

OHI Journal



The Newsletter for the Friends & Neighbors of Observatory Hill

November 2003

Raise the Roof OHI Housing Initiative Update

Leanne Onorato

If you haven't already, take a drive along Perrysville Avenue and look at Observatory Hill Inc.'s Housing Initiative!

We have sold one of our three re-hab houses and construction is underway on our three new in-fill housing on the Avenue. This is the first new housing constructed in 50 years in our neighborhood. We are eliminating blight and strengthening the streetscape by filling in the gaps along the road created by missing homes. Please talk to your co-workers, friends and relatives and encourage them to see our newest construction in our wonderful, thriving neighborhood.

For more information, call Dennis Friedland at the Northside Leadership Conference, 412-231-4714.

Watson Boulevard and Venture Street Improvements

Look for some activity to happen on the corner of Watson Boulevard and Venture Street. Two single-family town homes are going to be built on the existing foundation of the blighted apartment building that was demolished this past springtime.

A private developer is working with OHI to make that key corner in our neighborhood beautiful once again.



3008
Perrysville
Ave.



3000
Perrysville
Ave.



3004 Perrysville Ave.



3012 Perrysville Ave.



133 Marshall Ave.



Observatory Hills Inc.'s Candidate Biographies for 2004

The annual election of members to the Board of Directors of Observatory Hill, Inc. (OHI) will be held at the monthly board meeting November 19, 2003 at 7:00 p.m., at the Byzantine Church on Perrysville Avenue. Members will be elected to two-year terms.

Moses Carper has been a life-long resident of Observatory Hill and just completed his first term on the Board of OHI. This past summer he took over the stewardship of the Parks Committee for OHI. He has also been a life long advocate for Riverview Park. The Pittsburgh Park Conservancy has taken advantage of his expertise for numerous ventures.

Moses has conducted child development programs utilizing his equestrian access, experience and educational degrees. The Chiyou Corral is Moses' creative way of identifying *Children and Youth*. WQED's "On Q" filmed some of his activities, October 6, 2003. Watch for the broadcast on Channel 13.

Barbara Glynn completed the unexpired term of a previous OHI board member and has been taking our minutes for almost a year. Barb and her fiancé, Marc Reisman, opened their Victorian home this past spring to OHI's biggest fund raiser, our annual House Tour. They have been involved with house/apartment rehabilitation for seven years. Her civil engineering degree has been an asset for these types of capital investments. This will be the first time Barbara has run for a two-year term. She has given unselfishly of her time to address our OHI Board's involvement in numerous issues.

In her free time, you can find her weaving, upholstering and supporting Marc's harmonic talents with "Joe Grusheky and the House Rockers."

"Skip" McCrea has lived in Observatory Hill for close to 20 years and has been active on the OHI Board for ten. During that time, he has produced the newsletters and was President. He continues to assist with many OHI activities, including family swim night. He also dresses as "Sparky the Fire Dog" for school and civic appearances. For the last few years, Skip has also served on the City of Pittsburgh's School Board.

Skip and his son, Jason, continue to help with the OHI newsletters. Skip's degree in horticulture and position on the Board of Riverview Park aides our community well in improving our park and surrounding area.

Glenn Miller grew up in Bethel Park and graduated in 1984 from Penn State with a BS in Landscape Architecture. He is a Registered Landscape Architect in Pennsylvania and has practiced his profession in Connecticut, Maryland, and in Pittsburgh for the last seven years. He has recently joined the staff of Burt Hill Architects in downtown Pittsburgh.

Glenn enjoys working on his home, fishing, hunting, and all Pittsburgh has to offer. Most of all he enjoys spending time with his wife Amy and 5 year old daughter Kaelin. The family is expecting a new arrival in June.

Barbara Pace received the "Citizen of the Year" award representing OHI this past summer at the annual Northside Leadership Dinner. As a 3rd generation Northsider, Barb graduated from Perry High School, moved away and returned 12 years later to Watson Boulevard. She's been part of the City of Pittsburgh's Long Range Planning Committee for the Five Regional Parks. For the last two years, she has enjoyed co-chairing Riverview Park's Earth Day Events and participating in the production of the OHI newsletters. She is your local Democratic Committee Women for the 26th Ward.

Peg Perlik has lived on the Northside for most of her life. Her mother, daughter, grandchildren, and now great-grandchild have all lived in Observatory Hill. Peg has attended OHI meetings for many years. She opened up her home and fed numerous people attending the many meetings for the House Tour Committee this year. She taught elementary education for 33 years and belongs to AARP, and the Catholic Daughters of Bellevue.

Lynn Schraf is the core source of energy and direction for Observatory Hill's industrious "Housing Initiative Committee." Driving down Perrysville and Marshall Avenues, you can see the results of her countless hours—years—of donated time, talent and energies in eliminating the blight in our neighborhood. She also gives a good deal of herself to the concerns of Incarnation Parish where her daughter, Morgan, attends school. She and her gifted husband, David Gilbreath, have dedicated 12 years of effort to our community. They've both been awarded "Citizen of the Year" by the Northside Leadership Conference.

Richard Sestric is one of the original founders of OHI. He initiated the Business Development Program and with his wife, Jane, held many of the first meetings in their home while producing and delivering the newsletters themselves. Rich has been a life-long resident of the Northside. He has received many honors for his dedicated efforts to improve the quality of life in our neighborhood and Riverview Park. He was also takes pride in being a strong part of the movement to have St. Nicholas Church on Rte. 28 designated as an historic landmark!

Lorraine Schwartz has resided in our neighborhood for 40 years. She and her husband, Rich, are blessed with two sons, three daughters, six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Lorraine has attended many of OHI's monthly meetings and was an active participant in the House Tour Committee meetings this year.

Lorraine was a Girl Scout leader for 15 years. She participates in AARP, the Ladies Guild of Incarnation Parish, and remains active in her retirement by working a few days a week for Mellon Bank's downtown Customer Service Department.

State Rep. Don Walko Reports from Harrisburg

State Benefits for Veterans

Veterans Emergency Assistance

Veterans, their widows, infants or dependents are provided up to three months of temporary, emergency financial assistance. The aid must be used for food, clothing, fuel or shelter. To be eligible, honorably discharged veterans must have served in the U.S. Armed Forces during established war service dates, during hostile fire or a terrorist attack in peacetime as determined by the state Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. Upon the recent death of a veteran, the veteran's surviving spouse, children or parents may be eligible for assistance if the deceased veteran qualified prior to death and if the survivors meet dependent eligibility requirements.

Real Estate Tax Exemption

Honorably discharged veterans who are residents of Pennsylvania and are certified by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs as being 100% disabled from a wartime service are eligible for exemption from real estate taxes on a principal dwelling. The State Veterans Commission also must determine the need for the exemption. If the veteran dies, the exemption can pass on to the surviving spouse if he or she has not remarried.

Paralyzed or Blind Veterans Pension

Honorably discharged veterans are eligible for a Paralyzed/Blind Veterans Pension of \$150 a month. The veteran must have been a resident of Pennsylvania at the time of entering the armed forces. Veterans qualify if they are residents of the state now and if they suffered an injury or disease resulting in the loss of use of two or more extremities or blindness during a war conflict or hostilities during peacetime.

Birth and Death Records

Certified copies of birth and death certificates are issued to veterans and their dependents without cost by the Division of Vital Records, P.O. Box 1528, 101 S. Mercer St., New Castle, PA 16103.

For further information on the mentioned programs please call (800) 54-PA-VET.

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



Life as a High School Student

Leah Yoho

This fall I began my freshman year at Perry Traditional Academy. I was so excited to meet new people and have new classes; and that's exactly what I got. I knew quite a few people in my classes, but as the weeks progressed, I began waving at more and more people in the halls.

My classes really have changed since middle school. There are deadlines and if you don't meet those deadlines, you don't make the grade. I have learned so much already from the projects and homework, and I know there is so much more that I am going to learn. I have begun to take things into my own hands instead of depending on others to help me with my class work.

I have much more homework now, which means I don't have as much free time. I also have homework on the weekends so in order to do anything fun with my friends, I must finish my work first.

I also have more opportunities to be involved in student activities such as marching band, drama club, student council and a variety of other wonderful activities. I have more sports to choose from, and I no longer have to wear uniforms like last year at Allegheny Traditional Academy. There is always the choice of supporting our football team by going to one of their exciting games. We also just had our homecoming dance and everyone had a wonderful time as it turned out to be a great success.

Each day during lunch, there is a table set up by the cafeteria that sells Perry Accessories like t-shirts, book bags and Perry beads! There's something there for everybody.

Although my day starts early and I have so much more responsibility than middle school, I still am having a great time with all of my new and old friends. I am looking forward to a great year.

Book Drive for Clayton Elementary School Update

The Observatory Hill, Inc. sponsored book drive for Clayton Elementary School was a resounding success. We collected over thirty-five boxes of books from neighbors, family members, and local bookstores. In addition to having the books to take home from the Parent-Teacher conferences, Clayton has set up an in-school bookstore where students will be rewarded for good behavior by being able to select books from the store. The number of books we received exceeded Clayton's capacity, and we will be donating the remaining books to other schools.

OHI would like to thank the generous donations from the neighborhood and in particular the generosity of Half-Price Books on McKnight Road.



RAD Sustains Regional Parks in City's Budget Crisis

Pittsburgh's four large regional parks—Frick, Highland, Riverview and Schenley—will not be severely affected by recent layoffs at City Hall, thanks largely to the Allegheny Regional Asset District (RAD). These parks have been spared the severe budget and staff cuts taking a toll on recreation centers and parks throughout the city because they are recognized by statute as “regional assets.” These parks receive dedicated funding from RAD, the body responsible for doling out money raised from the county sales tax.

PPC and DPW Beautify Riverview Park

The Department of Public Works will replace Jersey barriers at Snyder's Point with large rocks this winter. The rocks, which act as a natural barrier, will provide the same benefit as the concrete barriers. Native perennial plants from Schenley Park traffic islands will be planted in the Snyder's Point meadow to beautify the area and increase plant diversity. The planting will include Yellow Coneflower, Heath Aster, Harebell and Butterfly Weed. Deer exclosures, small fences built around sensitive plants, will be used on areas of the meadow to determine deer-browse pressure.

Deer exclosure projects in the Maridale area will slow deer impact on oak regeneration and forest floor cover, including wildflowers. Northside Urban Pathways students planted six Dogwoods and six Redbuds in tree baskets at the entrance of the Wissahickon trail. Five of the Dogwoods were affected by Anthracnose, a fungal disease. All of the Redbuds survived. The Dogwoods will be replaced with Redbuds this fall or early next spring.

The Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy will continue to work with DPW crews in Riverview Park to manage non-native invasive plants such as Japanese Knotweed, Norway Maple, Bittersweet Vine, Tree of Heaven and Multiflora Rose.



Local Artist's Drawings Inspired by Architecture

John Repko is a local artist with a background in fine arts and graphic design and currently is a full-time teacher. Inspired by his own home's rehabilitation and remodel, he has taken to studying and appreciating local architecture and enjoys using homes and details found on them to hone his drawing skills. John is available to create your custom home portraits or unique Christmas cards in ink. He can be reached at 412-322-9122.

Looking to Buy, Sell or Lease a Commercial Property on the Northside?

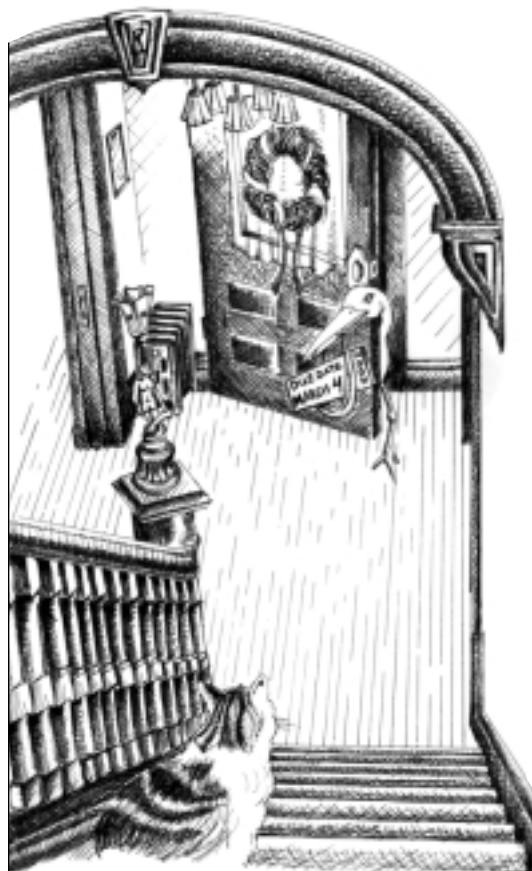
The Northside Leadership Conference (NLC) website, www.pittsburghnorthside.com, now features a Commercial Real Estate Locator to help interested business people buy, sell or lease commercial property in various business districts on the Northside.

The locator is easily accessible from the “Commercial Real Estate Locator” link on the NLC homepage. Visitors can browse available properties by neighborhood — including Allegheny West, Brighton Heights, Brightwood, Central Northside, East Allegheny — or by For Sale/For Lease designation. Listings include a photo, property specifics, and real estate contact information.

Renee Tappe, Business Development Assistant for the NLC, gathers property information from local real estate agencies and by driving through Northside neighborhoods. The Commercial Real Estate Locator is updated approximately every 2 weeks.



For further information or to get your commercial property listed on the NLC website, call Renee at 412-231-4714x26 or e-mail renee@pittsburghnorthside.com.



Byzantine Catholic Seminary Begins New Academic Year

They come from all Byzantine Catholic eparchies in the United States and one from Great Britain. One is a Franciscan Brother. One is in his final year of theology; six have just started. They are the 2003-2004 class of Byzantine Catholic seminarians.

Deacon Kevin Marks, a 4th year theology student of the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh, can be considered the elder statesman of the group. He looks forward to the successful completion of his last year and ordination to the priesthood. Michael O'Loughlin, of the Eparchy of Van Nuys, looks to complete his 3rd year of theology and become ordained deacon.

First year theology students include Adam Lowe, Eparchy of Van Nuys; Andrew Nagrant and Christian Tran, Eparchy of Parma; and Richard Plishka, Eparchy of Passaic. Added to that group are Brother Jerome Wolbert, ofm, Province of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Franciscans in Wisconsin; and Charles Works, Romanian Eparchy of Canton.

In addition to the seminarians, 13 other students are attending classes at the seminary; five in the School of Theology are currently enrolled in the Master of Arts in Theology (MAT) program and others are complementing their studies in the Deacon Formation Program, the Metropolitan Cantor Institute or are attending for personal enrichment.

"This is a diverse group who have already blended well and, in the process, brought tremendous energy to the seminary," said Fr. John Petro, seminary rector.

For 52 years the only seminary in North America for the formation of Byzantine Catholic priests has sat quietly in Observatory Hill at 3605 Perrysville Avenue, just at the bend of Riverview Avenue and the entrance to Riverview Park.

According to the Very Reverend Archpriest, John G. Petro, a Canonsburg native, rector and alumnus of the seminary, more than 250 priests have had their spiritual, intellectual, pastoral and individual formation on Observatory Hill. Those priests currently serve the hundreds of Byzantine Churches located throughout the United States.

Fr. John is the 14th rector of the seminary, an institution that became affiliated with the theology department of Duquesne University of Pittsburgh in 2001 to offer masters degrees to eligible students. In a continuing effort to remain current, the Byzantine Catholic Seminary became authorized in 2003 by the Pennsylvania Department of Education to issue masters degrees independently. Also in the works is an application to The Association of Theology Schools (ATS) to become accredited by that prestigious agency.

"The seminary is a vital and active place," Fr. John said. "In addition to seminarians from across the United States, we offer programs for many others interested in Byzantine spirituality."

Fr. John cited the Deacon Formation Program and the Metropolitan Cantor Institute as programs that serve men and women from around the country. He also described the seminary as a valuable community resource with seminarians serving field education at such organizations as Allegheny General Hospital, Light of Life Ministries, Pleasant Valley Homeless Shelter, and the Allegheny County Jail. In addition, community groups, such as Acorn Garden Club and Observatory Hill Inc., use the seminary facilities for their meetings.



CALLING ALL ALUMNI!

Do the names Incarnation Academy or Nativity of the Lord School ring a bell? We are on the lookout for graduates of the Catholic elementary school Incarnation Academy, previously known as Nativity. We want to hear your stories and share photos with you about the wonderful neighborhood school that has been in Observatory Hill for 77 years.

Remember the smell of chalk, the feel of plaid uniforms, the sound of the principal's laugh echoing down the hallway?

Call or write us. We look forward to hearing from you.

Incarnation Academy
4072 Franklin Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15214
412-931-2330



Holiday Greenery Fresh from the Forest

Incarnation Parish is sponsoring a holiday greens sale to benefit the Angel Fund, which directly provides tuition support for children and families.

*For more information, call
Incarnation Academy at 412-931-2330.*



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
mhardierdblue@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
Glenn Miller
Barbara Pace
Susan Rooney

Newsletter

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

Nominating

Entire Board

Neighborhood & Business Development

Scott Pipitone*
Dave Gilbreath
Barbara Glynn
Richard Sestric

Northside 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

Observatory Hill Journal Credits

Editor: Scott Pipitone Design

Design and Layout: Scott Pipitone, courtesy Scott Pipitone Design - 412-321-0879

Printing: Dave Gilbreath, courtesy Mercury Printing - 412-241-1189

November 2003



P. O. Box 7651

Pittsburgh, PA 15214-0651

Non-Profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 3666
Pittsburgh, PA