

OH Journal



The Newsletter for the Friends & Neighbors of Observatory Hill

August 2002

The Housing Initiative Is Now Underway

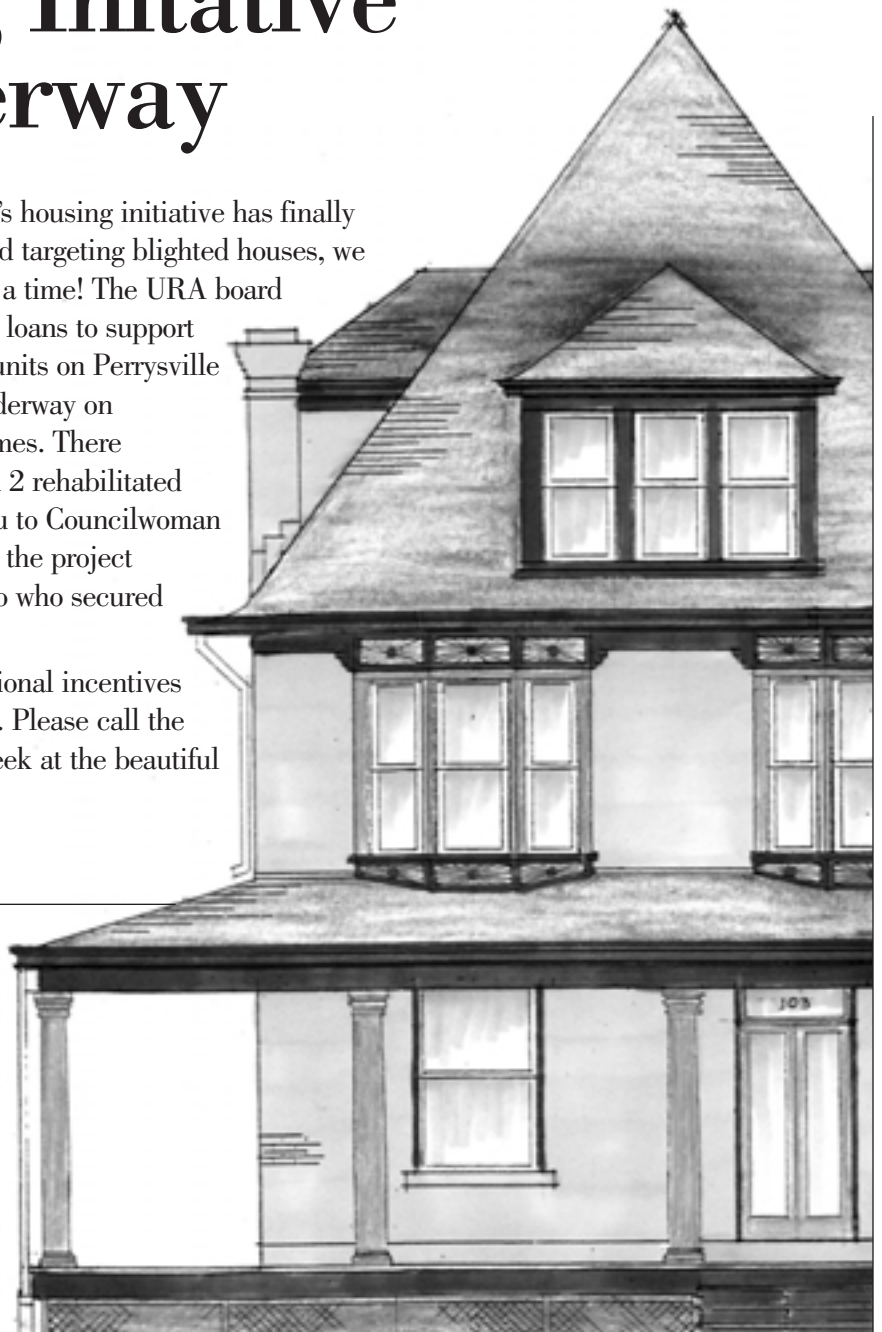
By Lynn Schraf

After 4 years of planning, Observatory Hill, Inc.'s housing initiative has finally begun! By responding to neighbors' concerns and targeting blighted houses, we are improving the neighborhood... one house at a time! The URA board approved approximately \$964,000 in grants and loans to support the \$1.6 million development of seven housing units on Perrysville Avenue and Marshall Avenue. Demolition is underway on 3 houses, which will be replaced with 3 new homes. There will be 2 rehabilitated houses on Perrysville and 2 rehabilitated houses on Marshall Avenue. A special thank you to Councilwoman Barbara Burns, who was instrumental in moving the project forward with funding, as well as Rep. Don Walko who secured a grant for us.

There is a \$40,000 deferred mortgage and additional incentives available for qualified homebuyers for each unit. Please call the Northside Leadership Conference for a sneak-peek at the beautiful additions to our neighborhood at 412-231-4714.

New and Renovated Houses for Sale

3000 Perrysville Avenue Single Family Rehab. \$135,000	3020 Perrysville Avenue Single Family Rehab. \$135,000
3002 Perrysville Avenue Single Family New \$139,000	103 Marshall Avenue Owner Occupied with 3 rd floor rental Rehab. \$206,000
3004 Perrysville Avenue Single Family New \$139,000	133 Marshall Avenue Owner Occupied with 3 rd floor rental Rehab. \$206,000
3006 Perrysville Avenue Single Family New \$139,000	



The Trails of Riverview Park

By Jim Doncaster, Riverview Park Alliance

The sun has been up for an hour, but the heat has not yet begun to rise this early July morning in Riverview Park. We have been in the woods ten minutes - my God daughter Ellyse, my dog Yankee, and I - when we hear rustling in the woods. Yankee cocks his head and sniffs the air. Another noise, then Ellyse and I see movement on a nearby tree. Yankee barks as three raccoons scamper up a bare tree trunk. Hushing Yankee, we observe for a few moments. Then, not wishing to disturb them, we move on.

Riverview Park teems with wildlife. Sightings of wild turkeys, rabbits, squirrels and ground hogs are commonplace, and the deer are seemingly ubiquitous. I have seen as many as ten together when the leaves are off the trees, and others have reported even larger herds in years past.

The key to such encounters at Riverview is getting away from the developed areas. For more than a hundred years, it has been the green areas that have attracted city dwellers, offering them peace and tranquility in the midst of an urban landscape. The trail system then and now has provided the gateway to this experience.

The trails of Riverview Park vary in width, length, level of maintenance and degree of difficulty. The widest and best-maintained trails are the former carriage and bridle paths. Principal among these are the Marshall Trail which runs from the Village in the Park apartments to the park entrance on Riverview Avenue; the Bob Harvey Trail, the only trail with signage at its trailheads, starts behind the old Nature Center and bisects the woodland enclosed within the loop road; the Wissahickon Trail which meanders through the beautiful Wissahickon valley with one trail head behind the old park office and the other at the Mairdale park entrance; and the Archery Trail which begins at the loop road's horseshoe bend and ends at the Wissahickon Trail at Mairdale. All of these trails are easy to moderate in difficulty. All are maintained by Pittsburgh's Public Works Department and are used by a variety of outdoor enthusiasts including hikers, runners, trail bikers, equestrians, and when snow is plentiful, cross country skiers.

The nature paths comprise the other major category of trails within Riverview Park. While many of these follow the contours of the hills within the park, others run up and down, intersecting the level trails and connecting them together. Trail difficulty ranges from easy to difficult, and like the wider trail network, is used by a variety of outdoor enthusiasts. Trail maintenance on the nature trails is spotty, usually conducted by volunteers if at all.

Although the trails are one of Riverview's main attractions, the trail system is not without its challenges. While some trails have been adopted and maintained by individuals or groups, most remain neglected. Some of the wider bridle trails, for example, sport continuously wet and boggy areas due to a crumbling infrastructure of pipes that once diverted the water underground. Meanwhile some of the narrower nature trails have their own problems with downed trees, erosion, and litter. Additionally, trail signage in the park is rare, and maps that allow one to follow the lacework of trails rarer still. (Currently both the Riverview Park Alliance and the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy are working on Riverview trail maps; the former should be ready within the year.)

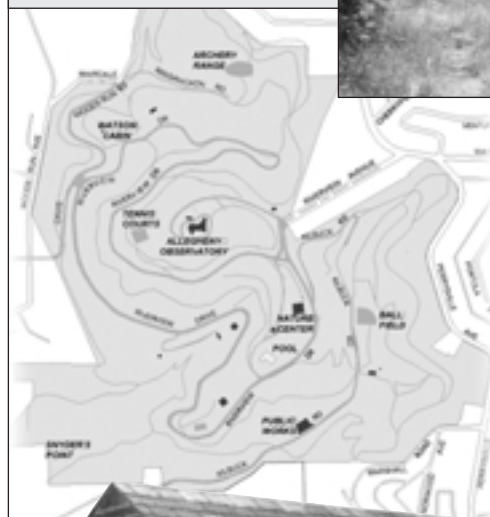
Finally, the competing uses of the trail system must be faced and balanced. Because trail use is not heavy, trail bikers, hikers, dog people, and horseback riders manage to coexist and live in harmony. For the good of all involved and the perpetuation of park resources, it behooves user groups to open a dialogue with one another and address trail maintenance and use issues.



If you are interested in the trails of Riverview Park and interested in being part of the solution, please contact the Riverview Park Alliance at (412) 321-3626 or the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy at (412) 682-7275.



Map of Riverview Park
Over 20 miles of trails



Angels Sighted: The Pittsburgh Project

By Barbara Pace

How do you recognize an Angel? Do they sprout wings like John Travolta in the movie, *Michael*? Do bells ring like they did for the angel "Clarence" in, *It's a Wonderful Life*? Do they have glowing lights surrounding them as they sometimes do on the TV series, *Touched by an Angel*?

I believe it's more of a special feeling that you become aware of when you are in an Angel's presence. Recently angels appeared to me in the form of young teens traveling from the state of North Carolina to participate in "The Pittsburgh Project." They arrived at my home in Observatory Hill the week of July 6, 2002.

"The Pittsburgh Project," under the directorship of Saleem Ghubril, has been involved in home improvement projects since the summer of 1986. These highly motivated youths, direct their energies and talents towards many grateful homeowners throughout our region.

My band of angels consisted of the following: Team Leader, Jon Whitley, who is pursuing a career in the ministry; Brian Groves, age 12; Will DeWese, also 12, and his mom, Sandra DeWese, who are in their first year with "The Pittsburgh Project;" Alex Mann (12), who has been assisting homeowners for two years; Bryan Carmichael (12); Alexis Worthington (13); Julie Kirsch (13), who has a twin sister working in a different group in Pittsburgh; Minnie Grace; and Marjorie Jewell.



These industrious worker bees of the Lord tore up twenty-year-old carpeting, foam, and nails. In addition, they cleared vegetation out of the back yard that had grown so high you could no longer call it grass. Their arduous endeavors were completed in spite of the humid, 80-degree temperatures.

That week, there were close to 150 people from five different states sharing their talents and hardy efforts to improve the quality of life on the North Side, as well as other city regions in need of repairs. At the end of the week, the group hosted a dinner and musical program to literally "Thank the Homeowners" for the privilege of being able to serve the Lord by working on their homes.

The "good vibrations" created by the evening's festivities, and especially by the group's unselfish, backbreaking hours of labor, will be felt and cherished for a long time to come!

The café at "The Pittsburgh Project" displays CDs showcasing the lyrical talents of these young people to help raise revenues. In addition, the Register of Wills of Allegheny County employees have earmarked their Friday dress-down contributions for two consecutive years towards "The Pittsburgh Project."

Thank You!

By the Co-Chairs of the Riverview Park's Earth Day Event, Barbara Pace and Will Forndenbacher

Many thanks to all the people and businesses for their support in making our Earth Day event at Riverview Park on April 28, 2002, a success. Close to two hundred people participated in clearing the trails, the walk-a-thon, and removing trash from Riverview Park and the surrounding areas of Observatory Hill.

But tending to Riverview Parks' needs that spring day encompassed a good deal of playtime too. The biggest treat of the day was the childrens' delight in being able to ride horses from the Chiyu Corral. In the Activities building, the Aviary's trained personnel presented their unique feathered friends and kites were let loose on Observatory Hill.

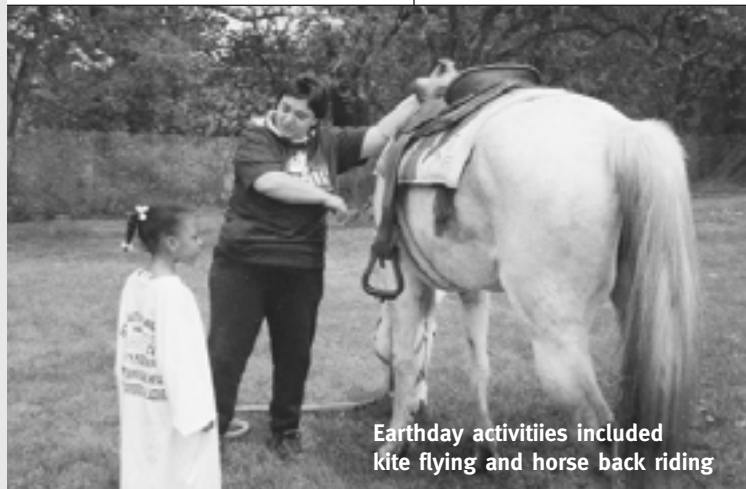
Please make note of the business' and groups who not only helped in making your park look its very best, but gave unselfishly of their time and/or their goods. Direct your hard earned dollars towards those establishments that helped your neighborhood.

You proved as a community that you care about your neighborhood. Let's keep our garbage can lids on tight, don't place your trash out before the eve of trash pick-up, and please clean up what they have left behind.

Let's keep Pittsburgh truly
SOMEPLACE SPECIAL!

Special thanks to,

Barbara Burns
Boy Scout Troop 678
Breadworks
Campfire Boys and Girls
Chiyo Corral
The Crying Onion
Cub Scout Pack 327
Duguesne Light Company
Giant Eagle / McIntyre
Home Depot/Ross Park
Kuhn's Market
Jenny Lee Bakery
Lynn Lee Catering
Media Play
Minton Family
National Aviary
Oliver High School
Perry Traditional H S
Pittsburgh Parks
Duane Ashley, Bob Lacki,
and Denny Meyers
Presley Ridge
Schorr Bakery
Three Rivers Youth
Waldon's Book Store/Ross



Earthday activities included
kite flying and horse back riding

Chapel Shelter Progress

Submitted by Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy

The Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy is pleased to be partnering with the City of Pittsburgh and neighborhood residents to restore the Chapel Shelter in Riverview Park.

Ellis Schmidlapp, of Landmarks Design Associates, a local firm noted for historic restoration, has been hired by the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, with the approval of the city, as project architect. The PPC is also in the process of retaining landscape architects to develop a plan for the restoration of the 4 acres surrounding the Chapel Shelter.

It is expected that both sets of plans will be completed in 2002 and work on the site completed in 2003. The shelter will be available for permitting in 2004. Two public meetings have already been held and more will be conducted as the project moves forward. The city has reserved funds for the building project from its RAD allotment and the PPC has raised money to pay for the architects and landscape restoration.

The plan is to completely restore the building – many of the interesting architectural elements were removed in 1954 when the building was “modernized.”

The dormers and steeple will be replicated and the concrete porch floor replaced with a wood porch. A new roof and new windows to match the historic design will also be added and the building will be heated for year round use. Councilwoman Barbara Burns’ office has been very helpful in moving the project along.



Pittsburgh’s Finest in Their Finery

By Barbara Pace

The Honorable Mayor, Tom Murphy, and the County’s Chief Executive, Jim Roddey, welcomed an illustrious crowd of near 500 in the largest tent Riverview Park has ever been home to for this year’s Spring Hat Luncheon.

Mayor Murphy challenged the group to wear a hat to next year’s fund-raising event that represents each one’s interests. The white construction hat worn by the Mayor was to reflect all the building currently going on in our city. Jim Roddey made a playful reference to his straw hat matching his suit and tie.

The huge tent was perched high on Observatory Hill behind the playground area at Riverview Park. The tables were decorated with large bluish-purple hydrangea, which were sold afterward to raise revenues for the City Parks. Handmade crickets and other insect life also adorned the tables looking so lifelike one was almost tempted to shoo them away. The *Pittsburgh Tribune’s* feature story on last year’s Spring Hat Luncheon event was made into unique, little chained bags for each table setting with unusual surprises inside.

The food, served by the superb staff of the Duquesne Club, was delicious. The hand-embroidered cocktail napkins and sweet melodic sounds of Serious Inquiry Band enhanced the afternoon, enabling each of us to feel sublimely pampered and special.

Meg Cheever can count on a booked event for next year’s Spring Hat Luncheon given the fine eye to detail that was paid to everything. Especially given that Teresa Heinz and her husband, Senator Kerry from New England, will be honoring our Pittsburgh fund-raiser with their attendance again next year.



Cool Jazz and Hot Movies

Concerts and movies continue to draw the crowds to Riverview Park each Saturday evening beginning at 7:00.

The selection of musicians by the Jazz Society’s Director, Tony Mowod, is truly among Pittsburgh’s finest. The movies follow the music and begin as soon as it gets dark.

The festivities end Saturday, August 31st with the melodic tones of Etta Cox and the Al Dowe Quintet, followed by the showing of *Evolution*.

Much thanks to City Councilwoman, Barbara Burns, and Pittsburgh Parks staff.

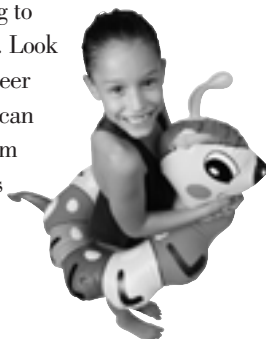


Pittsburgh Parks Director, Duane Ashley, and staff enjoying the festivities

Swim Night A Success

The numbers grew steadily each Thursday evening as word of mouth spread about the reasonably priced \$1.00 per family member fee to swim from 7:00 pm to 8:45 pm at Perry High School.

Thanks to the parents and community neighbors who were good enough to volunteer an evening to assist the lifeguards. Look for upcoming volunteer opportunities so we can continue this program after school resumes this fall.



Councilwoman Burns August Update

Remove Abandoned Vehicles Now (RAVN)

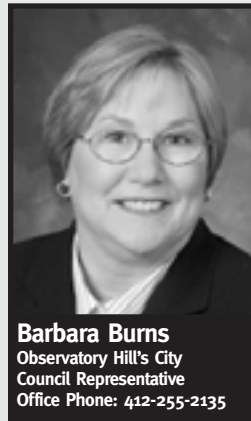
On July 15th, Mayor Murphy kicked off an initiative to rid the City of abandoned and junk vehicles. At this time Mayor Murphy officially announced the "60 Days of Grace" program in which the City will tow abandoned vehicles free of charge. This is part of the campaign to clean Pittsburgh's neighborhoods. Mayor Murphy encourages anyone with an abandoned vehicle to take advantage of this one-time opportunity. Anyone who owns a junk vehicle can have his or her vehicle removed during the "60 Days of Grace" by calling the Mayor's Service Center at 412-255-2621. A notarized title must be brought in to the Mayor's Service Center in order to have the vehicle towed. The make, model and location of the vehicle must also be provided. After the "60 Days of Grace," which ends on September 15, 2002, has expired the City will begin an aggressive Citywide ticketing campaign of abandoned and junk vehicles on neighborhood streets. Ticketed vehicles will receive a \$92.50 fine in addition to towing fees once the vehicle has been removed.

Rodeos

On Tuesday, July 23rd, Pittsburgh City Council voted 5-2 to reject the relaxation of the 1990 City Council anti-cruelty ordinance to allow the use of bucking straps. If this legislation had passed bucking straps, leather straps that are tied around the bellies of bulls and broncos to make them kick and buck, would have been allowed. According to the bill's sponsor, Councilman Motznik, this would have allowed rodeos to return to Pittsburgh. However, Council voted down the legislation. Therefore the 1990 anti-cruelty ordinance, which prohibits the use of electric prods, sharpened spurs and bucking straps will remain the same.

Council Recess

The summer recess for Pittsburgh City Council begins on August 6th and ends September 2nd. Council will resume its regular meeting schedule beginning on Tuesday, September 3, 2002, at 10:00 a.m. My office staff, Nancy Schaefer and Lynn Bonenberger, will still be available to take your calls at 412-255-2135.



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

North Side Neighborhood Day

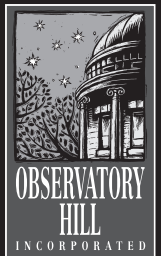
By Kimberly Bonenberger

Carnegie Science Center is hosting the 6th Annual *North Side Neighborhood Day* in cooperation with North Side community organizations on Saturday, October 5, 2002 from 10 am to 9 pm.

People of all ages who live and work on the North Side are invited to experience the Science Center along with a festive celebration including special performers, local North Side exhibitors, hands-on activities, and food for the whole family.

Beginning in September, visit local North Side businesses to pick up a *North Side Neighborhood Day* coupon. Adults and children pay a discounted admission price with a coupon of **\$5 for a General Admission/OMNIMAX[®] ticket.**

For more information call 412.237.3400.



Wanted

Young people to contribute their ideas, stories, poems, and drawings to the

Observatory Hill's quarterly Journal. All ages welcome to participate.

Of equal value would be YOUR input - whoever you are. This is your paper, too!

TAP Program: Savings for Tomorrow's College Tuition at Today's Prices

By State Representative Don Walko, 412-321-5523

The cost of a college education continues to skyrocket. Just this year, tuition at state-owned and state-related universities increased by more than 10 percent. Through the Tuition Account Program (TAP) you can buy tuition credits at today's prices for tomorrow tuition protecting your children from higher tuition rates in the future.

Under the program, deposits will be made to accounts administered by the State Treasurer. Unlike mutual funds and other market investments the Commonwealth will guarantee that deposits will keep pace with tuition inflation.

TAP funds can be used at any college or technical school, public or private, anywhere in the nation. Once a TAP account is established, anyone can contribute. The minimum deposit amount is \$25. And a TAP account can contain up to \$290,000 in investments and earnings.

These earnings are not subject to federal income tax while they remain in the account. Until January 1, 2011, earnings accumulated in your TAP account will not be subject to federal income tax when withdrawn for qualified college expenses.

For more information, you can call TAP at 1-800-440-4000, or visit the TAP Web site at www.patap.org.



Representative Don Walko
with son Nicholas and
Nathaniel (not pictured)

Annual Registration Form for Membership to Observatory Hill Inc.

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

Members 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 PM. All are welcome to listen and participate!

The OHI Board

Susan Rooney	Andy Balint.....412-322-4533
President.....412-323-0899	Moses Charper
Scott Pipitone	Skip McCrea412-231-3750
Vice President.....412-321-7155	Quynh McGuire412-321-5595
Brian Pinter	Barbara Pace.....412-231-4379
Secretary412-323-8868	Brian Pinter412-323-8868
Dave Gilbreath	Lynn Schraf.....412-321-5043
Treasurer412-321-5043	Richard Sestric412-231-8134

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Entire Board

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Quynh McGuire
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