

OHI Journal

Observatory Hill, Incorporated

The Newsletter for the Friends & Neighbors of Observatory Hill

June 2012

TOUR CHARMING HOMES OF THE EARLY 20th CENTURY ON JUNE 3rd

DISTINCTIVE ARCHITECTURE IN A DISTINCTIVE LANDSCAPE

By: Joe Skoski

On Sunday, June 3rd we are hosting a spring house tour that features ten houses and two churches. Our homeowners are a mix of new neighbors and longtime residents. All the homes included this year have beautiful views: of the park, of the city, or of the streets where we live. You can read more about the homes on tour at observatoryhill.net and order your tickets by emailing us at housetour2012@comcast.net, tickets are priced at \$10.00 through May 31st, and \$15.00 on tour day. For added information, call OHI at 412-736-2489. To volunteer, please contact JoAnn, 412-931-7729, Jane, 412-231-8134 or Joe at joeskoski@gmail.com.

Located mainly on the eastern rim of scenic Riverview Park, Observatory Hill captures Pittsburgh's architecture of the 1890-1940 period at its best. While the lower Northside's historic districts feature nineteenth-century row houses, the majority of homes in Observatory Hill are detached, single-family residences.

The neighborhood developed along Perrysville Avenue's winding turns, and the rolling terrain with its many hills and bluffs ultimately determined the layout of many streets. Stately Victorian-style homes were increasingly built in the neighborhood in the decade prior to 1900 when trolley lines connected Observatory Hill with other parts of the city and made living in a hillside neighborhood less isolating and more convenient for homeowners.

Victorian-style homes dominated the neighborhood until around 1910, when the less ornate Craftsman or Arts & Crafts style buildings became popular. Two-story Craftsman four square and upright cottage-style bungalows were well suited to compact city lots. Occasionally one or one-and-a-half story Craftsman bungalows were built on lots that could accommodate their larger first-floor footprint.

During the 1920s American and Dutch Colonial, Tudor, and English Cottage Revival styles became increasingly popular in the neighborhood. The Acorn Hill section of the neighborhood, northwest of the Perrysville and Marshall Avenue intersection, showcases an especially attractive assortment of pre-1940 Craftsman and Historical Revival styles.

We hope you can join us for the Observatory Hill House Tour this year! As you approach each stop on the tour, you will experience some fantastic views of downtown Pittsburgh, Allegheny Observatory, Riverview Park, and the surrounding Ohio River valley!



PIPITONE GROUP MARKS TWENTY YEARS HERE

Driving north through Observatory Hill passing the intersection of Perrysville and East you can't miss the renovated gold brick buildings on the left side of Perrysville. Scott Pipitone started the firm now known as the Pipitone Group twenty years ago and still lives in the neighborhood. He served as President of OHI in the past and has received recognition as a good neighbor and effective entrepreneur.

Although our neighborhood is the Pipitone Group's home base, their breadth, depth and marketing reach is growing constantly. The PG team is "Always evolving, ever learning, constantly growing, by doing great work with great people." We also have a blast doing the work we do, and of course make time for a little fun, too. The firm's web site reads:

For two decades we have lived by a mission that has served us and our clients well. Our specialization in channel marketing allows our clients to "talk through the people who talk to their customers." We identify and ally with the influencers, specifiers and intermediaries in the channel whom clients' customers listen to most.

The Pipitone Group takes pride in developing new approaches to communicate in exciting ways. Recent successes include:

- Named as Pittsburgh's 4th largest digital agency posted by Pittsburgh Business Times.
- Building more than a dozen websites while publishing more than 2000 pages of content online in 2011.
- Working in our nation's capital and the Cyber Security market.
- Going Green to save Green. They helped Direct Energy to promote their sponsorship of the ASE Green Schools Program.
- Giving Grove City College a new brand with the tools to recruit more great students
- Publishing two annual reports for companies in Puerto Rico.

In 2011, the Pipitone Group added 11 new faces and personalities, continuing to do great work, with great people. Congratulations to the PG team. Your success has made a real difference in our community!

BUSINESS DISTRICT GROWTH IN OBSERVATORY HILL

"A community is like a ship; everyone ought to be prepared to take the helm."
— Henrik Ibsen

Business district growth taking place from Perrysville and East Streets north has a significant impact on the well being of the community as a whole. The colorful mural on the Commodore Café reminds us of the importance of perseverance! Signs of growth are appearing as the longstanding businesses expand and new businesses take root. **See related stories on page 2.**

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High Schools Transition

Remembering Old Friends and Making New Ones



Memorial Day is a yearly holiday that is especially near and dear to my heart. My thoughts are with the brave men and women who have made, and continue to make, extraordinary sacrifices to keep our nation safe. Remembering and thanking our heroes for their service is a tradition I look forward to every summer.

In addition to remembering those who have made a difference in our community, summertime is also an excellent season for making new friends and new memories. As many of you already know, Oliver students will enter the 2012 school year in a new 'home', Perry High School. I have been working closely with the teachers, administrators and students of both schools to ensure the transition is a smooth one.

The Oliver-Perry merger is already off to a very promising start. In March I attended a very entertaining basketball game, at Perry, between members of Oliver and Perry's faculty versus several Steelers.

Neighbors have been hard at work, planting new plants throughout the Venture St. bend. We can look forward to a colorful summer, with blossoming Rose of Sharon bushes, lilies, daisies and hostas during the coming months.

This summer is a wonderful opportunity to make both new friends and new memories on Observatory Hill. I look forward to seeing you at this year's House Tour and the Heritage Day Festival.

Turning these project ideas into successful, well loved community events is a big job. Please consider joining Observatory Hill's neighborhood group, by working together you will help to strengthen the quality of life in Observatory Hill.

Please do not hesitate to call my office if I can be of assistance, I can be reached at 412.255.2135.

Schorr's Bakery: Continuing a Sweet Tradition for Forty Years

'All in the Family' is what you could call Schorr's Bakery. Jim Schorr's dad Tom started the bakery on Perrysville near Engine Company 34 at the corner of Bonvue Street in 1972. So this is their 40th anniversary! With Jim's brother Ron and his two daughters now working as bakers, the business has become more popular than ever, and expanded to nearby West View several years ago.

It's a busy lifestyle, with Jim stopping at West View about midnight, to pick up orders and pans, then making his way to the Northside shop. Each Saturday the crew bakes 150 dozen donuts, not to mention the many birthday cakes, loaves of bread and rolls. Jim's favorites to bake and to eat are the same: donuts and cake. With a hard working crew and great bakery items, Schorr's Bakery continues to draw a strong patron base.

Jim has been asking his Dad to sell the business to him for a number of years, but only recently did his dad Tom agree to the deal. Now his father can come in at 3am and work five days instead of 6. He can even get in a few rounds of golf when the weather is good. Mr. Schorr and the girls in the shop enjoy greeting many customers each day!

Jim and his father Tom, his brother Ron and Jim's girls pride themselves in offering a good product at a fair price. "Our biggest sellers are donuts and cakes," he says. He wants to reward the people who are long time patrons and keep the prices realistic and quality of the breads, cakes, and donuts high. "I still believe in this neighborhood. It's a decent business district," he says. Judging by the number of people you see at the bakery each day, the neighborhood believes in Schorr's, to be sure.

For information on commercial financing or commercial development/community needs please contact Mark Fatla at the Northside Conference at 412-330-2553, Mark@pittsburghnorthside.com or Mark Masterson at the Northside Community Development Fund, 412-322-0290.



Celebrating Pittsburgh's Early History at Riverview Heritage Day June 9th

We will be exploring the Frontier during Heritage Day at Riverview Park on Saturday, June 9th. You're invited to build a model fort, along with a totem pole. We'll be preparing Native American snacks and offering horse and pony rides that day, too. Please join your neighbors from across the Northside and across town as we take a trip west to frontier days. Wear your chaps, boots and cowboy gear as we live it up in the sunshine and green spaces of Riverview! The activities are scheduled from noon to 4 p.m. At the end of the day, come back for the Stars at Riverview Jazz Series concert at 7p.m., followed by Dollar Bank Cinema in the Park at dusk!

We'll have activities for young'uns like adoptable puppies from the Humane Society, the Venture Outdoors climbing wall, live birds from the National Aviary, wildlife friends from the Animal Rescue League Wildlife Rehabilitation Center, a chalk team from the Pittsburgh Zoo and PPG Aquarium and Plenty of lawn games.

All afternoon we'll have a variety of activities for gents and ladies: learning line dancing, exploring the river scene with RiverQuest, greeting mascots and friends from the DARE program and meeting our Public Safety Posse: the Bomb Squad Robot, SWAT reps and Engine Company #34 partners. Be on the lookout for Sparky the Fire Dog, McGruff and other mascots So grab your cowboy hats and gear and come on over to Heritage Day as we visit Frontier times on the green rolling hills of Riverview Park.

More interactive programs are in the planning stages, so please stop in at the Information Booth near the Visitor's Education Center for a complete list of activities and agencies taking part. All this is made possible by Citiparks and its partners and sponsors. If you can lend a hand, please call Jane or Rich 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. See you at the park for the Riverview Park 5K Run and Fitness Walk the evening before on Friday, June 8, at 7p.m. and Heritage Day events from noon to 4 pm on Saturday!

Enjoy local jazz entertainers and large screen outdoor movies every Saturday. You'll find a Citiparks booklet at the Information Booth or Visitor's Education Center.

Riverview 5K Run and Fitness on Friday Evening – June 8th

Riverview Park is full of challenging 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/>

Trios Market Opens at East Street Intersection

Trios Market opened at 3900 Perrysville on the corner of Perrysville and East Streets on March 16th. Owner Ahmed Choudhry and his partners Mike and Bob have been working together for three years. Mr.Choudhry and partners own restaurants and convenience stores around town and find Observatory Hill a busy and productive location so far.

Besides the usual convenience store offerings, Trios has coffee, cappuccino, slushies and prepackaged sandwiches to microwave at home or on the spot. The store features some household items such as light bulbs and paper products. Trios sells lottery tickets, money orders, and has bill paying services, too. So if you need a sandwich, coffee, juice, pop or the usual milk and bread, stop by Trios Market. They are open from 6am to 10pm for your convenience.

Block Watches Help Neighbors to Safeguard the Community

By Barbara Stanton

Public Safety and community watch organizations are at the forefront of many urban communities. These groups provide a sense of community for neighbors and help to foster pride and cooperation in the neighborhood. Observatory Hill is no exception when it comes to making public safety a priority for its residents. Aside from Observatory Hill Inc., there are several other smaller groups throughout the neighborhood that continue the commitment of public safety; one example is the Bonvue Street Block Watch group.

According to Leslee Schaffer, the Bonvue Street Blockwatch is a small blockwatch organization on Bonvue Street dedicated to living and working together to make Bonvue Street a safe and inviting place to live and to having fun while doing it.

The group provides several events throughout the year to give neighbors a chance to socialize and visit with each other. Last summer they participated in the National Night Out. The National Night Out is a chance for neighborhoods to raise awareness of crime prevention in a fun, family friendly environment. It is designed to raise crime and drug prevention awareness, encourage participation in neighborhood anticrime programs, strengthen police-community partnership, and send a message to criminals that neighborhoods are organized and fighting back.

The group also does some fund raising to raise money for things such as security cameras on the street and to make improvements to Bonvue like fixing up sidewalks or crumbling stairs – improvements to help better the area. Meetings are held each month at Allen Place with discussions and speakers on topics relevant to issues of the neighborhood.

How can I help? Neighborhood safety depends on the involvement of its residents. There are several ways you can get involved in helping to keep Observatory Hill a safe community.

Form your own block watch

If you are interested in forming a block watch for your street, contact Jasun Stanton, OHI Public Safety Coordinator, (jasunstanton@hotmail.com) to get started. You can also visit the city of Pittsburgh's Public Safety web site to learn more about keeping your neighborhood safe (<http://www.pittsburghpa.gov/publicsafety/>).

Attend Public Safety Meetings

Public safety meetings are held for all of the north side on the first Thursday of each month at 5:30 p.m. in the East Commons Professional Building at 4 Allegheny Center, Mezzanine Level

Attend an OHI meeting

OHI meets every third Wednesday of the month at 7:00 PM at the Byzantine Catholic Seminary on Perrysville Avenue. They also have a Facebook page where you can stay up to date with all the initiatives taking place in our neighborhood.

Northside Conference Dinner on June 7th

The Northside Leadership Conference is planning their 29th annual Dinner Banquet on Thursday, June 7th with doors opening at 5:30 and dinner served at 7pm. The dinner happens at the Northside Institutional Church Of God, at 302 West North Avenue. Jack Hunt, better known as 'Johnny Angel' to his fans, will be MC for the evening. To purchase tickets contact Kelly at 412 330-2562 or Kelly@pittsburghnorthside.com.



Ken Pomietto, Neighbor of the Year!

This year our neighbor of the year from Observatory Hill is Ken Pomietto who has lived in Observatory Hill for 36 years. Ken and his wife JoAnn have raised their three children here. When Ken's youngest son turned six and joined a T-ball team, he started a volunteer career with the Perry Athletic Association, the PAA. He started as an assistant coach and his role grew from there.

Ken served on the PAA Board and coached T-ball, instructional ball, baseball and softball. He also coached soccer. He continued to coach and be a part of the PAA even after his own children were grown.

As a matter of fact, Ken's children C.J. [Chris] and Jennifer joined their dad as PAA coaches. Ken also served as President of the Perry Athletic Association for more than a decade. With the closure of so many schools, and shortage of parent coaches at this time, the PAA is no longer active. Still, Ken and his family remember how the PAA provided healthy sports programs where young families enjoyed sports together. Entire families participated in PAA sports and we are better as a community for Ken's service! Thanks, Ken, for all you have done for the young people of our neighborhood and the Northside!



Sharing in City's Latest Renaissance

Dear Neighbors,

The days are growing warmer and longer, and I'm excited to welcome this year's cleaning and greening season. As you begin to Redd-Up your neighborhood, Green-Up empty lots and Love Your Blocks, I want you to know that your hard work and dedication not only improves the beauty of your neighborhood, but also helps keep your family and neighbors safe.

By transforming vacant lots into green spaces, community gardens and other creative community assets, your work helps reduce crime and improve residents' neighborhood pride. Blighted properties attract illegal and dangerous activity, and it's important that we work together to keep such activity out of our neighborhoods.

More blighted properties will be demolished this spring, creating opportunities for attractive, useful green spaces. As community members, I encourage you to take charge of these areas through City programs like Green Up, Love Your Block, the Sideyard Sale Program and the Garden Waiver Program. Businesses are reminded to take advantage of the Storefront Renovation Program and the Taking Care of Business program. By aggressively addressing blighted properties through community-driven development, you each take an active role in beautifying your neighborhood and improving its public safety.

Fighting blight is one way to keep our neighborhoods safe. As Mayor, I continue to take great measures across our City to improve public safety, including cracking down on nuisance properties, providing public safety officials with advanced training, and dedicating over \$3 million to demolition this year. As always, the safety of Pittsburgh's residents and businesses remains a high priority.

Residents are reminded to report suspicious activity, review crime alerts or join a block watch by visiting my Community Safety Website at communitysafety.pittsburghpa.gov.

Keeping our City clean, safe and green is up to each of us. By working together, we can continue to strengthen our neighborhoods and keep Pittsburgh "America's Most Livable City."

Sincerely,

Luke Ravenstahl
Mayor, City of Pittsburgh

Improved Tech Tools For the Community

By Roxanne Tuinstra

Observatory Hill, Inc. is presenting its members more information quickly using up to date technology. Whether it's the OHI web site using the Internet, announcements via e-mail to our e-mail blast contacts, or Facebook, OHI is branching out in new and different ways.

We have updated our website at <http://www.observatoryhill.net/> to serve you better. You can visit our site for OHI News and Northside special projects and programs. We want to include your block watch information or announce any important meetings or services for the community. So please let us know how we can help you communicate better with our neighborhood. Send inquiries and news to ohipgh@gmail.com. We thank Council President Darlene Harris for her support of this web page upgrade, so that we can stay connected and keep learning together.

There's more activity than ever on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com. All you need to do is create your free account and join! The OHI Facebook page has a discussion group, pictures of events, and current activities in our neighborhood. It offers ways for members to connect to each other and to our area. We're sharing information about community projects and services, the 100th Anniversary of the Allegheny Observatory this year in August, practical help for community improvement needs, and other neighborhood news.

Also, be sure to sign up for our popular e-mail blasts that contain our monthly Calendar of Events full of activities in our neighborhood for your family to enjoy, from Cinema in the Park, to Pittsburgh Pool swimming hours. Just contact OHI at ohipgh@gmail.com to have your name added to the e-mail list! If you'd rather phone us, feel free to call us for information about meetings or neighborhood events at 412-736-2489.

BEARS IN THE BIG BLUE HOUSE: TRANSITION PROGRAMS TO WELCOME OLIVER STUDENTS

When Oliver students visited Perry on a rotating, grade level basis, students were asked to vote for their favorite transition slogan. The students decided that they liked "Bears in the Big Blue House" representing Oliver students move to the Perry Traditional Academy. The school community decided to use this slogan voted most popular.

So far, several important sharing sessions and special events have taken place.

January 31st: School Community Transition Meeting @ Perry Library. Student representatives, school staffs and community leaders met in Perry's Library to discuss plans for the merger and work toward a smooth transition.

Feb 13-15th Oliver-Perry Ninth Grade Days followed by grade level transition days for grades 10 and 11. As one student said "When the kids are brought together they relax and are very positive."

March 6th – Pittsburgh Perry – Oliver Unity Day in City Council Chambers. Council President Darlene Harris presented a proclamation to recognize the efforts of the principals, staff, students, local leaders who are working to ensure a smooth transition.

March 7th – Perry – Oliver and Pittsburgh Steelers Football team Basketball Game Oliver students and staff and the Perry students and staff watched the Oliver / Perry team face off with Steelers Charlie Batch, Ramon Foster, James Harrison, Morty Ivy and Ryan Mundy. It was exciting! As one teacher put it "It was great to hang out and support our community and this transition with staff and students from both buildings." Another said, "Most people who don't live Northside don't realize all of the good things that are going on."

Perry's Theater Group presented THE LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS on April 28, 29 and May 4, 5, and 6. The lawn sign in the front of school welcomed all to attend. Oliver students and guests joined the troupe for laughs and entertainment.

The Pittsburgh Pledge, developed about 5 years ago, still rings true:

All of us – students, teachers, administrators, families, community, board members and other civic leaders – will take an active role in helping all students. Together, we will hold ourselves accountable for achieving Excellence for All.

This school transition process continues into the next few years. The administration, teachers and staff are interested in hearing your comments and ideas. School Community Council meetings will be scheduled monthly next semester. Please see the school's web site for more details: <http://www.pps.k12.pa.us/perry/site/default.asp>

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Annual Registration Form for Membership to Observatory Hill Inc.

Mail to: Observatory Hill Incorporated.
3888 East Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15214
412-736-2489

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.

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