Instruction & Fitness: 5:00 p.m.–5:45 p.m.

Family Swim: 6:00 p.m. - 7:45 p.m.

A parent or guardian must accompany children under 16 years of age during Family Swim.

Saturday, Sunday & Holidays:

Open Swim: 1:00 p.m. - 5:45 p.m.

Any child under age 6 must be accompanied by an adult in our pools.

Rates:

\$40 Family of four

\$ 6 For each child over the family of four

\$20 16 years of age and older

\$10 3 to 15 years of age

Free Children 2 and younger

For further information please call 412-323-7928



Barbara Burns
Observatory Hill's City
Council Representative
Office Phone: 412-255-2135

St. Johns Hospital Demolition

The demolition of St. Johns Hospital began on June 2nd. A hotline has been established to address any complaints or issues that may arise during this process. Should you have any questions, complaints or concerns, please contact Liz at (412) 355-0300.

11th Annual OHI House Tour

Barbara Glynn, *OHI Secretary*

On a very gray Sunday in May over 300 people attended the 11th Annual Observatory Hill House Tour. Four trolleys chauffeured guests throughout the neighborhood. Artisans from the Western Pennsylvania Craftsmen's Guild demonstrated their crafts in one of the fine old homes on Marshall Avenue currently being rehabbed as part of the OHI Housing Initiative. Six private homes were shown and three churches—Riverview United Presbyterian, Mount Zion Lutheran and Nativity Roman Catholic—welcomed visitors.

For the first time, the Allegheny Observatory was open for tours during daytime hours; visitors were amazed at the detail and beauty—and the crypt where the ashes of lens maker John Brashear and his wife are buried. Dwayne Dolphin's Trio and Drock and Roll, performed at the Observatory for those waiting to go inside.

The House Tour Committee and the OHI Board would like to thank everyone who contributed their time, expertise or funds to help make this year's tour a success.

Observatory Hill House Tour



Jazz & a Movie in the park

August 2nd

Music by Real Silk Band

7 to 8:30 PM

MEN IN BLACK (PG13)

9:00 PM

August 9th

Music by Dwayne Dolphin

7 to 8:30 PM

LIKE MIKE (PG)

9:00 PM

August 16th

Music by Roger Barbour

7 to 8:30 PM

DIE ANOTHER DAY (PG)

9:00 PM

August 23rd

Music by Salsamba

7 to 8:30 PM

JOHN Q (PG)

9:00 PM

August 30th

Music by Sandy Staley

7 to 8:30 PM

**HARRY POTTER and the
CHAMBER of SECRETS (PG)**

9:00 PM

5 K Run & Fitness Walk Friday, August 15, 2003

**Race starts at Riverview Park
Activities Building.**

5K Race 7:00 PM

5K Walk 7:05 PM

Fees

5K Race \$10.00

5K Walk \$10.00

Late fee after 8/13/03 +\$4.00

**For more information call,
412-255-2493.**

**An entry form is available at
www.observatoryhill.org**

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

Susan Rooney
President
412-323-0899

Scott Pipitone
Vice President
412-321-7155

Barbara Glynn
Secretary
412-322-5580
bdglynn@icubed.com

Dave Gilbreath
Treasurer
412-321-5043
davegilbreath@mercuryprinting.com

Moses Carper
412-583-5290

Brian Chapman
412-322-9206
becpitt@yahoo.com

Malcolm Hardie
412-231-6224
mhardieredblue@hotmail.com

Skip McCrea
412-231-3750
fmcrcal@pghboe.net

Quynh McGuire
412-321-5595
qtmcguire@yahoo.com

Barbara Pace
412-231-4379

Brian Pinter
412-323-8868
bpinter@County.Allegheny.PA.US

Lynn Schraf
412-321-5043
lschraf@earthlink.net

Richard Sestric
412-231-8134
sestric@telerama.com

Committees

Entertainment

Brian Pinter*
Quynh McGuire
Susan Rooney

House Tour

Entire Board

Mark Masterson
Glenn Miller
Peg Perlic
Lorraine Schwartz
Julia Vidic

Housing Initiative

Lynn Schraf*
Brian Chapman
Denise Colbert
Dave Gilbreath
Barbara Glynn
Michelle Kowalczyk
Rafal Kowalczyk
Quynh McGuire
Barbara Pace
Stacey Regan
Mark Reisman
Susan Rooney

Membership

Rich Sestric*
Barbara Glynn
Glynn Miller
Barbara Pace
Susan Rooney

Newsletter

Barbara Pace*
Moses Carper
Denise Colbert
Dave Gilbreath
Skip and Jason McCrea
Scott Pipitone
Susan Rooney
Lynn Schraf
Rich Sestric

Nominating

Entire Board

Neighborhood & Business Development

Scott Pipitone*
Dave Gilbreath
Barbara Glynn
Richard Sestric

North Side Leadership Conference (NSLC)

Scott Pipitone*
Barbara Glynn
Richard Sestric

Parks

Moses Carper*
Brian Chapman
Denise Colbert
Barbara Glynn
Skip McCrea
Barbara Pace
Rich Sestric

Public Safety

Susan Rooney*
*Chairperson)

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