

OH Journal



The Newsletter for the Friends & Neighbors of Observatory Hill

April 2002

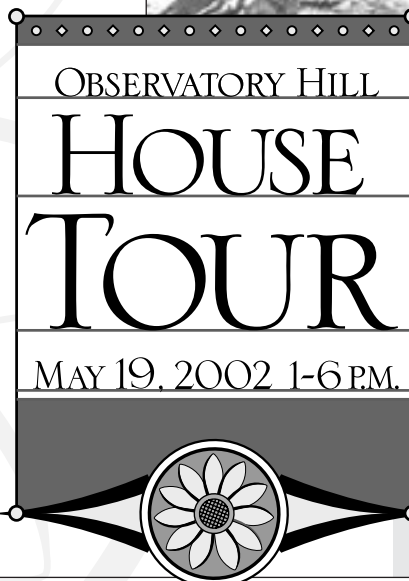
Observatory Hill House Tour

May 19th Marks Tenth Annual Observatory Hill House Tour

Spring is about to burst into bloom. Time to think about planting the garden. Doing the yard work. And working on that long list of things to do around the house—things you put off from last summer. Before your schedule fills up with a list of *have to* events, why not mark your calendar for an event that you won't want to miss? Join your neighbors or bring your friends and family for an afternoon of historic architecture and charming interiors at the tenth annual Observatory Hill House Tour on Sunday, May 19th.

Observatory Hill has an array of interesting architectural styles, ranging from Arts and Crafts to Victorian and Edwardian. The house tour showcases original homes and buildings that have undergone restoration and are helping to return the neighborhood to its original splendor. It also demonstrates to other communities in the Pittsburgh area and beyond the positive results of reinvesting in our city's neighborhoods.

The annual house tour is Observatory Hill, Inc.'s largest fundraiser, and the money generated will be reinvested in the community. This year, many new homeowners will open their homes for the tour. If you'd like to add your home to the tour list, it's not too late. And if volunteering your house is not possible, you can still volunteer your time. Lots of people in the community contribute to the success of the house tour each year, as docents and in other ways. Why not join them? In any case, c'mon out and have a look. It'll be much more fun than staying home and painting the garage.



Tickets are \$12 in advance and \$15 the day of the event.

Groups of ten or more will receive a \$2 discount if tickets are purchased in advance.

Call 412.231.2887 or visit <http://trfn.clpgh.org/orgs/obhill/> for more information.

The house tour tentatively begins at Riverview Presbyterian Church, with shuttle service along the main tour route.



Promoting the NorthSide?

Observatory Hill Inc. (OHI) is a member of the Northside Leadership Conference (NSLC). OHI, the NSLC and the Northside Chamber of Commerce (NCC) are working together to promote growth and revitalization of Northside neighborhoods and business communities. The NSLC and NCC marketing committee is comprised of representatives from Northside institutions, corporations and businesses. In an effort to increase public awareness and promote the advantages of living and working in the Northside, the committee has developed a new marketing campaign called, "Northside—More Than You Know."

To support the new campaign, a neighborhood guide pocket folder and "Northside—More Than You Know" brochure have been created. In addition, the NSLC web site was developed and went live early in March 2002 at www.pittsburghnorthside.com.

The pocket folders contain information relating to the history, community events and nearby attractions of each neighborhood. The brochure and website feature a map of Northside attractions, restaurants and nightlife, museums, sports and various other points of interest. The online map is interactive and links to many of the businesses listed, increasing patronage to the area.

The web site further details the NSLC's objectives and goals. Twelve Northside neighborhoods are featured, including community organized events, plans and projects. A listing of neighborhood housing for sale, a dynamic calendar and NSLC job postings will be updated regularly. Additionally, City Shops projects and nine Northside commercial districts are also featured.

The "Northside—More Than You Know" campaign will be a beneficial tool not only for the NSLC and OHI, but also for all Northside neighborhood organizations. For more information, a brochure or neighborhood guide pocket folder, call the NSLC at 412-231-5306 or log on to the NSLC website at www.pittsburghnorthside.com.

NorthSide
More here than you know



The Northside's website is the place to go to get information on fun events for you to take part in.

Calendar

April

Family Swim Nights

Thursday Nights—7:00 pm to 9:00 pm
March, April, and May
Perry Traditional Academy

Hola! Mexican Independence Day Celebration

April 5, 2002

First Annual Light-Up Night

April 8, 2002

Community Meeting

The Observatory Hill Neighborhood Development Plan

April 15, 2002—7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Byzantine Catholic Seminary

Earth Day at Riverview Park

April 27
Clean Up: 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Celebration: 12 p.m. to 3 p.m.

May

Old Hats, New Hats, Blue Hats, Cute Hats
Pittsburgh Parks, Conservancy
4th annual fund raising event
May 4, 2002
Riverview Park

OHI House Tour
Sunday, May 19, 2002
1:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Restoration corner

Several months ago, I spent the better part of a Saturday morning trying to get a bathroom sink unclogged using a plumber's snake. After several unsuccessful attempts I thought that I had succeeded in breaking through the clog as I watched the water go down the drain. Unfortunately, later in the day I discovered that I hadn't broken through the clog but had actually broken through the back of the pipe exiting the sink. The water that I had earlier witnessed running down the drain was actually running through the wall and finally through the ceiling in the powder room below. This was not going to be a good day!

I needed to cut an opening in the wall to expose the pipe and found that it was in an awkward position and after a few busted knuckles decided that it was time to call a plumber. After assessing the situation he came to the conclusion that the drainage system needed to be replaced and gave me an estimate that equaled the cost of a new car. After some discussion, I convinced him that I was only interested in replacing the damaged section of pipe and not paying to put his kids through college. As he handed me the bill for \$160 I had to wonder – was he trying to take me for a ride?

Actually, I was pleased with his work and have had him back for a few more projects outside of my comfort level as a weekend handyman. The following are some warning signs to look for to weed out the fraudulent contractors and suggestions that may be useful in finding a reputable contractor:

Make sure they are listed in the phone book. Not having a listed number may indicate a fly-by-night operation.

Only accepts cash. A legitimate business should have appropriate financial accounts.

Solicits door-to-door. Most contractors find enough work by word of mouth. If they need to drum up work door-to-door, they probably are not an established operation.

Asks you to pay for the job up front. They'll be long gone before your project starts.

Makes promises to good to be true. It may be a cliché but it's true – if it sounds too good to be true – it probably is.

Pressures you into signing an agreement for repairs. Before signing anything, get a second opinion if you feel uncomfortable or pressured.

So if your idea of a good Saturday morning doesn't consist of sitting in a puddle of dirty sink water you should follow these basic suggestions in finding a reputable contractor. I have better things to do with my time on the weekend – like repairing the water damaged powder-room ceiling.

Hola! Mexican Independence Day

Families, grab your kids and come celebrate Mexican Independence Day 1 month early! We have your passport to travel to different regions of Mexico to play games and have fun! There will be prizes, Mexican/American food and more!

FREE ADMISSION! Minimal charge for games and food.
Spice up your evening and join us:

Friday, April 5, 2002 6-8PM at the Incarnation Academy
4072 Franklin Road, Observatory Hill, PA 15214
412 931-2330



Light-Up Night—April 8, 2002

The first ever Northside Light-Up Night, in conjunction with the opening home game of the Pittsburgh Pirates at PNC Park, is meant to showcase the many assets of Pittsburgh's

Northside communities and unveil the campaign "Northside—More Than You Know."

The Northside marketing committee is working with communities, businesses, nonprofit institutions and various attractions to provide a full day of activities and events for those attending the Pirates game, visitors who regularly visit the Northside, as well as those who may need to rediscover the many fine attributes of the Northside once again.

For more information, contact Chris Taylor, Business Development Specialist, Northside Leadership Conference at (412) 231-4714, or email him at Christopher@nslconf.org

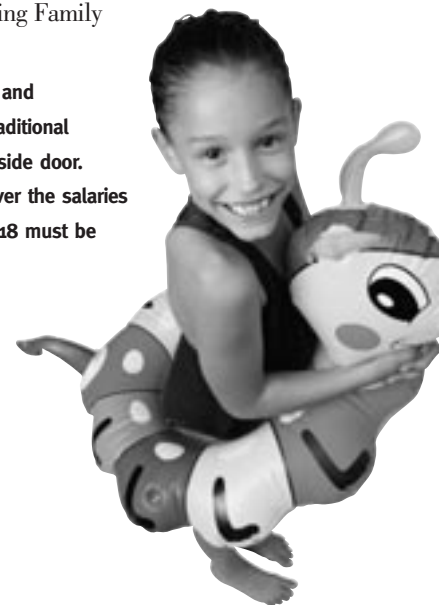


Make a Splash!

Observatory Hill Inc. is sponsoring Family Swim Night!

Every Thursday during March, April, and May 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm at Perry Traditional Academy—enter the Semicer Street side door.
A \$1.00 Donation is requested to cover the salaries of the lifeguards. All children under 18 must be accompanied by an adult.

Call OHI at 412 231-2887 with any questions.



Earth Day

The Riverview Park Alliance and OHI is undertaking a clean-up effort of Riverview Park and our surrounding community in celebration of Earth Day. The clean-up effort will take place April 27, 2002 from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm.

Observatory Hill, Inc. is planning a community day celebration immediately following all the industrious labor of the morning workers. Food, music, games, activities and surprises are being planned from 12:00 pm – 3:00 pm. Bring your friends, relatives and neighbors. Hopefully, they will put on the gloves, utilize the bags (provided), dig in and stuff them full!

When Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy was doing a survey a few summers ago, one of our Board members was surprised to interview many Wexford, and other distant community residents who were walking our serene Riverview Park's setting on an early weekend morning. One of our Board members had her grandson who lives in Butler County help clean our community park during a similar campaign.

We hope we can count on you to take pride in your own back yard.



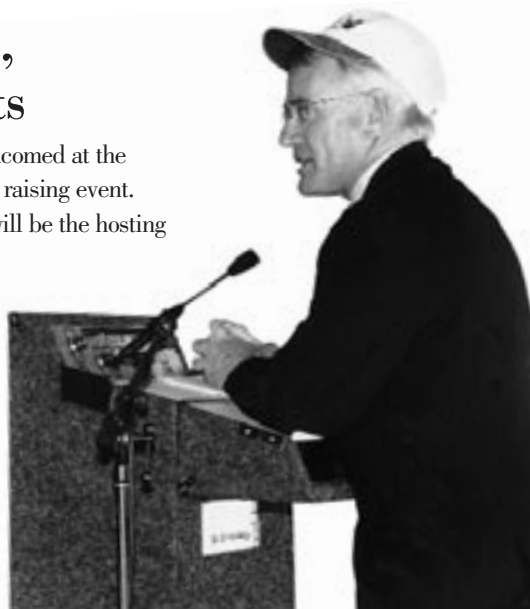
Old Hats, New Hats, Blue Hats, Cute Hats

Even ugly, or "Cat in the Hat" hats will be welcomed at the Pittsburgh Park's Conservancy 4th annual fund raising event. This May 4, 2002, our own Riverview Park, will be the hosting green space for this festive event.

The next time you are attending the Phipps Conservancy flower shows, just walk a little further down the road, and you'll be able to experience the wonderful benefits of the hard work and dedicated efforts of the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy. There you will find a totally renovated visitor's center for Schenley Park, which has been restored to its Old World's intended charm. Similarly, the beautiful stone walled entrance to Frick Park is another positive result of Meg Cheever, President of the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, and her talented team's labor.

Co-Chairing this year's afternoon delight will be Ritchie Scaife and Audrey Hillman Fisher. Both of these women's families have long been known in Western Pennsylvania for their philanthropic efforts. Even our own Mayor Murphy braved the ladies luncheon wearing a hat, along with the other 500 attendees at the \$150.00 donation luncheon last year.

Groups, or individuals interested in contributing to this partially tax deductible gift (which the majority of these proceeds goes towards improving our parks), can contact Shawn Butler for tickets by calling 412-828-4441, or e-mail her at butlerproduct@aol.com.



Mayor Murphy was the featured guest at last years event.

AGH Employment Update

Allegheny General Hospital (AGH) has updated the Observatory Hill Inc. outreach organization resource list. AGH utilizes both a telephone-based Jobline and also a website that provides immediate access and up-to-date information about current employment opportunities at AGH. The Jobline can be accessed by calling 1-877-JOB-REVIEW or by logging on to www.wpahs.org.

Owe Less in Taxes and Get Money Back?!



The Earned Income Tax Credit (EIC) is a special federal tax benefit for low-to moderate-income workers who worked full-or part-time in 2001. Family size and income determine eligibility.

To take advantage of this tax benefit, families with children should file form 1040 or 1040A and attach Schedule EIC. Families with no children living in the household in 2001 should file form 1040, 1040A or 1040EZ. Pennsylvania also offers a similar tax benefit, PA Tax Back. For more information, call Casey Capitolo at Just Harvest, 412-464-0739.

Males Are Better Drivers

Was debated in a *playful* atmosphere during the two morning sessions attended by one of OHI's Board members recently. If you would like a discount on your auto insurance, and you are over fifty years of age, you can call Senior Friends, Inc. at (412-621-4199). The \$10.00 fee for the two morning classes (Saturday's are available) is totally refundable by your insurance company.

Councilwoman Burns Legislative Report

Property Assessments

Information with regard to the Allegheny County 2002 Property Tax Assessment values is changing daily. If you feel that your Allegheny County 2002 Property Tax Assessment value is incorrect, I urge you to file with the County for an appeal hearing. (Unless you filed for an appeal in 2001 and you have not had your hearing yet. If this is the case, both your 2001 and 2002 appeal will be heard at the same time and you do not need to file another appeal form.)

City Controller Tom Flaherty is again offering assistance to City residents. If you have questions regarding the Controller's offer of free legal assistance with your appeal process or are interested in obtaining a low cost (\$100) appraisal of your home call Kevin Forsythe in the City Controller's office at 412-255-2479. Appeal forms are available in the County Office Building located at 542 Forbes Avenue, Room 334. There is also an Allegheny County public information number 412-350-4600 with County employees who will answer questions regarding Allegheny County's 2002 Property Tax Assessment.

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) volunteers will be available to provide free assistance to low income, elderly, non-English speaking and disabled individuals beginning on February 5, 2002 until April 15, 2002 on the 2nd Floor of the City-County Building (take the Ross Street elevators). This help is available Monday through Friday from 9:30 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. No one will be accepted into the office after 2:30 p.m. Individuals will be helped on a first come, first serve basis.

Shelter Permits Available

Saturday, March 23rd is the first day you are able to purchase shelter permits. Permit Day will be held in the lobby of the City-County Building. Only City residents may apply for permits at this time. Proof of residency and age will be required. Please bring one of the following: drivers license, state I.D. card, voter registration, current years tax receipts, etc. Permits are issued based on a lottery system. After permit day, applications will be considered on a first-come, first-served basis with priority given to requests from City residents.

All applications must be accompanied by a nonrefundable fee in the form of a Cashier's Check, Certified Check, or Money Order made payable to the Treasurer, City of Pittsburgh. (Cash will only be accepted on Permit Day.)

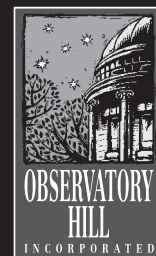
All shelters require a mandatory alcohol permit. The current fee is \$50.00.



The Northside Initiative

The Office of Mayor Tom Murphy, The Office of Councilwoman Barbara Burns and Observatory Hill, Inc. invite you to a Community Meeting to discuss The Observatory Hill Neighborhood Development Plan Monday, April 15, 2002, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Byzantine Catholic Seminary located at Perrysville and Riverview Avenues.

The Community Builders and the Northside Leadership Conference have assembled a project team to create a Neighborhood Plan for Observatory Hill. Please come review their findings, discuss opportunities and constraints, and share your thoughts on issues to be addressed as we move forward on this important neighborhood initiative. All residents and business owners from Observatory Hill are invited.



OHI's Call for Action

This is your community, your park, your civic group working under the name of Observatory Hill, Inc. Please come, be involved and participate in any way you can. Our committees need your input. Your newspaper needs your ideas, talents and energies. See you soon!

Incarnation Restoration

Incarnation Restoration, a group of volunteers from Incarnation Parish, located at Franklin Road in Observatory Hill, have struck again. In November of 2001, approximately 50 volunteers painted the entrance lobby of the Church. Volunteers also replaced the drop down ceiling with a new 'faux tin' ceiling in the rear lobby of the Church. Volunteers also moved pews in the sanctuary to better accommodate physically impaired worshippers.

In the middle of February, another 40 volunteers swarmed through Incarnation Academy to make improvements to the kindergarten and primary grades floor. Improvements included new paint and graphic design in the kindergarten, new storage cabinets, and miscellaneous painting and repairs.

If you want to become a part of Incarnation Restoration, please call Mark Masterson (412) 931-6771 or Mark Fatla (412) 322-5214. We hope to conduct future volunteer spruce up projects later this year.



Annual Registration Form for Membership to Observatory Hill Inc.

Mail to: Observatory Hill Inc.
P.O. Box 7651, Pittsburgh, PA 15214

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	Lorri Lankiewicz412-322-4020
Scott Pipitone	Skip McCrea412-231-3750
Vice President.....412-321-7155	Quynh McGuire412-321-5595
Mary Ellen Burdick	Barbara Pace.....412-231-4379
Secretary412-231-8310	Brian Pinter412-323-8868
Dave Gilbreath	Lynn Schraf.....412-321-5043
Treasurer412-321-5043	Richard Sestric412-231-8134

Committees

House Tour

Lynn Schraf*
Entire Board

Neighborhood & Business Development

Scott Pipitone*
Richard Sestric
Dave Gilbreath
Barbara Glynn

Public Safety

Susan Rooney*

Parks

Barbara Pace*
Barbara Glynn

Membership

Rich Sestric*
Mary Ellen Burdick
Susan Rooney
Barbara Pace

Nominating

Entire Board

Newsletter

Barbara Pace*
Brian Pinter
Scott Pipitone
Rich Sestric

Entertainment

Brian Pinter*
Quynh McGuire
Susan Rooney
Mary Ellen Burdick

North Side Leadership Conference (NSLC)

Scott Pipitone*
Richard Sestric

Housing

Lynn Schraf
Quynh McGuire
Barbara Pace
Mary Ellen Burdick
Dave Gilbreath
Barbara Glynn
Mark Reisman
Susan Rooney

*(Chairperson)

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Preschool Questionnaire



Incarnation Academy and Incarnation of the Lord Parish

4072 Franklin Road | Observatory Hill, Pa. 15214 | 412-931-2330

Incarnation Academy is a K-8th Grade Catholic School located in the Observatory Hill section of the North Side. Incarnation Academy guides your child to be a leader with a progressive style of teaching.

We are doing a market survey to determine the need for a quality pre-school that would continue the one-on-one attention to each child's special needs and leaning style that is the core of Incarnation Academy's philosophy. Please take a few minutes to complete this form. All information is optional and will be considered confidential.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: () _____

Number of children five or under? _____

Ages of children _____ _____ _____ _____

Is your child currently enrolled in a preschool?

If so, please indicate where _____

How much are you currently paying? _____

Are you currently enrolled for September 2002? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If different options were available which would you be interested in?

☐ 2 day ☐ 3 day ☐ 5 day

☐ Morning ☐ Afternoon

What would you like to find in a preschool for your child? (Check all that apply)

☐ Snack ☐ Art ☐ Other ☐ Specify

☐ Education ☐ Music

Surveys may be returned to the Incarnation Academy, Incarnation of the Lord Church (in collection basket or box at rear of church) as well as the following locations:

Any of school crossing guards at Bascom, the firehouse and Perry High School intersections will accept the surveys.

• Schorr's Bakery • National City Bank • Fischer's Pharmacy

