



Newsletter of the Center City Residents' Association

Vol. 13 No. 4 Winter 2022

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## Town Square

# Fighting Gun Violence with Families, Fun, and Football

By Hugh Taft-Morales



Aliyah Maduro

John Spagnola, 1984 Eagles Offensive MVP, leads the crowd in the Eagles fight song, with Philadelphia Police officers holding up cue cards for the crowd.

I was feeling a wee bit nervous. It was nearing 11am on Friday, September 16, and the Peace Day Philly event I'd been planning for six months was about to get started. The idea was to host a fun gathering and give away 100 footballs, as a means to build community and counter gun violence. I was particularly pleased with the name I'd thought up: "Footballs Not Firearms." But the process had been exhausting and now—as I waited for people to show up—I wasn't convinced the result would be worth the effort. "I'll never do this again," I swore to myself.

That's the way it is with new coalitions. You don't know how things will turn out. For this march and rally, Peace Day Philly founder Lisa Parker and I had brought together the Philadelphia Police Department, the office of Councilmember Maria D. Quiñones Sánchez, and the Philadelphia Eagles organization. Lisa and I had met numerous times with the police inspector of the Northwest Division and the captains of the 24th, 25th, and 26th districts to plan the date, route, and theme.

A friend of mine, former Eagles tight end John Spagnola, helped us secure a donation of 100 footballs and an appearance by Eagles cheerleaders. All good. But to make it a success, we still needed the most important demographic: young folks!

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The point was to help young Philadelphians and police officers get to know each other better. Our rally site was in Fairhill Square near 4th and Lehigh. The youth in that neighborhood are greatly affected by gun violence, gangs, and drugs. Many view the police with suspicion. The mistrust and violence spreads easily throughout the city.

If we could help steer just one or two young people away from dangerous lifestyles, or if we could forge a healthier relationship between a police officer and even one young person, then Lisa and I would feel our efforts had paid off. But if no young people showed up, then we would have failed at even those modest aspirations.

Fifteen minutes after our scheduled start time, thank goodness four busloads of high school kids arrived. They joined dozens of younger children—parents in tow—who had been coming in from the neighborhood. A DJ cranked the music. The police department's community affairs officer, Ryan Barksdale, danced with the cheerleaders, to the delight of all. And my mood swung from grim to joyful. The grateful families, the laughter of children, and the good-natured participation of 40 police officers made my eyes tear up.



John Spagnola, Eagles Offensive MVP from 1984, leads the crowd in the Eagles fight song.



Students marchers full of positive energy.

At 65, I probably should have developed the emotional maturity to ride the rollercoaster of event planning with equanimity. Alas, I have not. So, I couldn't help but chuckle when John, my Eagles friend, spoke about "next year's rally." I knew, then, that I would sign on for another wild ride. Want to come along? Please email me at [LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org](mailto:LeaderHugh@phillyethics.org) if you can help with the 2023 Footballs Not Firearms march and rally against gun violence.

*Hugh Taft-Morales is the Leader of the Philadelphia Ethical Society.*

*NOTE: A month after our Footballs Not Firearms march, more young people took to the streets to protest gun violence. As reported by the Philadelphia Tribune, hundreds of teens marched from Broad and Diamond Streets to the Municipal Services Building to make their voices heard. Organizer Roweena Lynne Jones-Fauck said that she didn't know what to expect, but—as with Footballs Not Firearms—all involved were pleased with how the young people responded. Let's continue encouraging our youth to get involved!*

*FROM: [https://www.phillytrib.com/news/youth-marches-in-city-against-gun-violence/article\\_8e54040a-1e97-53ae-8808-da8b-9c39de23.html](https://www.phillytrib.com/news/youth-marches-in-city-against-gun-violence/article_8e54040a-1e97-53ae-8808-da8b-9c39de23.html)*



Philadelphia Councilmember Maria Quiñones-Sánchez exhorts the young folks to make their voices heard. Others, L to R - Eagles alum Garry Cobb, Cheerleader Azari, Eagles alum Ken Dunek.



Captain Steven Wheeler of the 25th District marches with students.

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1/4 Page	\$100.00	\$120.00

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# President's Letter

## Orchestrating Change for the Coming Year

By Rick Gross, CCRA President

Thanks to the almost 75 members who attended CCRA's 75th Annual Meeting September 29. For those of you who missed it, I wanted to give you a summary of a stimulating and thought-provoking session.

After electing seven board members, including three talented people who have joined the board for the first time and four returning members, we had a charismatic keynote speaker. Pennsylvania State Representative Amen Brown, whose district (the 190th) adjoins CCRA's (the 182nd) at Logan Circle, spoke about his efforts to respond to the scourge of illegal ATV and motorbike riding on city streets in our neighborhood and throughout the city. He sponsored a bill to allow the police to confiscate and destroy the vehicles they seize, while previously the perpetrators could buy them back the next day for a few hundred dollars. The new law gives a needed weapon to enforcement and hopefully will reduce this problem. He also talked about ghost guns, which are unregistered, and readily available at gun shows throughout the state. He has personally interacted with gun-show promoters in an attempt to reduce such sales, and is working in Harrisburg on legislation to ban such sales. Brown is a young Black man who rose above a dysfunctional family background to work positively for his community...and ours. He was warmly received by the audience.



The membership heard from past president Maggie Mund about the effort she is leading to bring CCRA and the Freire Charter School into a more harmonious relationship. Populated almost entirely by students of color, the school sends over 80 percent of its graduates to college, but has never had a meaningful relationship with its neighbors or CCRA. By offering the students tickets to cultural events they don't normally attend, by helping to organize and run after-school clubs, and by mentoring students as they prepare for college exams, we hope to build a relationship that is beneficial to the school and to CCRA. It's long overdue and Maggie has done a great job spearheading this effort.

I then announced a major initiative for the coming several years. In partnership with the Enterprise Center of West Philadelphia, CCRA will try to raise \$1 million in charitable gifts for a fund that will make low-interest loans available to minority and women entrepreneurs to locate in their businesses in Center City West. It is our hope that the seed capital provided by the fund will help fill the numerous empty storefronts that still plague the neighborhood with a diversity of small businesses never before present here. It is a heavy lift, but the CCRA Board is committed to trying. You will hear much more about this in the coming months as we rely on the generosity of our members, neighbors and business partners to make this a reality.

Finally, I announced that we will celebrate our 76th anniversary in May at the home of our newest merchant partner, the Kimmel Cultural Campus. Not only are CCRA members eligible to purchase discounted tickets for nearly all Kimmel Center performances, including the Philadelphia Orchestra and Broadway shows, but our Center City Citizen of the Decade, the incomparable Yannick Nézet-Séguin, will join us again to celebrate! Watch for details in the Spring. We are fortunate to have the friendship and partnership of the most noteworthy cultural institution in Pennsylvania as we move forward. I am genuinely thankful for this relationship and pleased to pass on these benefits to all of you.

*Rick Gross*



# Greater Philadelphia Winter and Holiday-themed Museums and Attractions

By Margie Wiener

Seeking something special for the winter and the holidays? Here are winter and holiday-themed museum exhibits and attractions in Greater Philadelphia. Although many of us in Center City rely on public transportation, and access may require a car or car share services, some of these sites could be intriguing as “expeditions” outside Center City. Before visiting, check websites for up-to-date information.

Join the [Elfretth’s Alley Museum’s](#) “*Deck the Alley*” Open House December 3. Residents open their homes on Philadelphia’s most historic residential street (more than 300 years old) as carolers fill the street with colonial charm. Enter homes to see the first floors while guides share facts about the histories of the houses. Buy tickets in advance.

The [Please Touch Museum](#) in Fairmount Park holds several special events this December: *Winter Wonderland Kick-Off* Saturday, December 3; *Holiday Magic* Saturday, December 10, which invites visitors to decorate cookies with Santa and enjoy a performance of *The Nutcracker*; *A Celebration of Hanukkah* Sunday, December 18; *A Celebration of Kwanzaa* Friday, December 30, with a dance performance; and *Countdown2Noon*, Saturday, December 31, their most popular annual event celebrating New Year’s Eve before naptime! Check out [gift memberships and single-day passes](#) for holiday gifts.

Don’t miss [Winter Weekends](#) at the [Museum of the American Revolution](#) in Old City, held the first three weekends in December (3 – 4, 10 – 11, and 17 – 18). Each weekend offers musical performances, a silhouette artist, festive crafts, and holiday gifts. On Sunday, December 11, enjoy a special [Relaxed Experience Morning](#). Off from school or work during Winter Break and need something fun to do? Stop by the Museum December 26 – 30 for exciting festivities!

The popular *Christmas Underwater* exhibit at the [Adventure Aquarium](#) on the Camden waterfront features Scuba Santa and the world’s tallest underwater Christmas Tree. The Aquarium houses almost 8,000 animals living in varied forms of semi-aquatic, freshwater, and marine habitats. Don’t miss Button and Genny, two 3,000-pound Nile hippos!



Scuba Santa greeting guests at the Adventure Aquarium.

The [Betsy Ross House](#) in Old City, birthplace of the American flag, is alive with the sights and sounds of the 18th century. At 4:30 pm Sunday, December 18, Betsy Ross House joins Old City Jewish Arts Center to host a *Community Menorah Lighting* celebrating the first night of Hanukkah—complete with traditional foods like latkes and doughnuts, and menorahs for younger guests.



Betsy Ross House decked out for the holidays.

The historic [Eastern State Penitentiary](#) in Fairmount hosts its annual *Holiday Toy Drive BOGO Daytime Tour Admission* (valid through December 31) for anyone who donates a toy or children’s book by December 21 (dates to be confirmed). ESP partners with local organizations to collect gifts for children who have a currently or recently incarcerated parent. Drop off donations for this worthy cause during public tour hours even if you do not plan to take a tour.



Make the holidays bright, with a toy donation at Eastern State Penitentiary.

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The [Weitzman National Museum of American Jewish History](#) on Independence Mall features an annual, inclusive, family-friendly event, *Being \_\_\_ at Christmas* on Christmas Day (when little else is available). See the website for specific programming. Check out the Museum Store for Judaica and general holiday items. Free Admission through Saturday, December 31.



Visitors enjoy *Being \_\_\_ at Christmas* at the Weitzman National Museum of American Jewish History.

Explore the forgotten history of Swedes in Philadelphia at the [American Swedish Historical Museum](#) in South Philadelphia. Come to the *Museum Tour & Glögg Tasting* December 28 to tour the general gallery, learn about Scandinavian holiday traditions, and enjoy some glögg and Swedish pepparkaka between tours.

While the animals spend the winter in their indoor habitats, the [Philadelphia Zoo](#) in Fairmount Park presents the awesome *LumiNature at Philadelphia Zoo* through January 7. The Zoo houses more than 1,700 rare and endangered animals.

At the [Brandywine River Museum of Art](#) in Delaware County, the *Brandywine Railroad Holiday Train Display* (a holiday favorite for 50 years) features trains running on 2,000 feet of track. The display contains more than 1,000 pieces, including locomotives, passenger and freight trains, trolleys passing through a small village, a farm, factories, a drive-in movie theater, and a carnival. Through January 8.



Take in the *Holiday Train Display* at the Brandywine River Museum of Art.

The [Winterthur Museum, Garden, and Library](#) in Delaware's Brandywine Valley, offers holiday tours of rooms in Henry Francis du Pont's former home, decorated in full holiday splendor. This year's tour, featuring Christmas trees inspired by those seen at the White House, corresponds with the exhibition [Jacqueline Kennedy and H. F. du Pont: From Winterthur to the White House](#). Through January 8.



Winterthur Museum is bedecked in holiday splendor.

[Longwood Gardens](#) in Chester County dazzles with [A Longwood Christmas](#) through January 8. See their 2021 display in this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=owvm4xuu3gM> Starting January 21, experience the serenity of winter at Longwood's *Annual Winter Wonder Exhibit*. Highlights include strolling indoors under glass through a winter wonderland—with a tropical twist—and outdoors through a landscape of colorfully lit trees.

The [National Constitution Center](#) on Independence Mall offers varied civic holiday programs for MLK and Presidents' Day. Free admission on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Monday, January 16, includes the *Reading of "I Have a Dream Speech," Story Corner, and Arts & Crafts Activity Tables*. To emulate Dr. King's spirit of service, the NCC sponsors a *School Supplies Drive* throughout January for the School District of Philadelphia. Presidents' Day Weekend, February 18 – 20, presents special programs on Monday including a Presidential Costume Contest and Kids Town Hall: Meet the Presidents.

The new exhibition [Science and Survival](#) at the [Science History Institute](#) in Old City shares the story of one family's escape from Nazi Germany in the [Papers of Georg and Max Bredig](#). Enlarged reproductions, displayed on the building's façade, help tell the story of the Bredig family while inviting the public to explore the documents more fully in its digital collection. This is a noteworthy exhibit for visitors of all denominations during the holidays as well as other times of the year.

If you love the excitement at the Mummers Parade on New Year's Day you can experience this tradition at the [Mummers Museum](#) in South Philadelphia during the holidays and all year round! This museum preserves the Mummers' costumes, songs, and memorabilia while explaining the customs of their clubs. Kids can bop on a glockenspiel, one of the essential instruments in a string band, play "Oh, Dem Golden Slippers," and learn to strut like a native Mummer.



# Meet the Newly Elected Members of the CCRA Board

CCRA welcomes seven members, three new and four incumbent, to its Board of Directors, elected by unanimous consent at the Annual Meeting September 29.



**Michael Coleman**

A native of Allentown, PA, Michael has made Philadelphia his home since graduating from college and law school at Penn (except for two years after law school, working at the SEC in D.C.). Michael has had two careers: practicing law for 19 years, including 11 as a partner at Pepper Hamilton; and starting and managing a successful legal search, recruiting, and placement firm for 26 years (retiring in 2011).

Since late 2020, Michael and his wife, Ellen, have lived on Rittenhouse Square. A founder of Philadelphia Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts (PVLA) and a longtime board member of Philadelphia Theatre Company, Michael's interests have been focused on expanding Philadelphia's visibility as a vibrant, well-regarded arts and culture community; mentoring, career counseling, and helping students from underserved communities; and expanding justice, equality, diversity and inclusion in the CCRA neighborhood and elsewhere. He has enjoyed introducing volunteers to CCRA's new JEDI Committee, and looks forward to working with chair Maggie Mund on JEDI's critically important work.



**Kate Federico (incumbent)**

Born and raised in the Rittenhouse Square neighborhood, Kate has been a licensed success in the Philadelphia Real Estate industry for the past 22 years. With her creative energy and dynamic personality, she guides sellers, buyers, developers and investors in achieving their goals. Her flair for

design in staging homes can get them market-ready quickly. She worked with the CCRA Board for many years co-chairing the Annual House Tour with her mother, Kathleen, and most recently participated on the Events Committee, assisting in the very successful 75th Anniversary Celebration Gala. When Kate's not cooking delicious Italian eats or playing tennis, you'll find her spending quality time with her family and her best friend and fur baby, Monte. Giving back to the community is rewarding and fulfilling for her. Kate believes in contribution, community and connection, and looks forward to meeting and serving her neighbors.



**Gilbert Feinberg (incumbent)**

Gil has studied, lived, and worked in Center City since 1970, and now resides in the Rittenhouse Square area with his wife, Nadeen Van Tuyle. He is a sole-practitioner attorney specializing in estate planning and settlement. Gil is a current board member and past president of Gretna Music, and

now serves on the board of Singing City.

**Bill Goldstein (incumbent)**

Bill Goldstein is a lifelong Philadelphia resident, having grown up in West Oak Lane, across the street from the original Ben & Irv's Delicatessen. He graduated from Central (215 class), Penn (College '64, Law '67) and celebrated 55 years of marriage to wife Joan in May. Bill has lived in the Murano since 2013.



**Richard Huffman (incumbent)**

Richard, FAIA, is a retired architect partner at Wallace Roberts and Todd. He and his wife, Susan, have lived and raised a family in Center City for 50 years. His other board assignments include CPDC, Friends Select School, AIA, and Urban Land Institute.



**Leo Levinson**

Leo loves Center City, and especially our district. He and his wife enjoy spending 12 months a year living here, as they are not shore people nor snowbirds. Leo also works in our district—he owns GroupLevinson Public Relations, one of the highest-rated branding and PR firms in Philadelphia. Leo is already active in CCRA as roving food writer for the *Center City Quarterly*.



**Bill West**

For the last several years Bill has served as co-chair of CCRA's streets committee, which focuses on helping to make our streets safe, useful, and pleasant for everyone. Other committees are engaged in complementary activities—such as the effort to revitalize our neighborhood tree canopy and the push to find better ways to collect our trash. All together, these initiatives amount to an attempt to reimagine our streets—what do we use them for, and how do we use them? Bill believes he can be more useful in this overall effort in his capacity as a member of the board, in addition to his duties on the streets committee.





## Bluestone to the Rescue! Every Street Needs a Gimmick

Text and photos by Bill West



Have a look at the street above. It's really narrow, and surrounded by some pretty high buildings. Philadelphia has a bunch of streets like this. It's an old city.

I see a lot of potential in these narrow streets with high walls. There's a lot of intrinsic drama here.

Years ago, narrow streets were a thing. Then along came the mania for wide streets—really wide streets—and people stopped paying much attention to the little ones.

The street above is in the 2300 block of Ludlow, just south of Market and not far from the Market Street bridge. I think a lot of people don't even know it's there. It's easy to miss driving by on 23rd street.

### Outdoor Rooms

It's not that people don't know about Philly's narrow streets, but it's fair to say that the picture that comes immediately to mind is something like [Elfreth's Alley](#)—a small residential street flanked by relatively low buildings.

Streets like Elfreth's Alley have the potential to be outdoor rooms. Here's a picture of Smedley Street running north from Pine to Spruce, between 16th and 17th.



Not every little residential street looks like this, of course. But some do, and more could.

Most are lined with small dwellings two or three stories tall, and the low height of the buildings contributes mightily to the feeling of an outdoor room.

Urbanist Jan Gehl, in his *Cities for People* (2010), has interesting things to say about how people relate to the buildings that line their street. He notes that humans are designed to look primarily horizontally, and down. Looking up is not so easy for us. We can readily take in the first two or three stories of a building; and we can with more difficulty relate effectively up to about five floors. (See, in particular, pages 39-42, 84.)

Imagine you're trying to talk to someone leaning out a window. Fairly easy if the person is on the second or third floor; up to five stories you can probably still connect. Higher floors are essentially disconnected from the ground, or, as Gehl puts it (p. 42), "Above the fifth floor, offices and housing should logically be the province of the air-traffic control authorities."

With a three-story building, the cornice at the top can signal the ceiling, which of course isn't there. Instead, we have a room where the sky stands in for the ceiling.

### Narrow Streets, High Walls

Higher walls create something different. These high-walled narrow streets are often called concrete canyons (to borrow a term from Manhattan). There are two basic things going on here: First, compression at the street level and, second, an invitation to look up—straight up at a sliver of the sky.

There's an old Latin epigram—*per aspera ad astra*. Translation: *through difficulties we reach for the stars*.

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So the compression on the ground reminds us of the limitations we face in our daily lives. And the sliver of sky reminds us we have higher aspirations. Not a bad lesson for a street to teach. We could call such a street an open-air cathedral.

Medieval Gothic cathedrals, in particular, work this effect very well. For instance, the cathedral at Chartres in northern France has a nave that is [37 meters tall](#)—about 120 feet. Not too shabby for a structure built of stone. And then there are the stained-glass windows, particularly those high up, in the clerestory.

Streets like 2300 Ludlow are probably cathedrals of commerce, and I don't expect them to match the effect of Chartres, but the compression at ground level and the invitation to crank our necks back and look straight up are the same.

We have quite a few streets in Philly that pull this off with aplomb. A few years ago I found a happy hunting ground of sorts in Old City, north of Chestnut and west of Second. Here's a picture of Strawberry Street, with the [Custom House](#) in the background. Notice the truck, which gives you a good idea of the width of the street, and also the trash bins and a rather pensive man standing in the road.



These are working streets, with delivery trucks bringing stuff in and trash trucks hauling stuff out. There's even the occasional car.

This block, as you can see, is blessed with quite a number of front façades. However, in many of these little streets, you are looking primarily at the back or the side of buildings. This is true of 2300 Ludlow, but I have some good news.

The [new building](#) going up in the 2300 block of Market will take up the whole block from 23rd to 24th, extending to Ludlow. However, it will not be demolishing the large building at 23rd Street, which has lovely façades on Market, 23rd and Ludlow. It will be incorporated into the new building. So the façades pictured below, on 23rd and Ludlow, will remain, along with a similar façade on Market.



#### *The Blank Wall Problem*

I think our new open-air cathedral will have a very nice north wall. As for the south wall, it may be time to say, like the astronauts of [Apollo 13](#), "Houston, we have a problem."

The building on the south side of the street is primarily a parking garage with some offices, none of which open onto Ludlow. What we have is a blank wall extending from the ground to the sky, punctuated by openings that allow the tailpipe emissions to dissipate.

We have a lot of these blank garage walls in Philadelphia, and they share one thing—they're very boring. There's basically nothing to look at.

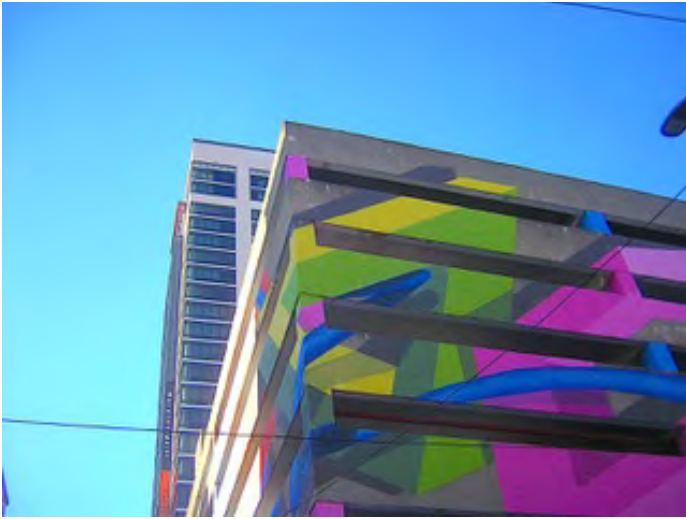
To make them less boring, one option is throw a fabric screen over the whole thing, which you can illustrate in any way you want. Here is a small-scale screen fronting a construction site on Sansom at 16th.



I'm more partial to paint on masonry, as in the picture below. This garage is at 12th and Walnut.

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Not boring. Think of the people in the new building on the north side of Ludlow, which will have lots of windows looking out to the garage; the people inside the building will be glancing out the window occasionally. We don't want them to be bored to death. Perhaps we could even amuse them.

*At Ground Level*

My main concern, however, is for the people walking by at ground level. What will this canyon feel like to someone on the street?

Remember, we humans spend most of our time looking horizontally, or a little bit down. The walls at the ground floor are therefore crucial to the pedestrian's experience. So how much variety in the ground-floor visual experience do we need?

Gehl says that, on commercial streets, the ideal width for a storefront is around 19 feet. (Gehl visited Philadelphia in 2016 and walked Market Street from Old City to City Hall with Ashley Hahn of WHYY's PlanPhilly. For that story, click [here](#).)

It's easier to meet this goal on a commercial block with a string of small shops. That's why the shopping areas on Walnut and Chestnut are more successful than the commercial frontages on Market and JFK.

Not every street is going to be lined by shops, or interesting residential façades, but the pedestrian's need to be amused is a constant, and walkers will tend to walk where they know they will find interesting things to look at. How do we keep people interested when they're walking down a block like 2300 Ludlow?

I don't foresee anyone opening a trendy boutique here. I expect this will always be mainly a space that people pass through, rather than a place where people linger. But still it should be a space that people enjoy passing through, and possibly even remember fondly.

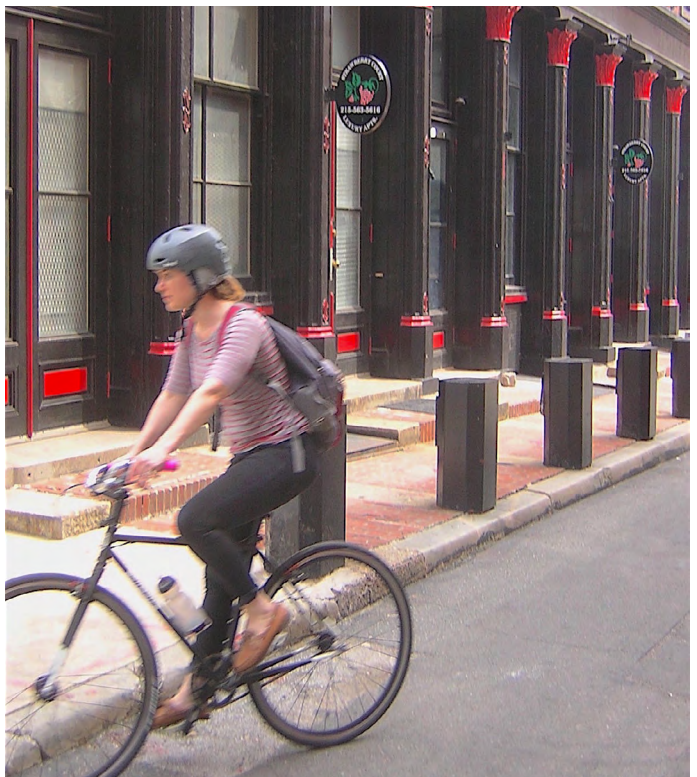
One thing not to do is put up a blank wall. Unfortunately, this seems to be an acceptable solution for at least some architects and developers in Philadelphia today. Here's a nearby wall on a relatively new building that's even blander than the parking garage. This one is on the 2200 block of Ranstead, barely a stone's throw from 2300 Ludlow.



Even the decrepit north side of Ludlow is doing better than this. Have a look below.



You may not like this assemblage very much, but I'm a pushover for ramshackle. Just as a reminder of the potential of these spaces, here's a façade on Bank Street, in Old City.



This of course is an actual building façade, but architects have a whole footlocker full of ornaments that can dress up a blank wall. My favorite is the [pilaster](#), which dates back to ancient Greece. Such ornaments have generally fallen out of favor.

As with the upper floors discussed above, my go-to solution for the Blank Wall Problem at street level is a mural, which is also an ornament. However, in Philly at least, murals have gained acceptance, and they do save you from what may be the only alternate solution, which is to completely redesign the blank wall and add some windows and possibly a door or two—in other words, to create an actual façade.

I've given the matter some thought: the dreadfully boring ground-level wall on the south side of 2300 Ludlow needs a mural. Not just any mural. As a street-level mural, it needs a lot of detail, and a lot of different things going on, and, I think, people. For this particular site, the mural should be an imaginary streetscape from around 1900, complete with pushcart vendors and happy merchants standing in the doorways of their shops. Maybe a cat snoozing in a shop window. A few well-behaved dogs, children playing with hoops, perhaps a mother selecting apples from a pushcart while holding her baby in her arm (motherhood could be complicated even then).

#### *A Room with a Floor*

Why all this nostalgia? Let's have a look at the third piece of our cathedral—the floor. On one of my early visits to this block, I noticed that the asphalt pavement was badly deteriorated, and then I noticed, peeking out of the holes in the blacktop, something remarkable: bluestone pavers.



Under the tarmac, it turned out, was a whole city block of old bluestone pavement, suitably mangled by the ravages of time. And I thought to myself: "What a fabulous gimmick!" A bluestone

street. I know of only one intact bluestone street in the larger Rittenhouse area. It's in the 1400 block of Waverly, behind Peirce College. Perhaps we could daylight the bluestone in 2300 Ludlow and repair the inevitable defects. Then the area would have two bluestone streets.

Here's a shot of 1400 Waverly.



And here's a close-up of some of the bluestone. You'll note there are a few red bricks, presumably filling in for damaged bluestone.



I think bluestone is gorgeous, providing an attractive and unusual backdrop for the surrounding red walls, while giving us a little history lesson: Years ago, our city looked very different, often in ways now hard to imagine.

*If it's not possible to restore the bluestone pavement on 2300 Ludlow, perhaps it would be possible to salvage the viable bluestone at that location and use it to replace some of the red bricks currently being used in the 1400 block of Waverly. I actually like the red bricks, but I would love to see a bluestone street in close to its original state.*

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*ALAS, my bluestone proposals have been overtaken by events. This block of Ludlow was recently repaved with asphalt, and the bluestone pavers will sleep again under the asphalt, for a few more years.*



## It's Academic

# At Greene Towne, Parent Education Begins with Teachers

By Nicole Leapheart

Typically, when adults see a Montessori classroom in action, they are impressed with the way the children move about the room with purpose and independence. Everything in the Montessori classroom is the result of meticulous preparation. The teacher, as a guide, prepares the environment for the children to develop independence, a sense of exploration, and a love of learning.

Presented by Greene Towne lead teachers, Greene Towne's Parent Education series, a complimentary set of workshops about parenting and Montessori that is open to the wider community, pulls the curtain back on the preparation that is done prior to the children's arrival to learn, and offers parents practical information for bringing Montessori home.

As part of ongoing professional development and preparation for the series, Greene Towne teachers lead presentations on various subjects to each other. With over 50 years of experience in the toddler lead-teaching team alone, it made sense that toddler lead teacher Desiree McNeill was the first to present. McNeill shared "How to Give a Lesson and Walk Away!" with her colleagues.

"In keeping with the Montessori philosophy," she says, "the presentation of lessons helps children develop concentration, independence, sense of order, and self-regulation."

Lead teachers Maggie McCaffrey from primary (ages 3-6 years) and Michelle Nowacky from toddler teamed up to present "The Spiritual Preparation of the Teacher"; many more presentations are to come.

These peer presentations invigorate staff by giving them the space to share wisdom and reaffirm their commitment to the Montessori philosophy. According to Dr. Maria Montessori,

"The greatest sign of success for a teacher is to be able to say, 'The children are now working as if I did not exist.'"

Teachers introduce work to children individually, step back to let them explore on their own, and observe as children set their own goals for moving to advanced work. It seems like magic, but it is actually preparation.

Over its 55-year history Greene Towne has helped thousands of young children grow into lifelong learners and leaders. Greene Towne Montessori School serves children 18 months old through Kindergarten. Greene Towne is the only area school that is dually accredited by the American Montessori Society and the Pennsylvania Association of Independent Schools, along with a 4-star Keystone STARS rating. To learn more, and for more information on future parent education workshops, visit [www.gtms.org](http://www.gtms.org).



Lead Toddler Teacher Desiree McNeill gives a lesson to a student.

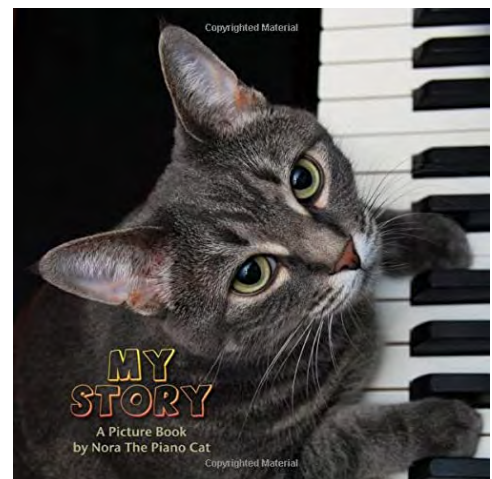
## City Lit

# Nora the Piano Cat "Pens" Memoir

By Bonnie Eisenfeld

Children and adults love Nora the Piano Cat's illustrated memoir about how she met our neighbors, Betsy Alexander and Burnell Yow!, her "purrsonal" assistants and teachers, and learned to play the piano. *My Story, A Picture Book* by Nora the Piano Cat was created with the help of humans and is available for purchase online. According to Alexander, "Nora is a real-life piano-playing cat and internet star whose combined [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...) videos have garnered more than 40 million views."

On a weekend in October, the Naudain Art Collaborative held a [fundraiser](#) in support of a new musical comedy web series about Nora's life story and her human and feline friends. Musician and artist Alexander is producing the show, along with a crew of talented artists.



## Rittenhouse Square Houses Appear in Filmmaker-inspired Photo Book

By Bonnie Eisenfeld



One of two images from the 1700 block of Manning Street appearing in the book.

In *Accidentally Wes Anderson*, a book of collected photos of unique, whimsical, geometric, posteresque, candy-colored buildings and objects in some 200 places all over the world, four rowhouses in the vicinity of Rittenhouse Square are included. Located on the 1700 block of Manning Street, the photos of the houses illustrate filmmaker Wes Anderson's iconic flattened visual style.

The book abounds with Wes Anderson-style images of historic and modern buildings—including lighthouses,

rail stations, and fire stations—vehicles, nautical objects, typewriters, and more. Each entry, culled from contributions by over one million photographers, comes with an entertaining description and story.

Some of the places in the U.S. with quirky stories are the Wilmington Opera House, said to house ghosts; Washington State Ferry's jigsaw puzzle table for passengers; and Mishaum Point Yacht Club in Dartmouth, Mass., which never berthed a yacht.

Three of Anderson's award-winning films are *The Royal Tenenbaums*, *Moonrise Kingdom*, and *The Grand Budapest Hotel*. He has written a foreword to the book.

Since 2017, photographers, aka "Adventurers," have been contributing to a website curated and published by Wally and Amanda Koval, originally from the Philadelphia area, now living in Brooklyn. The [website](#) boasts many photos of sites in Philadelphia and the region: Suburban Station's front entrance, interior rooms in both the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Bachelors Barge Club on the Schuylkill River, Mount Pleasant in Fairmount Park, Carpenters' Hall, a pink wall phone in the former Hahnemann Hospital, the Strasburg Rail Road, Wildwood's welcome sign, Zwaanendael Museum in Lewes, Del., and the organ at Longwood Gardens.

People who love films, architecture, color photography, and travel will enjoy this book and website.

## Town Square

### CCRA Mourns Past President Vivian Seltzer

CCRA mourns the loss of Dr. Vivian Seltzer, who passed away on Saturday, August 20. She was a longtime CCRA member as well as a CCRA President. The staff and board send our deepest sympathies to the family. You can read her obituary and share your condolences [here](#).

Following graduation from the University of Minnesota, Vivian traveled to Philadelphia, fell in love, and married William (Bill) Seltzer in 1953. After starting a career in family therapy, Vivian enrolled at Bryn Mawr College, where she received her PhD in psychology. For the next three decades, she taught developmental psychology at the University of Pennsylvania.

Throughout her life, Vivian held leadership roles in a variety of academic, religious and community organizations, including years of service with University of Pennsylvania's Faculty Senate, Gratz College and the Center City Residents Association. She is survived by her husband, William Seltzer, her three children, Jonathan (Liza), Francesca (Andrew), and Aeryn (Bruce), and nine grandchildren.



Dr. Vivian Seltzer.



# Free Self-guided Walking Tours in Our Own Backyard

By Margie Wiener

From my south-facing balcony window at night, I often marvel at the beauty of the lights before me: the dramatic glass canopy of the Kimmel Center, the changing colors atop Symphony House, the Drake tower, and the beaux-arts Atlantic building. As a transplant to Philadelphia, I've admired the city's eclectic architecture and public art, which includes a unique mix of modern, neoclassical, Romanesque, Victorian, Gothic, Mural Arts, and sculptural styles.

But only recently I discovered that the Preservation Alliance offers free self-guided tours. Each tour includes a brief neighborhood history, an easy-to-follow map, photographs, and descriptions of each building, with an emphasis on architecture, architectural history, and historic preservation.

Preservation Alliance offers two self-guided tours in our neighborhood of the Rittenhouse-Fitler Historic District: **Rittenhouse East** and **Rittenhouse West**. The former covers 16th to 22nd Streets (including Rittenhouse Square) between Walnut and Delancey. The latter encompasses 22nd to 24th (including Fitler Square) between Pine Street and St. James Place.

For the [Rittenhouse East](#) tour, I simply downloaded this link onto my iPhone and proceeded right up the 1600 block of Locust Street, noted as one of the most architecturally distinguished in the district. At 1622 Locust stands Lea House, built in 1855; across the street sits St. Mark's Church (built around the same time), which is considered one of the finest examples of architecturally correct Gothic Revival churches in the U.S.

When I reached Rittenhouse Square, facing north, I was fascinated to see (for the first time) the Comcast Technology

Center in the distance, flanked by exquisite high-rises. The tallest building in Philadelphia, it boasts a vertically stepped, post-modern design.

The [Rittenhouse West](#) tour provides a fascinating history of the western part of the Rittenhouse-Fitler Historic District that started in the 1820s. It is among the most varied residential areas in the city. The tour features housing types ranging from grand mansions originally owned by some of Philadelphia's wealthiest 19th-century entrepreneurs, to tiny "trinities" built to house the working class.

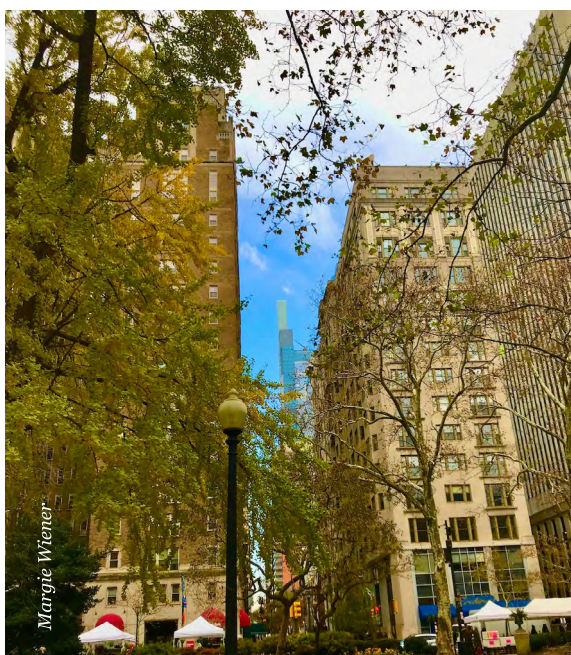
This tour begins at Fitler Square, popular with children for its animal sculptures, and flora enthusiasts for its foliage surrounding a Victorian-era cast iron fountain. The square was created in 1896 to honor mayor Edward Fitler (d. 1896). He was also an inventor, manufacturer, and philanthropist.

*Links to other free self-guided Preservation Alliance tours that are wonderfully eye-opening:*

[Art Deco Mini Tour](#) concentrates on buildings between Chestnut and Walnut Streets, from 15th to 17th Streets. This popular early 20th-century style, synonymous with the Jazz Age, is renowned for its sleek designs. Highlights are the flamboyant WCAU Building at 1618 Chestnut, whose façade glowed blue when the station was broadcasting, and resembles a 1930s tabletop radio; 1616 Walnut; and the Architects Building skyscraper on South 17th Street.

## [Frank Furness: A Talk and a Walk](#)

Furness' highly individual style, which has been described as Neo-Gothic, is expressed in his polychromatic decoration and



*A view of the Comcast Technology Center from Rittenhouse Square.*



*Entrance to 1616 Walnut.*

*Continued on p.14*



massive geometric ornamentation, the shapes of which were frequently abstractions of forms found in nature.

Highlights include the glorious First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia (1883) at 2125 Chestnut. Remarkable for its bold design and bright colors, it features Tiffany windows on the northern and eastern sides.

The Horace Jayne House (1895), on the southwest corner of 19th and Delancey Streets, was built as a residence and office for zoologist Dr. Horace Jayne. It was divided into two sections joined by an elaborate doorway. Over the years, the house evolved into a synagogue, offices, and finally the private residence it is today.

The Thomas Hockley House (1875), at 235 South 21st Street, has windows on all sides. In typical Furness style, the façades exhibit his characteristic use of color, texture, and asymmetry. Note the magnificent corner entrance and light-colored pigmy columns.

Preservation Alliance also offers public tours for a fee. Their next season starts in May 2023. Highly recommended are any tours led by retired architect Warren Williams. His courses on Philadelphia architecture at Temple University's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (aka OLLI) inspired me to embark on my architectural journeys. For public tour details, contact Vinni Cheng, Manager for Tours & Events, Preservation Alliances Public Tours at <https://www.preservationalliance.com/walking-tours/> or [vcheng@preservationalliance.com](mailto:vcheng@preservationalliance.com)

For additional resources, check out:

**The Museum Without Walls** free audio sculpture tours, sponsored by the Association for Public Art. See **Government of the People** (1976) sculpture by Jacques Lipchitz (1891 - 1973). It stands in front of the Municipal Services Building Plaza, Broad Street and John F. Kennedy Boulevard, amid Penn Center's towers. At first glance, the sculpture appears to be an inverted pyramid of human arms, legs, and torsos. Upon further study, the figures begin to emerge more clearly, spiraling upward and growing from each other in a totem-like arrangement. As a symbol of democracy, the sculpture suggests a process of continual struggle, mutual support and dedication, and eventual triumph.



Horace Jayne House.

Although not on the Museum Without Walls tour, around the corner from the Municipal Services Building Plaza on Arch Street (between 13th and Broad Streets) I chanced upon a fascinating juxtaposition of modern, Norman, and Mural Arts styles.



A mix of styles is visible from the 1300 block of Arch Street.

### [The Lost Mansions of Rittenhouse Square](#)

#### [Furness Buildings in Rittenhouse: Well Known and Lesser Known](#)

#### [Mural Arts Philadelphia](#)

Self-guided tours are a fun way to get some exercise and learn about architecture and public art at the same time. Explore whenever it's convenient for you and at your own pace. *Carpe diem!*



Rittenhouse West tour: an exquisite Victorian mansion with a mansard roof, now a multifamily dwelling, at 21st and Spruce Streets.



## Out & About

# Naked Bike Riders at Rittenhouse Square—What a Sight!

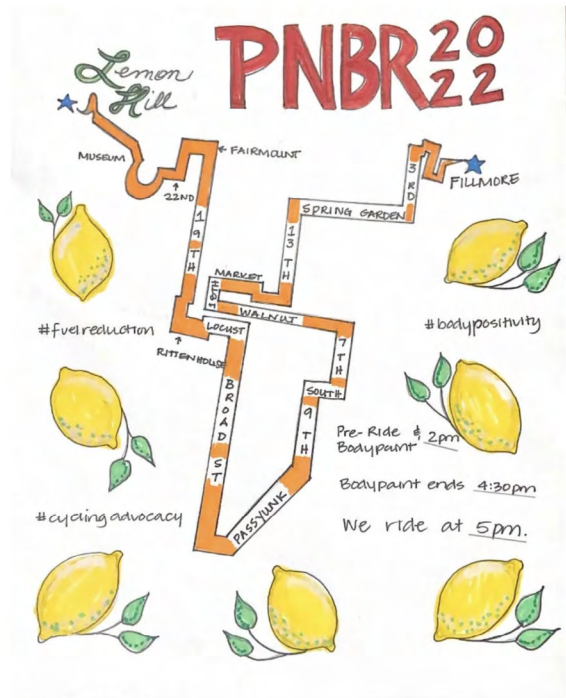
By Bonnie Eisenfeld

On Saturday, August 27, a crowd slowly gathered along Walnut Street near the 19th Street entrance to Rittenhouse Square to await the arrival of the Naked Bike Ride, an annual event in Philadelphia and worldwide. In the meantime, spectators were entertained by bagpipers playing for a wedding party exiting the Church of the Holy Trinity across the street.

Naked Bikers started riding at Lemon Hill near the Art Museum at 5 pm and arrived at Rittenhouse Square around 5:45. Traffic was not halted. Participants spanned a variety of ages, shapes, sizes, colors, hair styles, and genders.

Most riders were completely naked; some wore scant clothing or had decorated themselves with body paint, hats, or partial costumes. A few people rode tandems, recumbent bikes, or skateboards, and some walked. The crowd clapped, laughed, and shouted encouragement. Bikers smiled, waved, and seemed to be enjoying the ride. Photos appeared in the [Philadelphia Inquirer](#) later that day.

The first [Philly Naked Bike Ride](#) happened in 2009, with 400 participants. This year, several thousand participants rode on the 12-mile course. The date and route are announced 24 hours before the ride. The organizers' purpose is to promote cycling, body positivity, and fuel reduction.



The ride route for the 2022 Philly Naked Bike Ride.  
Courtesy of the Philly Naked Bike Ride

## Town Square

# Rittenhouse Row Protections Restored

By Michael Schade

The Remapping Committee, co-chaired by Charles Robin and Michael Schade, has been meeting since December 2014. (Wow – that is not a typo – it has been almost eight years!) Our mission is to recommend revisions to the zoning map in our neighborhood for several purposes:

- to correct zoning classifications where the allowed use and density do not match the actual use and density
- to implement changes that will help direct density to appropriate areas within our neighborhood
- to reduce the need for zoning variances by applying consistent standards

One of the most difficult challenges we faced was the remapping of the Rittenhouse Row area. This area is zoned CMX-5, which allows for the highest density of buildings. This designation is appropriate for blocks along our widest streets (Broad and Market) and areas close to mass-transit stations.

Up until 2012, there were some sensible overlay restrictions that limited building frontages and required height setbacks on Walnut and Chestnut Streets. The addition of the “Skyplane Option” in the 2012 Zoning Code rewrite allowed these

restrictions to be avoided. Our committee realized that the wonderful pedestrian scale of Walnut, Sansom, and blocks of Chestnut Street would be lost if the densest zoning envelopes were applied to new construction on the streets. Rather than trying to reduce the allowable zoning on these blocks, we adopted another strategy that would limit the maximum building frontages along Walnut and Chestnut Streets when using the Skyplane Option, and would also limit building frontage and require setbacks along Sansom Street.

The Remapping Committee worked with the City Planning Commission, City Council members, the Building Industry Association of Philadelphia, and fellow RCOs in Center City to negotiate the specific details of this proposal. Earlier this fall City Council Bill 200118 was passed, adding these provisions to the Zoning Code. The new regulations affect development along Walnut, Sansom and Chestnut Streets, from river to river. The pedestrian scale of these streets has a much better chance of being maintained under the new regulations.

This ordinance, combined with the ongoing efforts of the CCRA Historic Preservation Committee (which is hard at work adding historic buildings to the Register) will help to maintain the best aspects of Center City and Rittenhouse Row.

# Rep. Amen Brown, in Real Time and in Real Life

By Richard Vaughn

During Rep. Brown's keynote speech at CCRA's Annual Meeting in September, he demonstrated his understanding of how quality-of-life issues affect the city, in speaking about his work on ghost guns and on mandating stiff penalties for individuals with multiple gun charges.

Recently, we caught up with Rep. Brown and got a chance to have a candid, timely discussion about quality-of-life issues and more.

## Tell us about your childhood.

I was born and raised in West Philly at 56th and Market Streets. I was one of seven children, raised in a single-parent household with my mom. I experienced homelessness, a parent battling drug addiction, and having an incarcerated father.

## You have an entrepreneurial side that surfaced early.

It did! At about six years old, I started doing odd jobs like cleaning houses and shoveling snow to help at home. At around 19 years old, I started a summer camp and things grew from there. It was important to me to give kids access to resources and opportunities.

## Fast-forward to politics.

I just wanted to help my community and give back. But as I got more involved in community work, people would always say I should run for office because they recognized genuine passion I had for community.

I had an unsuccessful run in the 2019 special election for the 190th legislative district. 2020 came around and I ran again with the community behind me. I was the Democratic nominee elected to the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. I was proud of that accomplishment as I did not have the backing from the party or any other strong political machine. But I did have the people. I was most recently re-elected to represent the newly created 10th legislative district.

## Quality-of-life issues are important to you. You've worked on ghost guns and ATVs, and introduced a bill that stipulated a mandatory minimum for certain repeat offenders of violent crimes.

In 2021, I introduced a "mandatory minimum" bill to address gun violence as our city was (and still is) suffering. I introduced a laser-focused bill, specifically for repeat violent offenders using illegal firearms. If a person was convicted of firearm offenses in the past five years only, and was caught on their second, third or fourth offense, they'd get a higher bail or no bail and get a mandatory minimum if convicted.

## Tell us about the bail aspect.

The reason the bail piece was so important is that it would've served as a way to limit additional lives being put at risk. I grew up with guys who were in "the streets" and understand their thinking a little.

If one of these guys shoots up a corner and hits the person and the person survives, automatically in the streets his street cred is in jeopardy. If he gets arrested and gets back on the street—because he gets low bail—he's gonna go finish the job.

If someone has a recent history of charges related to gun charges and violent crimes and is easily let back on the streets, they feel there are no real consequences, so no need to change. It's a small percentage that's committing this gun violence and many people across the city and varying demographics feel we need to do something.

## You caught a bit of flak for introducing that bill.

I did. A few groups and community leaders were upset about the bill, feeling that I was hurting the Black community and trying to lock my people up. That was not my intention, but I heard clearly how people felt. Some of my colleagues who were originally in support of the effort also received pushback and pulled their support. I decided to ask for the bill to be pulled before the summer break of last year to get feedback on better solutions. We must come together to find immediate and long-term solutions.

## How did the folks in your community respond to the bill?

There were people who were very supportive, people who were against it completely, and people who didn't agree with the idea of mandatory minimums but understood where I was coming from after they were accurately informed about the bill. But at the end of the day people want to feel safe.

## Going forward...

I want to work with community and leaders to make the city clean and safe and a place where individuals are thriving. We need strong, bold leadership to get us there, putting the people first.



Pennsylvania State Rep. Amen Brown.



## Town Square

# Hunger, Housing, and Health: Donate to Help People Survive

By Bonnie Eisenfeld

Here are ten nonprofit organizations, local and global, helping people survive by providing them with the basic necessities—food, housing, health care, job training, and more. You can help these organizations help people in need by sending donations this holiday season.

### Here in Philadelphia....

**Help refugees and immigrants** get settled, learn English, obtain necessities, training and jobs:

HIAS Pennsylvania <https://hiaspa.org/about-us/mission/>

Nationalities Service Center <https://nscphila.org/about-us>

Center for New Americans <https://cnam.org/about/>

Garces Foundation <https://www.garcesfoundation.org/>

**Help seniors, children, and families** experiencing hunger get food:

Philabundance <https://www.philabundance.org/about/>

**Help people experiencing homelessness** get meals, health care, housing, and social services:

Broad Street Ministry [https://www.broadstreetministry.org/radical\\_hospitality-detail/social-services/](https://www.broadstreetministry.org/radical_hospitality-detail/social-services/) and

Project Home <https://www.projecthome.org/about>

### Worldwide...

**Help disaster victims, displaced people, and refugees**

get food and medical care:

World Central Kitchen <https://wck.org/mission>

Doctors Without Borders <https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/who-we-are>

International Rescue Committee <https://www.rescue.org/>

## Out & About

# Penn's Village West Walkers – Meet You at the Goat

By Sandra Sokol

Walking, talking and taking in the city has become a weekly ritual for the Penn's Village West Walkers. The goal in forming the walking group earlier this year was to connect Penn's Village members and encourage healthy exercise, while exploring and enjoying Center City and the adjacent neighborhoods.

Since then, early each Monday morning, weather permitting, a dedicated group assembles at the Goat sculpture in Rittenhouse Square. The walking route is determined spontaneously by group consensus, and the half dozen or so members set off in the chosen direction. Despite extreme heat and extreme cold they plan to walk year round, and to adjust their starting time and duration based on seasonal factors.

The benefits of walking are well established, and magnified when walking with friends. As one member says, "This is a great way to start the week, on the right foot and with a friendly and dynamic dose of conversation."

Some walkers are faster than others, but the group adapts along the way, as walkers move back and forth within the group and conversations merge or diverge. For some members, the "safety in numbers" factor removes a barrier to engaging in healthy outdoor exercise.

The group has walked in all directions and discovered many big and small wonders as they wend their way around the city. So many interesting details can be discovered only while walking. One memorable walk this summer was to The Rail Park. Heading northeast to the 12th and Noble Street entrance, they were delighted and astonished at what they found.

Another walk took them south to Washington Avenue, where they marveled at the new businesses and dynamic development

in that area. Sometimes they decide to walk a little farther than usual and take the bus back home. Thank you SEPTA for our bus cards!

Walking, talking, taking in the city, establishing new friendships, discovering new facts, new neighborhoods, new details, in a warm, comfortable, inclusive group has created a safe and enjoyable activity for Penn's Village West Walkers. Other Penn's Village members are also walking together in pairs or small groups. The continuing goal is to grow this movement and enroll more occasional or regular walkers.

*Penn's Village helps older adults stay active, age in place in their own homes, and engage, connect, and thrive with others in our Village community.*

For more information visit [pennsvillage.org](http://pennsvillage.org) or call 215 925 7333



*Penn's Village West Walkers at the Rail Park.*

# CCRA Commits to JEDI

By Maggie Mund, Committee Chair

A little over one year ago, CCRA began to explore how our organization might be more inclusive and supportive of city residents of color. This proved challenging, as our neighborhood is not especially diverse. After exploring issues of social justice through discussions with the Philadelphia Ethical Society, it became clear that our most meaningful options were to be more welcoming to students and businesses from outside the neighborhood. Subsequently, we have identified two substantive JEDI (Justice, Equity Diversity, and Inclusion) initiatives for CCRA.

### Partnership with Freire Charter High School (Freire)

CCRA supported the creation of Freire and its growth over the years, but is now expanding our partnership to offer ways for the students to partake of the many opportunities afforded by their Center City location, and for CCRA members to get involved with the students. This year, CCRA budgeted \$5,000 to sponsor cultural-immersion activities for Freire students, with plans in place for them to attend two local theater productions. Additional outings are being explored. CCRA members are also invited to volunteer at Freire's after-school tutoring workshops in Math, Science and Writing. These sessions are held Monday through Thursday, 3 – 4:30 pm.

### Social Equity Business Loan Fund

CCRA recently partnered with The Enterprise Center Capital (TEC-CC) Corporation to develop a CCRA Social Equity Fund. The Fund will provide low-interest loans and social capital to qualified, under-resourced entrepreneurs who locate in Center City West, resulting in a more equitable, sustainable, and vibrant local economy in Center City. With a focus on women- and minority-owned businesses, TEC-CC has a long track record of offering low-interest loans with flexible terms in a wide range of sizes, combined with pre- and post-loan financial advising to ensure that businesses get the best results from each loan.

Under the agreement, TEC-CC and CCRA agree to jointly fundraise. TEC-CC will collect funds and administer the loans, and CCRA will develop an Advisory Group to work with the TEC-CC to identify and vet candidates. CCRA will also provide entrepreneurs with ongoing mentoring.

Interested members should contact [Maggie Mund](#) or [Rick Gross](#) for more information or to get involved. This is a big undertaking and will require treasure, time and commitment from many volunteers.



CCRA President Rick Gross and Della Clark of the Enterprise Center sign the CCRA Social Equity Fund agreement.



# What's New this Season at Koresh Dance Company

By Keila Perez-Vega

Koresh Dance Company is dedicated to the enrichment of the cultural landscape and artistic reputation of Philadelphia, and making these enrichments accessible to the Greater Philadelphia area through performance, education and outreach.

Koresh has had a busy Fall season in all areas of the Company's work—keeping Philadelphia dancing and representing our cultural community abroad!

## Performance

The Koresh Dance Company hit the road with tour stops in Calgary, Seattle and Arizona. They wowed audiences with Artistic Director Roni Koresh's "La Danse" (2019). During the Dancer's residency in Wickenburg, AZ, Roni created and set a new work for the Company to premiere at the Suzanne Roberts Theatre for their home season in May 2023. The work includes original composition and a live singing accompaniment by up-and-coming opera singer Sage DeAgro-Ruopp. Stay tuned for details!

Meanwhile, back home, the Koresh Youth Ensemble represented—and did some wowing as well!—in performances at the Koresh Studios, the Northern Liberties neighborhood, and at The Grier School in Altoona, PA. The Ensemble took master classes from visiting choreographers while their Director, and Assistant Director of the Company, Melissa Rector, was on tour. Currently, they are getting into the holiday spirit rehearsing for some festive performances including at the Winter Village in Love Park.

## Education

The Koresh School of Dance is a hub for the dance community in Philadelphia—from professionals to those just looking for a creative outlet. Many people, of all backgrounds and levels and styles of dance training, consider Koresh not only a place to train and perform, but also a place to connect and be surrounded by passionate artistic individuals, to meet and gather with friends, and to have a respite from the immense stressors of the "outside" world. Koresh offers over 40 classes a week serving dancers from ages 4-99+—come dance with us! The School's children's program (ages 4-18) is open for spring registration.

## Outreach

*Neighborhood Connections*—Made possible by funding from The William Penn Foundation, Koresh Dance Company is beginning its three-year Philadelphia community residency program. Each year, the Company will focus on one neighborhood to host free performances, master classes and other activities in the community. First up is Germantown! Stay tuned for details.

*Koresh Artist Showcase Series*—an initiative created to give local, emerging talent a platform to present their work, as well as give the community a chance to discover new artists and new styles of dance. Our September showcase welcomed three sold-out audiences to enjoy home-grown art. Our last showcase of 2022 takes place December 3 – 4 at our David Cooper Black Box Theater.

*Koresh Kids Dance*—Serving over 750 students in 11 Philadelphia public elementary schools with free weekly dance classes, Koresh Kids Dance focuses on teaching children dance movement, how to use dance as a form of communication and storytelling, and relying on dance to support emotional and physical health. This year's theme is "Creating Together," focusing on collaboration skills.

For more information visit [koreshdance.org](http://koreshdance.org), or email [pr@koresh-dance.org](mailto:pr@koresh-dance.org).



Koresh Showcase.

## Why whisper down the lane when you can shout it from the rooftops?

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Email: [ccqeditor@phillyccra.org](mailto:ccqeditor@phillyccra.org)



## CCRA Meet & Greet at Alimentari Tuesday, November 1



Photos by Michele Ettinger and Margie Wiener



## Dining Scene

### 264 S. 16th St. Monk's Café

By Leo Levinson—*The Center City Foodie*

“And all at once, summer collapsed into fall,” wrote Oscar Wilde. Suddenly, as the days turn cooler, the soul aches for comfort food and a welcoming sanctuary in which to warm up with friends and good cheer. We can think of no more comfortable place in our neighborhood than Monk's Café. At this time of the year, Monk's warm lighting and rich paneling serve as the perfect backdrop to settle in for its menu of comfort food served by a cheerful, knowledgeable staff.

Monk's is a treasure in our district, for decades world-renowned as a Belgian beer mecca. But more about their remarkable beer selection later; I have to admit, we go for the mussels. I know, I know. The beer selection is beyond exceptional. But those mussels, warm and bubbly in their fragrant broths, each based in a perfectly paired beer potage bathing these tender morsels.

It may be difficult to pick a favorite, but I lean towards the simplest, the Monk's—a delicious fumét (a classic stock, in this case made from simmering seafood) with Allagash White beer, garlic and parsley. I like the others on the menu as well, because they bring a diversity of spicing to each beer boil, including subtle chili, a delicate curry, and a leek, bacon, blue cheese and garlic recipe too.

As great as the mussels are, Monk's totally original Belgian frites served with housemade Bourbon mayonnaise gets me every time and brings me back for more. I confess—one time I ate two orders! At Monk's they take the time to hand cut and double fry the potatoes to obtain a flavorful creaminess inside a crispy exterior. I have found nowhere else in Philadelphia that makes anything close to these fries. One serving gives you about a pound and a half of these beauties to dip in the uniquely flavorful mayonnaise accompaniment. The good news is that the frites are available alone, with the mussels, and with pretty much everything else on the menu.

On a recent visit, I tried something new for me, The Cheddy—a delicious, perfectly cooked medium rare ground beef burger, served on a Metropolitan Bakery brioche bun, dressed with their homemade mayonnaise, topped with an with an IPA-based cheddar, and pickled onions. A true comfort for burger lovers.

Monk's has some fun things on the menu too. I enjoy the buffalo frog legs served with a bleu cheese crème—an imaginative leap over traditional chicken wings. Also offered are delicious vegetarian and gluten-free comfort-food dishes—hey, everyone should be comfortable here!

Monk's attracts a friendly local crowd for lunch and dinner, but it owes its global renown to its beer selection, specializing in Belgian beer, Belgian-style beers and other exclusive, artisanal brews from around the world. Stories abound about Monk's early days, when founder and co-owner Tom Peters talked iconic Belgian breweries into bringing their tasty brews to his place in

America. Today, decades later, he and Monk's are sought after to preview beers. (Check the website to see what exclusive beer-tasting is next.)

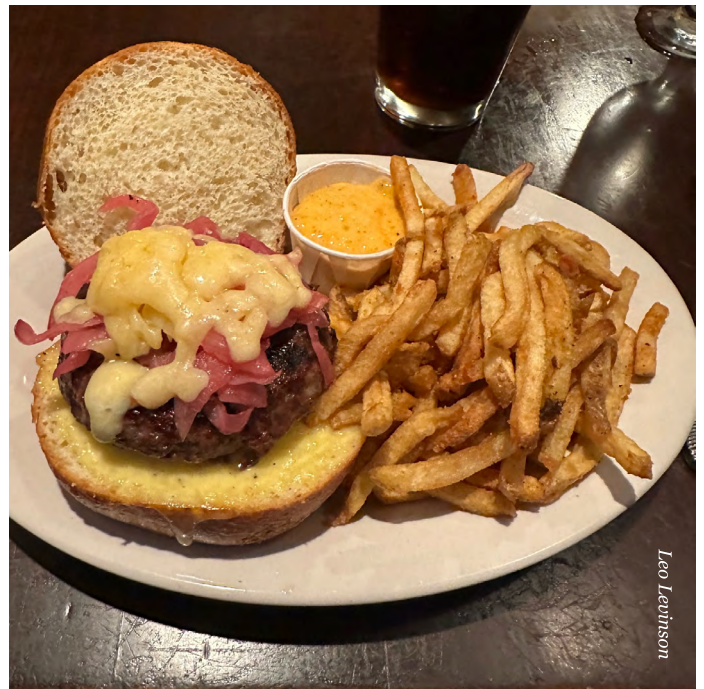
Monk's Café features a whopping 25 beers on tap, including many delicious choices you won't find anywhere else . . . plus there are many more bottled beers available to try. And for beer newbies, each one is perfectly described on Monk's beer menu. It's fun to taste different beers during each course: I especially enjoyed the chocolatey stout Grimm Ales Double Negative for dessert—imagine beer for dessert! If you're not a beer drinker, you'll find a nice wine list and well-stocked bar as well.

So to paraphrase an old song:

*The snow is snowing and the wind is blowing  
But I will weather the storm  
What do I care how much it may storm  
I've got my Monk's Café to keep me warm.*

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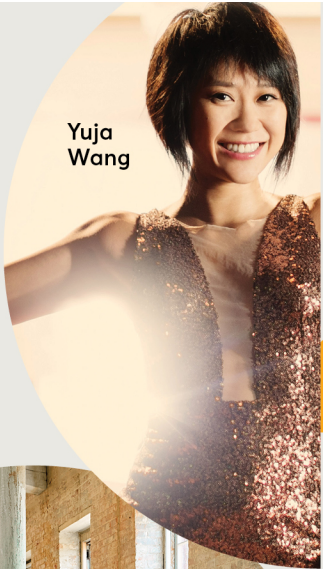
*Leo Levinson, our roving food writer, is a board member of Philadelphia's premier gourmet club, The Chaîne Des Rotisseurs, former chair of the Union League's Grand Cru Society wine club and accomplished amateur cook. As an active foodie, resident and public relations guru in Center City West, he'll give us the inside track, from pho to foie gras. Follow Leo on Instagram @theleolevinson*



*The Cheddy.*

Leo Levinson

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Yannick Nézet-Séguin Music Director

Photos: Pete Checchia, Gregor Hohenberg - Deutsche Grammophon, Julia Wesely, Nigel Parry





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# CCRA Winter Calendar – A Wonderland of Activity

## Fitler Square

### Christmas Tree Lighting

Sunday, December 4, 5 pm (no rain date)

Light Christmas trees in the fountain, enjoy hot drinks and tell Santa what you want for Christmas. Sing carols with MacGuffin Theatre and Film Company, enjoy The Nutcracker excerpts from Philadelphia Dance Academy.

### Menorah Lighting at Sundown

Sunday, December 18, 5 pm

Rain date: Monday, December 19, 5:30 pm

Gather with families, friends, neighbors, and a community rabbi to see the lighting of the Menorah!

## Philly POPS Christmas

Kimmel Center - Verizon Hall

Broad and Spruce Streets

Saturday, December 3 to Saturday, December 17

<https://tickets-center.com/search/Kimmel-Center-Verizon-Hall/A-Philly-POPS-Christmas-tickets>

## Boathouse Row Festival of Lights

Philadelphia lights up Boathouse Row with festive colors for Hanukkah (December 18 – 23); Christmas (December 24 – 25); and Kwanzaa (December 26 – January 1).

## Christmas Village

Local and international merchants, food and beverages.

Love Park and City Hall

Through December 24

Sunday to Thursday, 11 am – 7 pm

Friday and Saturday, 11 am – 8 pm

Christmas Eve, Thursday, December 24, 11 am – 5 pm

<https://www.philachristmas.com/>

## Miracle on South 13th Street

Neighbors along the 1600 block of South 13th Street deck out their homes with holiday lights and over-the-top decorations.

Through Saturday, January 1

## Mummer's Parade

Sunday, January 1, 9 am – 6 pm

Broad Street from City Hall to Washington Avenue

Indoor Fancy Brigade Finale competition at the Pennsylvania Convention Center

Tickets for bleacher seating at City Hall, for Fancy Brigades at Independence Visitor Center.

<https://www.phlvisitorcenter.com/Mummers>

## Winter in Dilworth Park

1 South 15th Street

Ice skating at Rothman Orthopaedics Ice Rink, Wintergarden on the Greenfield Lawn, Made in Philadelphia Holiday Market, Deck the Hall Holiday Lights.

(Various dates; see sidebar for details.)

## Macy's Philadelphia Christmas Light Show

Macy's Center City, Wanamaker Bldg, 1300 Market St.

Light show, music by Wanamaker Grand Organ

Late November to late December. Check for details.

## Curtis Institute of Music

Student recitals, faculty recitals, graduation recitals

<https://www.curtis.edu/curtis-performances/curtis-recital-series/>

## [The Comcast Holiday Spectacular and The Universal Sphere](#)

[Comcast Center, 1701 John F Kennedy Boulevard](#)

Through January 1

[The Comcast Holiday Spectacular](#), Comcast Center lobby.

15-minute show at the top of the hour, 10 am – 8 pm daily.

Sensory-friendly shows every Thursday and Friday at 2:30 pm; other times upon request.

[The Universal Sphere](#), upper lobby, Comcast Technology Center.

A free cinematic experience (advanced reservations encouraged) created by Steven Spielberg, DreamWorks Animation, Universal Parks & Resorts and Comcast Labs.

Daily 10 am – 8 pm; last show starting at 7:45 pm.

## LumiNature at Philadelphia Zoo

3400 W. Girard Ave.

Winter wonderland, 500 colorful illuminated flamingos, a 25-foot-tall flamingo holiday tree, over 200 illuminated penguins, and a 21-foot-tall colored snake, plus performance artists, and holiday light show.

Timed tickets must be purchased in advance.

<https://philadelphiazoo.org/luminature/>

## Rivers Casino New Year's Eve Fireworks on the Waterfront

Great Plaza at Penn's Landing

<https://www.delawareriverwaterfront.com/footer/blue-cross-riv-errink-winterfest/events/river-s-casino-new-year-s-eve-fireworks-on-the-waterfront>

## Modigliani Up Close

Barnes Foundation

2025 Benjamin Franklin Parkway

Through Sunday, January 29

<https://www.barnesfoundation.org/whats-on/exhibitions/modigliani-up-close>

## Winter in Franklin Square

200 N. 6th Street

Citizens presents Electrical Spectacle Light Show, free shows featuring more than 100,000 lights, food, local beers, and hot beverages, outdoor fire pits and an indoor heated tent. Chilly Philly Mini Golf course and and Parx Liberty Carousel.

<http://www.historicphiladelphia.org/franklin-square/winter-in-franklin-square/>

## Blue Cross RiverRink Winterfest

101 South Columbus Boulevard

Skating at the city's largest outdoor rink, warming cabins and fire-pit stations, twinkling lights and holiday tree. Carnival games and holiday markets on select dates.

<https://www.delawareriverwaterfront.com/places/blue-cross-river-rink-winterfest>

## Kimmel Cultural Campus

Broad and Spruce Streets

Free programs in the Kimmel Plaza

Family Fundays 10 am – noon

Lunchtime Unplugged 11 am – 1 pm

Happy Hour Sessions 4 – 7 pm

Nightlife at the Kimmel 8 – 10:30 pm

Check website for days and dates.

<https://www.kimmelculturalcampus.org/globalassets/pdp/202223/free/kimmel-cultural-campus-plaza-programming-2022-23-season--final.pdf>



## What's Going On

# Winter at Dilworth Park Attractions and Events

1 S 15th St (West Side of City Hall)

### Storytime with Santa

Saturday, December 3

11 am – 1 pm

Spend the afternoon with Woodland Santa as he reads stories and takes photos with children in the beautiful Wintergarden on the Greenfield Lawn. Crafts, including wooden ornament making, will also be offered.

### Made in Philadelphia Holiday Market

Through January 1

Sundays – Thursdays, 11 am – 7 pm

Fridays & Saturdays, 11 am – 8 pm

Support local small businesses while browsing and buying handmade jewelry, artwork, home décor and more. Visit Dilworth Park <https://centercityphila.org/parks/dilworth-park> for hours and a full list of vendors.

### Deck the Hall Light Show presented by Independence

Blue Cross

Daily, 5 – 9 pm

Through January 1

The west façade of historic City Hall will be illuminated with a full show every hour. Nightly at the top of the hour.

### Cocktails and Cold Ones

Wednesdays, 5 – 7 pm

Through February 22

Sip \$6 Hornitos Tequila cocktails, \$5 wine and \$4 Blue Point

Toasted Lagers, plus discounted weekly food specials, every Wednesday night at the Rothman Orthopaedics Cabin.

### College Nights presented by Temple University

Thursdays, 5:30 – 9 pm

Through February 23

College students pay \$2 admission with a valid student ID. Online reservations encouraged. Skate rental not included. Discount cannot be used in conjunction with other offers.

### Rothman Orthopaedics Ice Rink

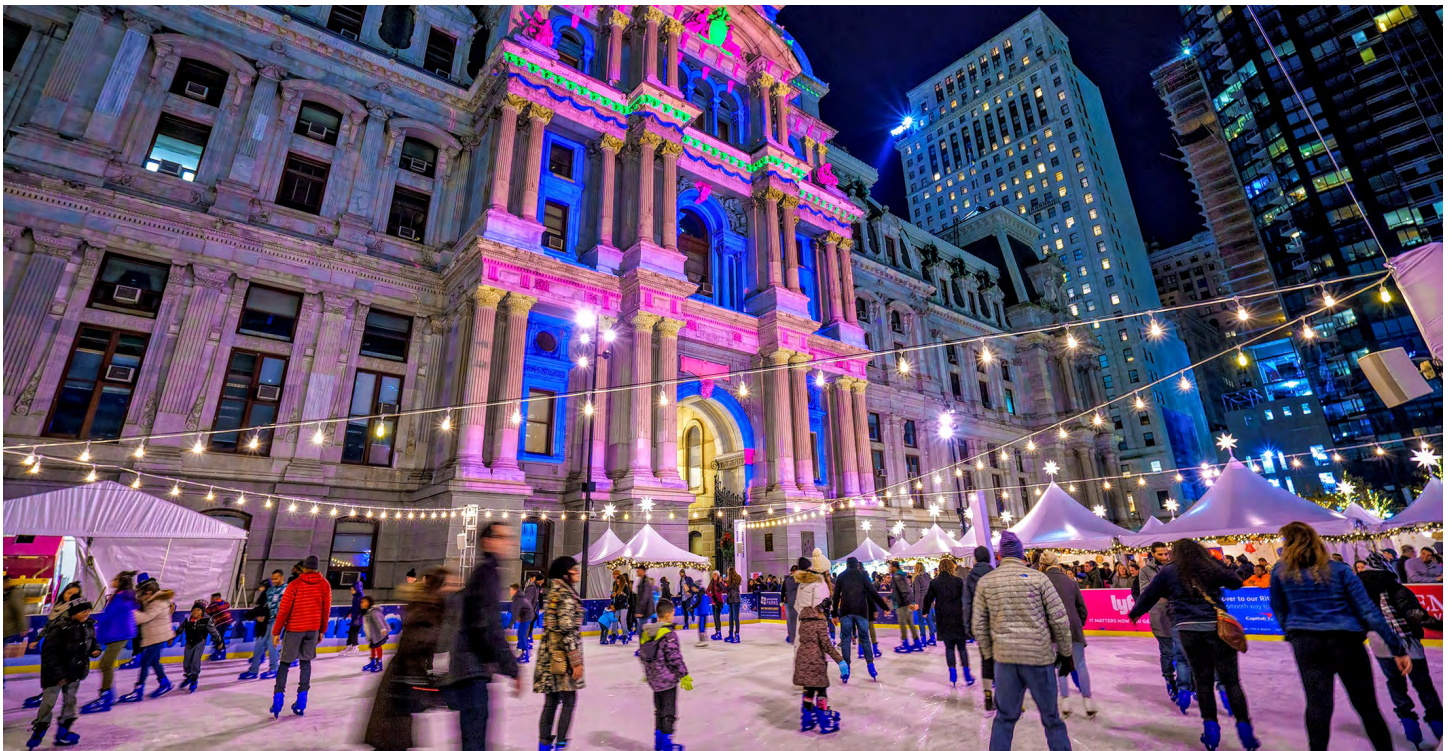
Daily, through February 26

Experience the city's premier wintertime destination, open seven days a week. Reservations are encouraged for timed, 90-minute skating sessions. Purchase advance tickets online; find full schedule at [rothmanrink.ticketsocket.com](http://rothmanrink.ticketsocket.com). Weekday hours will change in January and February. Children and adults with physical/developmental disabilities can reserve a sled for skating beginning January 2 through February 26, 2023. To reserve a sled email, [sleds@rinkmanagement.com](mailto:sleds@rinkmanagement.com).

### Wintergarden

Through March 26

The Wintergarden on the Greenfield Lawn is a picturesque and whimsical outdoor sanctuary for visitors to relax amid the bustle of Center City. Highlights include rustic décor, playful reindeer topiaries and twinkling lights. Adults 21 and older can purchase warm mulled wine at the Chaddsford Winery kiosk conveniently located within the space.





# Center City Residents' Association

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