



Newsletter of the Center City Residents' Association

Vol. 14 No. 3 Fall 2023

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Town Square

Peace from the Inside Out

By Hugh Taft-Morales, Clergy Leader, Philadelphia Ethical Society



Deb Schell

Drum circle after Peace Day program, 2019.

For over a decade, while serving a humanist congregation on Rittenhouse Square, I've dedicated time to commemorating the United Nations International Day of Peace on September 21. Through the years, I have worked with Lisa Parker, founder of Peace Day Philly (PDP), and core PDP team members and volunteers to build peace in our increasingly violent world. This year, with the war in Ukraine dragging on and guns devastating many Philadelphia neighborhoods, the work seems ever more important, though sometimes one can get a passing feeling of futility.

To bolster my determination to work for peace, I've returned to a method I've used before—cultivating peace from the inside out. Over the summer I spent more time meditating, practicing yoga, and nurturing peace in my personal relationships. While it may appear to others to be more self-serving than working on the public front lines of peace activism, I believe such inner cultivation of peace can make anyone more effective in their broader ethical engagement. This is why my **Ethical Society talk at 11 am, Sunday, September 17, will be about "Embodied Peace."**

It's hard to experience peace of the body if you are unemployed, unsafe, unhoused, and uncertain of your next meal. Which is why **peace activism must also involve campaigns for justice, which I'll speak about on October 1.** Even those of us who currently have our physical needs met, can find peace elusive.

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CENTER CITY RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

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For many people scarred by violence or trauma, embodied peace is evasive. Which is why I invite you to participate in a ***grief workshop on Saturday, September 16***, at the Ethical Society. Whatever trauma you are carrying, whether it involves grave assaults on your body or less extreme forms of unsettling experiences (such as watching the nightly news), offer yourself opportunities to heal. You'll be a more effective peacemaker at home and in the world.

Some parts of Philadelphia suffer greater attacks on peace of mind and peace of the body than others. They include Kensington, Richmond, and North Broad. This is why the planned ***“Footballs not Firearms” march and rally on Tuesday, September 19***, is a valuable community opportunity. The rally will take place at Fairhill Square Park in North Philly. This Peace Day Philly effort, in coordination with the Philadelphia Eagles and the Philadelphia Police Department, will offer students from several schools and police officers from several districts a time

of celebration, connection, and activism. Building ethical relationships is the main goal.

Other ***Peace Day Philly 2023 programs*** will include a ***September 17 benefit concert at the Ethical Society featuring musicians from the Philadelphia Orchestra***; a ***refugee/immigrant resource fair on September 18***; and a ***September 20 program on local and global water issues and their connection to peace***. The culmination of Peace Day Philly 2023 will be on ***Peace Day, September 21, at the North apron of City Hall***, instead of Rittenhouse Square, due to set-up for the grand Friends of Rittenhouse event that weekend.

To learn more please go to <http://www.peacedayphilly.org/> and plan to attend one or more programs, or try this [link](#) to our video. And think about what you might feel is meaningful to do on Peace Day, September 21. Getting involved might help you grow peace from the inside out.



Day program, Rittenhouse Square, 2021.



Hugh Taft-Morales, Peace Day Social Media Campaign, Peace Day program, Rittenhouse Square, 2021.

Town Square

City, Giffords Law Center, and Local Law Firm File Suit against Suppliers of Ghost Gun Kits

In July, the City of Philadelphia Law Department filed a lawsuit against Polymer80, Inc. and JSD Supply, the two largest suppliers of unserialized and untraceable ghost-gun kits confiscated in Philadelphia. The [suit](#) was filed with co-counsels Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence and Hausfeld law firm.

Former U.S. Representative Gabby Giffords (D-Ariz.) and her husband, Arizona Senator Mark Kelly, a Navy combat veteran and retired NASA astronaut, co-founded the Giffords Law Center and the Giffords Center for Violence Intervention, subsequent to the mass shooting in January 2011 when she and 18 others were shot during a constituent event in a supermarket parking lot near Tucson, and the mass shooting in 2013 at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut.

The [Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence](#) provides activists, legislators, and the general public with the facts about

our country's gun violence epidemic and the most effective ways to address it.

[Giffords Center for Violence Intervention](#) researches and promotes community violence-intervention strategies, connects community organizations to policymakers and to one another, and helps secure funding for violence-intervention initiatives nationwide.

According to a report by WHYY radio, some cities have won in court against gun suppliers. Los Angeles got a \$5 million settlement, and Washington, D.C., got \$4 million. In both cases, the gun supplier agreed to comply with serial-number and background-check requirements. New York State won [a preliminary injunction](#) to stop 10 national gun suppliers from selling and shipping parts to New York state residents.

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President's Letter

Taking on the City's Challenges with the New Administration in the Wings

By Rick Gross, CCRA President



Fantasizing about January 1 in the midst of stifling summer heat might be wishful thinking, but in this case, it is something more. On that day, Philadelphia will have a new Mayor and a very changed City Council. For me, it's an inflection point with great possibility ... and maybe even cause to be hopeful.

Things in a post-pandemic Center City have obviously been improving. I walked on Market Street at noon recently and there were lines out to the street at all the salad and sandwich shops, serving the noticeable increase in office workers. There was a pop-up musical performance and crowds obviously enjoying their return to in-person work ... or at least a better lunch!

New restaurants have opened all over the neighborhood, and Sansom Street in particular is bustling in the evening with crowds enjoying sidewalk cafes, happy hours, and some really terrific new eateries. (See Leo Levinson's review of BOLO in this issue, for example.)

The new lawns in Rittenhouse Square, the new benches, and the hanging planters make the Square the best it has ever looked in anyone's memory. These are all good developments to be encouraged and nurtured.

But amid all this rebirth, we have experienced a most unwelcome increase in antisocial street behavior. Panhandling by those experiencing addiction—who support their habits with money from generous (if misguided, in my view) neighbors—populate almost every corner on Chestnut and Walnut Streets. Mentally ill people have engaged in such acts as disrobing in public and unsanitary behavior.

Many of our members have told me they cannot walk the neighborhood without feeling a sense of profound unease, even if crime statistics are improving. The police I speak with are frustrated about the lack of social workers and drug counselors to engage with this population, and the never-ending cycle of engagement, removal, and return that characterizes the problem. That brings me back to the inflection point where I started this letter.

CCRA's government relations team and I have met with Chelle Parker's senior staff to ask how we can work with her to confront these problems. We have offered to review the existing code and rewrite it to better couple the provision of social services with enforcement of basic social norms to restore a sense of civility and safety in the neighborhood ... and the city beyond. They have welcomed this effort, and I have created a task force to tackle this difficult but critical issue and develop a proposed code to present to the new Mayor promptly after the New Year.

We have also met with Jeffery Young (who will replace Darrell Clarke as 5th District Councilmember) to enlist his help in the effort, and he has expressed strong support for it. And I met at length with 9th District Captain Tyrell McCoy to solicit the police department's view on how they can more effectively work to solve this problem. (Please see our interview with Captain McCoy, explaining his thinking about this, which appears elsewhere in this issue.)

I am cautiously optimistic that January 1 will be an inflection point, establishing a working government that will listen to our concerns and respond creatively and effectively to them. After so many years without strong executive leadership in this city, we can all hope that the new year will bring the change we desperately need.

CCRA is committed to being part of the solution. We encourage your support and help as we move forward. New ideas are welcome and, as always, I will respond to your thoughts about this. Working together is the only way I know to make progress for the neighborhood and the city.

Rick Gross

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New Book by Center City Author Offers Insights on the “Education Democracy Needs”

By Lois Traub West

Longtime Center City resident and educator Sandra Every Dean is the author of the recently published and highly readable book *Beyond Civics: The Education Democracy Needs*. Looking back at her long career as a teacher and administrator, Dean encourages educators to practice, model, and impart democratic values inside the schoolhouse.

Public figures of all political persuasions point toward one word—*civics*—as a cure-all for our divided nation’s problems. “But it is not enough to teach weekly classes on how a bill is passed, how the electoral college works, or how many senators represent each state,” says Dean. “Schools themselves must be democratic ecosystems that equip children with the tools that allow them to envision and construct their futures together.”

According to Dean, a school that goes “beyond civics” is a community that respects the professionalism and autonomy of teachers, knows and values each student, and does not shy away from controversial topics. Democracy depends on a citizenry well practiced in such interactions as working together, listening to the ideas and opinions of others, making compromises, and finding solutions that benefit the common weal. Using vivid stories from Dean’s own practice, *Beyond Civics* describes an educational approach that gives children the opportunity to practice these democratic skills every day in every classroom.

Currently an educational consultant, Dean has taught in both public and private schools. She was the head of The Philadelphia School for more than two decades, and she was interim lower school director of Friends Select School during the 2014-15 academic year. Dean received a B.S. in economics from the Wharton School, an M.Ed. from Temple University, and an Ed.D. from the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania.

Beyond Civics: The Education Democracy Needs, available online on Amazon and Barnes and Noble, offers a pragmatic yet hopeful response to fundamental challenges facing American education today.



Lauren Horvath Photography

Center City author and educator Sandra Dean.

Town Square

CCRA’s Under 40 Group Finds Meaningful Ways to Support Community while Socializing

By Kimberly Bowers

CCRA members Kim Bowers and Maddie Sweitzer have been leading an initiative to pair service and socializing through summer volunteering opportunities for “Under 40” members. The first initiative was participation in the Church of the Holy Trinity Rittenhouse Square Open Hearts Café, a volunteer-run food and clothing ministry that operates on Tuesday and Sunday evenings to serve our Center City neighbors experiencing homelessness and/or food insecurity.

CCRA was able to take swift action on a generous grant opportunity that arose through State Representative Ben Waxman’s office—a District 182 Community Programming Grant in the amount of \$9,000. The Young Friends of CCRA have named the grant opportunity “Summer of Service.” The group will be able to help purchase the supplies most needed by the community, such as shoes, clothing, personal items, and backpacks, in addition to showing their in-person support by volunteering to serve meals and gather customized clothing packages.

They look forward to topping off these special service opportunities with a chance to socialize at various fun locations and eateries in the city. Stay tuned for future updates from this inspired new group, Young Friends of CCRA, who are kicking off their first organized event in a spirit of service and CCRA teamwork.

This initiative is a continuation of the momentum from CCRA’s “Under 40” focus group sessions held this past spring, which produced important and fruitful conversations that gave our younger, newer members a chance to share their motivations for joining and aspirations for what they hope to enjoy from and contribute to our organization.



Office of Rep. Ben Waxman

Under 40 group leaders Kimberly Bowers, left, and Maddie Sweitzer are joined by PA Rep. Ben Waxman at the CCRA Young Friends volunteer event at Open Hearts Café August 13.

How to Dismantle Havoc The Mustangs of 23rd Street

Text and pictures by Bill West



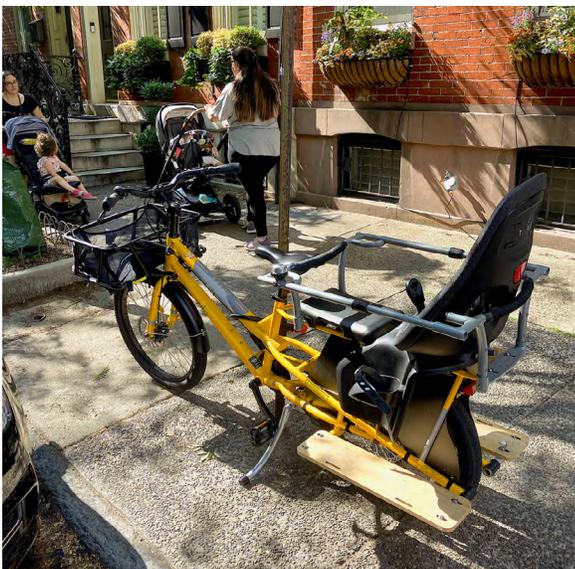
Crossing 23rd at Fittler Square.

The bike lane network in Center City Philadelphia is much better than it was just a few years ago, but there are still major gaps. One of the more significant lies in my neighborhood, the southwest quadrant of William Penn's original plan.

We have a very nice bike lane heading north on 22nd Street. It starts deep in South Philly, runs through Center City, and then extends well to the north. Unfortunately, it lacks a southbound twin, which means it's easy to use the 22nd lane to go somewhere, but coming back you have to get inventive. Or you could say screw it and take the car. But then, of course, you'll need to find a parking place, and another one when you get home.

The two obvious choices for a southbound pair are 21st Street and 23rd Street. It's my understanding that our local member of City Council, Kenyatta Johnson, has been unable for a number of years to decide where he would like the southbound lane to go.

I've decided to give Mr. Johnson a helping hand. I think 23rd is preferable for several reasons. First, the motor-vehicle traffic on 23rd is even more unruly than it is on 21st; second, 23rd runs next to Fittler Square, which is often heavily populated with small children, many of whom cross 23rd to get to Fittler Square; and third, 23rd runs across South Street and into Grays Ferry Avenue, creating any number of dangerous situations at that location.



Near the entrance to the Goddard School, Pine and 22nd.

I suggest that a bike lane replace one of the two motor-vehicle lanes on 23rd, thereby eliminating the abrupt lane changes that are one of the main hazards of the street's current two-lane configuration.

Changing streets from two lanes of car traffic to one is a proven traffic-calming measure. We need look no further than Pine and Spruce streets for a successful example. (Pine and Spruce continue to have the problem of illegal parking in the bike lanes, but the city and the Philadelphia Parking Authority are taking measures to improve that situation.)



Pine at 17th.

My ideal outcome for 23rd Street would have this new bike lane run from just south of the Benjamin Franklin Parkway through to Bainbridge. In the north, 23rd Street is interrupted at the Parkway and resumes at Summer Street, near the Franklin Institute. Motor-vehicle traffic is heaviest further south, between Market Street and Walnut Street, because of the three bridges across the Schuylkill at Market, Chestnut, and Walnut.

The folks at the city's Streets Department might well balk at a bike lane on the two blocks near the bridges. If they do, I'd recommend asking for the northern stretch, which could run south from Summer Street to Market, where it would connect with the bike lanes on Market. After PennDOT finishes renovating the Market Street bridge, we may well have excellent bike lanes across the bridge, and also connecting to the Schuylkill Banks.

As for the level of traffic on 23rd from Summer to Market, recently this stretch has been a de facto one-lane street because of all the construction. Call it a natural experiment. If one lane is good enough when the construction workers need the other lane for their tools and toys, perhaps it would also be okay to install a bike lane.

As for the potential gap in the bike lane between Market and Walnut, the obvious workaround is to run the bike lane down

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24th Street. The lane could go down Ludlow, just south of Market, from 23rd to 24th, and then down 24th, returning to 23rd at Delancey.

South of Locust, 24th has parking on both sides of the street, so the bike lane would likely have to become a share-the-road enterprise. Not ideal, but a lot better than nothing.

Now let's look at the southern piece of 23rd. The stretch from Walnut down past South Street seems perfectly feasible, but if Streets balks again, a fallback position could be starting the lane just north of Fidler Square, at Delancey.

I think traffic calming around Fidler Square is crucial because of the large number of children who currently visit the park. In addition to families bringing their kids, there are school groups coming from two locations of the Goddard School, the main one at 22nd and Pine and the annex on 23rd just south of South. (It's easy to miss this southern location—it's directly above the Amazon hub at 23rd and South.)

The two sites have a total enrollment of around 200, and these children go to Fidler Square on a regular basis.



Goddard above the Amazon hub.

I of course favor running the bike lane down 23rd from Summer Street to Bainbridge, but any of the outcomes outlined above would be a huge win, both for the evolving network of bike lanes in this city, and for traffic calming on 23rd Street.



Dismissal at Greenfield.

Finally, here's another argument for having the bike lane run between Market and Walnut: the need to provide safe southbound bicycle access to the Greenfield School, a K-8 public elementary school that lies between 22nd and 23rd, and Chestnut and Sansom. The school has around 650 students, and its catchment area extends north to the Parkway.

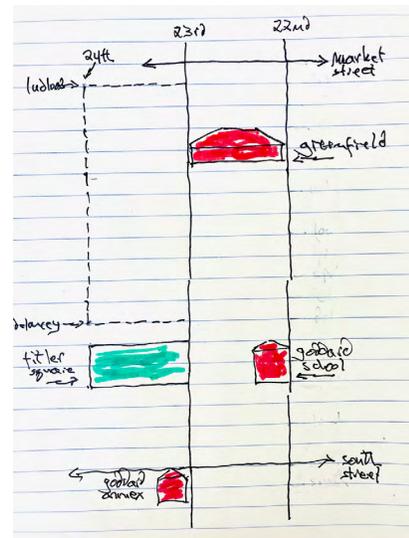
Encouraging families to walk and bike to school should be a major focus of traffic planning in Center City Philadelphia. There is significant latent demand for child-friendly routes to school, and more walking and biking would help clear the air and unclog the streets.



Independence Charter, Lombard at 17th.

Here's a shot of Independence Charter School, a K-8 school in the area. It was taken some years ago, and the part of the play yard facing Lombard has now been replaced by a new building. But I keep coming back to the bicycle here, which I think reminds us of the strong attraction that bikes can have for boys and girls, if they're given half a chance.

For a comprehensive update on bicycling and bicycle infrastructure in and around Philadelphia, see *I BikePHL 2023*, from the Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia. <https://story-maps.arcgis.com/stories/a94373c7697d45ddb70aef071933481>



The author's whimsical illustration of his proposed 23rd Street bike lane.

Front Street Memorials: Immigrants, Heroes, and Tragedies

Text and Photos by Margo Villanova

For a different historical perspective from the traditional tourist offerings in Philadelphia's historic district, a series of memorials, situated in a park along Front Street from Market to Spruce, are especially interesting because they represent "unfamous Americans." All except one depict nameless people; all portray groups of American people who suffered in some way; and

some represent Americans who died in foreign wars. From our neighborhood, several bus routes go to Front Street. You can combine a pleasant walk, learn history, and dine at one of many nearby restaurants.



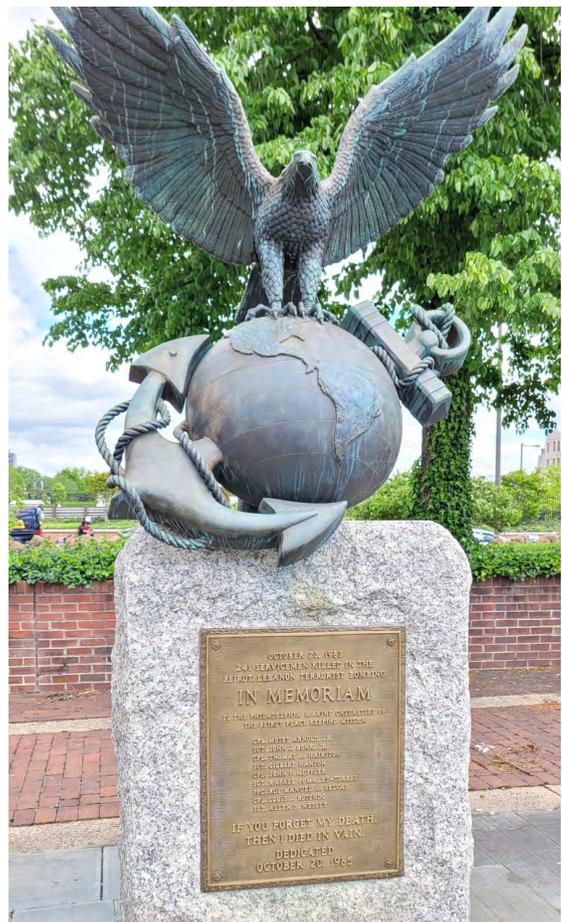
Irish Memorial commemorates Irish immigrants who fled their homeland in time of famine. Located at Front and Chestnut Streets.



Korean War Veterans Memorial commemorates 610 servicemen from the Philadelphia area who died in combat during the Korean War. Located at Front and Dock Streets.



Scottish Memorial commemorates families of Scottish immigrants meeting with members of St. Andrew's Society, who provide help. Located on Front Street, south of Irish Memorial.



Beirut Memorial commemorates the nine marine casualties of the Beirut Peace Keeping Mission who died in a terrorist bombing on October 23, 1983. Located in Korean War Memorial Park.

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[Philadelphia Vietnam Veterans Memorial](#) commemorates 648 Philadelphia servicemembers who died in the Vietnam War. Located at Columbus Boulevard, and Spruce Street.

Margo Villanova, our east-side correspondent and flaneur, enjoys walking, discovering, and photographing. She has previously contributed photographs of the Camden side of the Delaware River Waterfront as seen from the Philadelphia side.

City Lit

PCI Announces Fall Programming Lineup

By Erin Hoopes

Please join the Philadelphia City Institute Library (1905 Locust Street) for these exciting programs this fall!

Movie Matinees

Wednesdays at 2 pm

Join us every Wednesday at 2 pm to watch a recently released feature film in our meeting room.

Penn's Village Presents

Select Mondays at 2 pm

Join us for the final screenings of this popular film series. September 11: *Macbeth* (1948); September 25: *The Hundred-Foot Journey* (2014); October 2: *Touch of Evil* (1958); and October 23: *Delicious* (2021).

Storytime Yoga

Mondays at 11:15 am: September 11, 18, 25; October 2, 16, 23

Take a fun and playful yoga journey led by Sarah of Surya Moon Yoga. We'll learn individual and partner poses through songs and storytelling, all while building confidence, creativity, and strong, healthy bodies. Children and parents will practice how to center themselves through breathing and relaxation. This series of classes is designed for families with kiddos aged 2 to 5 years old. Please BYO yoga mat or blanket. This series is generously sponsored by the Philadelphia City Institute Board of Managers.

Intergenerational Teen Book Club

Saturdays at 11 am: Oct 7, Nov 4, Dec 2, Jan 13, Feb 10, Mar 9, Apr 6, May 4

Join us for a book club that will create space for meaningful conversations and bring different generations

of readers together around the same book. This club is open to teens in grades 9-12 and their adult family member or mentor. Free copies of the featured books will be available to a limited number of participants, first-come, first-serve. Please register by emailing hoopese@freelibrary.org, calling 215-685-6621, or stopping by the Reference Desk. This program is generously sponsored by the Philadelphia City Institute Board of Managers.

Neurodiverse Reads: A Discussion Group for Adults and Older Teens

Mondays at 5:30 pm: Oct 23, Nov 20, Dec 18, Jan 22, Feb 26, Mar 18, Apr 15, May 20

Adults and older teens are invited to participate in a monthly discussion series of books exploring neurological differences such as autism, ADHD, and more. Please register for this program by emailing hoopese@freelibrary.org, calling 215-685-6621, or stopping by the Reference Desk.

Author Talk: Steven Ujifusa

Monday December 11 at 5:30 pm

Author Steven Ujifusa will present his book, *THE LAST SHIPS FROM HAMBURG: Business, Rivalry, and the Race to Save Russia's Jews on the Eve of World War I*. In his new book, bestselling historian Steven Ujifusa tells the largely forgotten, colorful story of three remarkable businessmen who, driven by very different motives, made much of this immigration possible and forever changed the fates of millions. Steven Ujifusa is also the author of *A Man and His Ship, Barons of the Sea*. He is the recipient of the Washington Irving Medal for Literary Excellence from the Saint Nicholas Society of the City of New York, and the Athenaeum of Philadelphia's Literary Award. He lives with his wife and two sons in Philadelphia.

Library Lovers Stand Against Book Bans

By Bonnie Eisenfeld

Moms for Liberty, a political organization that aims to ban school curriculum topics and library books that address racism, gender, and sexuality, held their annual summit in Philadelphia June 29 through July 2. On Thursday, July 29, the Philadelphia City Institute (PCI) Library on Rittenhouse Square got word that the ironically named group would be demonstrating at this library branch.

Members of Friends of PCI and other community organizations came out in force to support the library. Police Civil Affairs Officers who were stationed at the library estimated the crowd of supporters to be around 100 people. At one point during the demonstration, four Moms for Liberty members carrying signs arrived across the street, saw the huge crowd of supporters, and turned around and left.

Library Supervisor Erin Hoopes sent this message to Friends of PCI:

“My deepest thanks to all of the Friends of PCI who came out and made such a definitive statement about how loved our library is. What a powerful display of solidarity! Your actions sent a clear message about your support for the freedom to read as well as the important role libraries play in helping young people, including LGBTQ+, Black, and Brown people, thrive. Thank you!”

Read the Free Library of Philadelphia’s [webpages](#) on **Material Selection, Freedom to Read, and the American Library Association’s Library Bill of Rights.**



A crowd gathers in a show of support for literary freedom at the PCI Branch of the FREE Library of Philadelphia (the name says it all).

The Perpetual Short-Sightedness of Banning

By Bonnie Eisenfeld

Book banning in America has been around for centuries. The Puritans banned certain books as far back as the 17th century. The Comstock Act of 1873 made it illegal to send “obscene, lewd or lascivious,” “immoral,” or “indecent” publications through the mail. Over the years, various authorities have banned classic books by authors such as Mark Twain, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and William Shakespeare, based on content considered controversial or obscene.

Yet, motivated readers always managed to get their hands on and read banned books. Some may remember that, back in their youth, friends passed around dog-eared copies of so-called obscene books.

Of the Modern Library’s list of the **100 Best Novels** published since 1900 in the English language, nine of the top 10 have been banned at some point, mostly for reasons relating to language, sex, violence, or immoral behavior, and sometimes based on politics, race, or religion. The most banned book of all time is *1984* by George Orwell. Needless to say, these books are widely read.

One-third of school library personnel, in a [nationwide survey](#) by *EdWeek*, said that when students find out a book is under challenge, their interest in that title goes up. Some librarians reported that students ask them for help finding the book outside of school, and that after books were challenged students used the library more often or became more interested in reading in general.

More than half of library personnel who responded to the *EdWeek* survey said that most students are not aware or do not react when a book is challenged, and that students’ interest in the challenged book, reading overall, and using library services remains unchanged after a book challenge.

The nationally representative survey, in which 1730 K-12 school library personnel participated, was conducted in April by the *EdWeek* Research Center. Respondents were asked their opinions about the impact of book banning on their district over the past two years. Respondents included

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librarians, library paraprofessionals, media center directors, and other employees with school library jobs. *EdWeek* is operated by Editorial Projects in Education, an independent nonprofit publisher.

In the past few years, there has been an upsurge in book banning according to PEN America, a free-speech organization that tracks book bans. During the first half

of the 2022-23 school year, PEN America's *Index of School Book Bans* lists almost 1500 instances of individual books banned, affecting almost 900 unique titles. From 2021 to 2022, more than 4000 book bans spread across 32 states, affecting thousands of school districts. Book bans are most prevalent in Texas, Florida, Missouri, Utah, and South Carolina, and book banners are most likely to target stories by and about people of color and LGBTQ+ individuals.

Town Square

Granny Peace Brigade Philadelphia Participates in International Peace Wave

By Jean Haskell

On July 8 and 9, members of the Granny Peace Brigade Philadelphia participated in the second annual International Peace Wave, a 24-hour Zoom meeting featuring live peace actions in the streets and squares of the world, moving around the globe with the sun.

The Peace Wave, sponsored by the International Peace Bureau and World Beyond War, took place just prior to the annual NATO meeting. The groups expressed opposition to all military alliances with the theme "NO to Militarization, YES to Cooperation."

July 9 was the anniversary of the [Russell-Einstein Manifesto](#) issued in London on July 9, 1955, in which physicist Albert Einstein, philosopher Bertrand Russell, and nine other scientists warned the world about the dire consequences of a nuclear war and urged peaceful resolution to international conflict to avoid "universal death."

The Peace Wave visited dozens of locations around the globe and included rallies, concerts, production of artworks, blood drives, installation of peace poles, dances, speeches, and public demonstrations of all varieties. Joining the Grannies, who sang antiwar songs and urged citizen actions for peace, were members of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom; the Brandywine Peace Community; Peace, Justice, Sustainability NOW; and singers from the choir of the Unitarian Universalists of Mt. Airy. To see the Peace Wave around the world, go to Worldbeyondwar.org/wave, or the website, www.24hourpeacewave.org

[Granny Peace Brigade Philadelphia](#) hopes to celebrate International Peace Day, September 21, in collaboration with some of those same peace groups in the Philadelphia area. On past Peace Days, the Grannies have conducted a survey of Philadelphia residents, asking how we can have a more peaceful world and a more peaceful city; a sing-along of peace songs with a group from the Philadelphia Ethical Society; a visit to the Peace and Social Justice Academy for group discussions about world peace; and a call for action, asking people to contact their Congresspeople and urge them to do everything possible to rid the world of nuclear weapons.



Granny Peace Brigade information table, Rittenhouse Square, Peace Day Philadelphia 2021.



Granny Peace Brigade, Peace Day Philly September 2022.

It's Academic

TPS Commences Major Renovations to Lombard Building

By Elise Greenberg

Over the summer, The Philadelphia School began their long-anticipated Lombard building renovation. Part of the *Ours to Shape* strategic plan, the project seeks to enhance communal spaces and place-based learning, inspire creative play, and transform the block with new landscaping, trees, and flowers. Over the past few months, this project has come to life thanks to SMP Architects, Wolf Scott Associates, and Aegis; the school will welcome students, families, and the neighborhood to see the completed construction later this fall.

Inside, the new Commons features a dynamic meeting space, a teaching kitchen, and easy access to the new yard. Not only will TPS students and families be able to enjoy this new space, but the greater community will be able to rent it for events and celebrations. Classes will have a new environment to enjoy as part of their lessons, and the school is planning many intimate and larger-scale events to introduce the space in the 2023-2024 school year.



A bird's eye view of the construction.

The yard will become an extension of the school's progressive classroom, allowing for boundless creativity and imagination. With new play structures such as the Workshop and the Treehouse, students in the Lombard building have more options for hands-on learning and recreation. There is an amphitheater, a waterwheel, and of course, a four-square court. With students nearly back at school, faculty and staff are dreaming up ways to integrate the yard into their lessons and into events for the community.

In the fall, TPS will host a ribbon-cutting ceremony to formally welcome families, neighbors, and community members to the new space, with opportunities to tour the building, experience the yard, and connect with others to enjoy this new chapter in the life of TPS.

Once the renovation is complete, TPS will look ahead to future phases of transformation to classrooms, administrative offices, and more. Read more about future plans and how to support the next phases of this project on the [Ours to Shape page of the website](#).



A rendering of the Commons, a multi-functional community space with easy access to the yard.

Our Greene Countrie Towne

Huge Decrease in Philadelphia Shoppers' Use of Plastic Bags

By Bonnie Eisenfeld

According to a study conducted by two university researchers at sample grocery stores in Philadelphia, only 4 percent of shoppers used plastic bags after the city's ban was implemented, down from 64 percent before. Meanwhile, shoppers' use of paper bags increased to 45 percent, up from 18 percent, and their use of reusable bags rose from 22 to 42 percent.

The researchers estimate the ban led to the elimination of over 200 million plastic bags in the city, "equivalent to filling Philadelphia City Hall with plastic bags every eight months."

The study looked at 9,000 shoppers using over 21,000 bags at seven locations. Pre-ban data collection was conducted in June 2021; post-ban data collection began in July 2021 and ended in August 2022.

"Evaluating the Ban: Philadelphia's Plastic Bag Ban and Changes in Bag Usage in the City," [Study](#) conducted by: Daniel Banko Ferran, Lead Researcher (University of Pittsburgh) and Syon Bhanot (Swarthmore College).

Philadelphia's Landmark Chinatown Friendship Gate Turning 40

By Margie Wiener

Philadelphia's Chinatown Friendship Gate (or Arch), which was dedicated almost 40 years ago, welcomes visitors to bustling Chinatown. Commissioned by Philadelphia's Departments of Commerce and Public Property, the gate celebrates the neighborhood, and commemorates the bond between Philadelphia and Tianjin, its sister city in northern China. It is located at the intersection of 10th and Arch Streets.

Notably, it is the first Chinese gate in the U.S. to be created entirely by Chinese architects and artisans. Initially produced in Tianjin in 1982, the gate was completed by Tianjin artisans, and dedicated in Philadelphia in 1984. Reflecting the traditional Chinese architectural style of the Qing dynasty (1644–1912), the gate stands four stories high (40 feet and 88 tons) and is painted bright gold, red, green, and blue.

It is adorned with fire-breathing dragons, phoenixes, small sculptures of mythical animals, Chinese characters, and ornamental roof tiles. The mystical creatures that prominently decorate the structure, such as the phoenix and dragon, signify good luck and longevity. The phoenix is intended to ensure good luck, and the dragon, said to have the magical power of retaining water in its mouth, is meant to protect the structure of the gate and community from fire. The colors—red, yellow, blue, and green—were used to signify imperial buildings in China.

The gate is a major contribution to Chinatown's community and Philadelphia. Because it deteriorated over time, in 2008 Tianjin's artisans returned and were commissioned to repaint it, using ancient, traditional techniques and materials, one of which included using pig's blood to make red paint.

The Arch also signifies Chinatown's community solidarity and determination during hard times, one major example being the Save Chinatown Movement from 1971-1977. The proposal to construct the Vine Street Expressway threatened vital Chinatown establishments, like the Holy Redeemer Church and School. The loss of the Church and School would have meant losing a recreational center and community hall that hosted events from basketball games and community meetings to weddings and wakes.

Community members unified to fight to keep important structures in Chinatown from being demolished. The movement brought together people from different generational, religious, educational, and geographical origins. The group achieved success: the Vine Street Expressway was scaled down and redesigned so it would not harm as many of Chinatown's structures. As a result, Chinatown has put down deeper and wider roots in its long fight for survival.

Especially after this plight, the gate continues to symbolize cultural exchange and friendship, not just between Philadelphia's Chinatown and Tianjin, but also between Chinatown and Philadelphia itself. It serves as an important gateway to Chinese culture and community, as well as a significant marker for Asian American progress within the history of Philadelphia.

The Friendship Gate alerts residents, passersby, and visitors that Chinatown is indeed a permanent part of Philadelphia's urban landscape. The arch, along with other visual markers, announces that Chinatown is integral to Philadelphia's long history, and the community will not be marginalized. Chinatown's struggle with the city and private investors continues to this day, as residents unite to prevent the [construction of a Sixers' stadium](#) and [casinos in the neighborhood](#).



Chinatown's Friendship Gate is turning 40.

Town Square

Mail-in Ballot: Do It Right and Do It on Time!

Thousands of mail-in ballots arrive late in Pennsylvania in each election, according to the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Ballots must be received by 8 pm on Election Day, regardless of when voters mailed them. Otherwise, they will not be counted. The Pennsylvania Department of State and Philadelphia City Commissioners reported in June that more than 1300 Philadelphia ballots arrived late in May's primary.

Errors in mail-in ballots also cause them to be rejected. The most common disqualifications are "undated ballots"—no date on the outer envelope. Other errors leading to rejection are unsigned ballots, naked ballots (ballots not enclosed in both an inner secrecy envelope and the larger mailing envelope), ballots without identification on file, and ballots with incorrect dates.

The N.W. Ayer Building: A Condo with a History

By Margie Wiener

Luxury condos have sprung up all around us throughout Center City. But this particular condo building is unusual because it was one of the oldest advertising agencies in both Philadelphia and in the U.S.

Founded in 1869 by 21-year-old entrepreneur [Francis Wayland Ayer](#) and his father, Nathan Wheeler Ayer, N.W. Ayer and Son initially represented religious weekly newspapers and farm journals. N.W. Ayer is considered by some sources to have been the first advertising agency not only in Philadelphia but in the entire U.S.

Other sources say that the first advertising firm in Philadelphia was founded in 1842 by Volney Palmer, who bought large amounts of space in various newspapers at a discounted rate and then resold the space at higher rates to advertisers. The actual ad—the copy, layout, and artwork—was still prepared by the company wishing to advertise; in effect, Palmer was a space broker.

But N.W. Ayer & Son was to become the first full-service agency to assume responsibility for advertising content. In 1875, Ayer introduced the “open contract,” which allowed an advertiser to pay a fixed commission based on the volume of advertising placed, aligned the advertising agent firmly on the side of the advertiser, and gave advertisers access to the actual rates charged by newspapers and journals.

Before this, in effect, agencies had bought newspaper and magazine space for as little as possible and sold it to clients for as much as possible. Ayer revolutionized the infant advertising industry by making the advertising firm an active agent for the advertiser, rather than a middleman selling a newspaper’s space to the advertiser. Ayer brought advertising a new respectability and stability.

Whereas Volney Palmer established the roots of the modern-day advertising agency in Philadelphia by brokering advertisement space in newspapers, Ayer and Son took things to the next level by offering to plan, create, and execute complete advertising campaigns for its customers. Ayer’s agency prospered, buying out other agencies, opening offices in major U.S. cities, and hiring salesmen to seek new business, as well as full-time copywriters and graphic designers to work in teams. As a result, by 1900, Ayer & Son had become the focal point of creative planning; advertising was firmly established as a profession; and Ayer was unquestionably the largest advertising agency in the U.S.

During the 20th century, Ayer and Son attracted such clients as [American Telephone & Telegraph Company](#), W.K. [Kellogg Company](#), and Steinway & Sons. The agency also pioneered the refinement of copywriting and the development of advertising campaigns.

Ayer and Son has been responsible for some of the most recognizable slogans in advertising history, including "[When it rains it pours](#)" for Morton Salt, "[I'd walk a mile for a Camel](#)" for Camel cigarettes, "[A diamond is forever](#)" for DeBeers, "Reach out and touch someone" for AT&T, and "Be all that you can be" for the U.S. Army.

The company started to decline in the 1960s. Ayer faced challenges from industry changes as smaller agencies began creating ads appealing to targeted groups of consumers. This method focused agency attention on single demographics and could be performed more nimbly by smaller agencies rather than traditional larger agencies. After a series of mergers, Ayer and Son closed in 2002, when its assets were bought out by the Publicis Group.

The headquarters for the Ayer Company, built in 1928 and designed by Ralph Bencker in the Art Deco style, was located at 210 W. Washington Square in Philadelphia. In 2005, the building was bought and converted into The Ayer, a luxury condominium.



The historic N.W. Ayer Building on Washington Square.

Penn Live Arts 2023-24 Season a Timely Selection

By Margie Wiener

Last season, Penn Live Arts (aka Annenberg Center) looked back in celebration of its 50th anniversary and a legacy filled with thousands of artists who energized its stages, bringing together untold numbers of people to share in the joy of live performing arts. Now, PLA eagerly looks to a bright future with the promise of more transformative artistic experiences, meaningful outreach across Penn's campus and community, and exciting enhancements to the Annenberg Center, including the addition of the Stuart Weitzman Theatre, the cornerstone of a multiyear capital project.

Think Global, Live Local

The performing arts offer the opportunity to be global and local at the same moment. Through diverse artistry, innovative ideas, and visionary perspectives, they seek to use the arts as a force for positive change, one audience at a time.

As PLA begins its next 50 years, they emphasize how the arts can be a catalyst for positive social change, both globally and locally. In the 23/24 season, they broaden their worldview with **Ukraine: The Edge of Freedom**, which seeks to raise

awareness about the country's wartime struggles while honoring its people's resounding spirit and resilience. They uplift this nation rich with cultural history and make connections to the Ukrainian American population in our city, reminding us how interconnected we truly are.

And, using their platform to advocate for a safer Philadelphia, they look at our own vibrant city, stricken by gun violence, an issue that grips much of the country. In **Toll the Bell**, they use an ongoing artist residency with **Rennie Harris Puremovement and the Negro Ensemble Company** to explore the tragedy and trauma of this epidemic and its disproportionate impact on communities of color.

PLA offers subscriptions and individual tickets. Subscribers get the best seats and receive the lowest prices, now and throughout the season as other events get added. Subscriber benefits include free ticket exchanges, discounted parking and up to 35 percent savings with a series subscription of eight performances. Contact PLA [online](#) or call the Box Office at 215-898-3900.

The Drawing Room

Cartoon by Richard Vaughn



"I'm sorry, but Mr. Benson is busy expanding his work to fit the time allotted."

Nonprofits Fill Education and Training Needs for Adult Learners

By Bonnie Eisenfeld

Adults turn to alternative learning programs for a variety of reasons: they dropped out of high school; they immigrated from another country; they need job training; they are missing some requirements for their next level of education or employment; or they got in trouble with the law, to name a few.

I have met some of these adult learners and they are smart, motivated people, who want to get their lives on track. Some who left high school had good reasons: for example, they needed to work; feared violence; or felt they were not learning necessary skills. Dropping out need not be the end of education: for many of these students, alternative programs fill their educational and training needs, not supplied by traditional high schools.

Local nonprofit organizations, funded by grants from government, corporations, foundations, and individual charitable contributions, offer classes for low-income adult learners. Most classes are free. Each year, thousands of adult learners participate in education and training programs including basic skills (reading, writing, science, social studies, and math), career and technical training, English language classes, computer literacy training, citizenship test prep, and GED (high school equivalency) test-prep classes.

JEVS Human Services, headquartered at 1845 Walnut Street, operates several adult education and training programs; most are free to eligible applicants. In 2022, they served 10,282 adult learners. Programs include: EduConnect and Orleans Technical College (career and technical education), Center for New Americans (refugee assistance), The Choice is Yours (prison diversion program), and WorkReady (for individuals leaving public assistance). EduConnect and Orleans Technical College charge tuition but provide affordable payment options, and applicants are encouraged to apply for financial aid.

[JEVS programs](#) for adult learners are supported by Federal, state, and local governments, foundations, and individual donations. Individual donations help JEVS reach more people and expand their services. One example of how individual donations make a difference is the Center for New Americans, which has served over 680 refugees since December 2022.

To attract students, JEVS advertises through digital and other media, and participates in community events. Students are referred by government offices and social service agencies.

[Beyond Literacy](#) at 211 N.13th Street, is currently providing classes to 1500 adult learners. All classes are free. (In 2021, the Center for Literacy merged with the Community Learning Center to form this new organization.)

Robin Robinowitz, Chief Development Officer, describes Beyond Literacy's program goals: "We elevate underserved adults from learning to earning, helping them succeed as students, workers, and parents."

Five core programs are offered: Adult Education (basic literacy and numeracy skills through High School Equivalency test preparation); English Language Proficiency and Citizenship Preparation; Family Literacy for Immigrant Families; Digital Literacy; and Workforce Development.

The majority of Beyond Literacy's funding comes from Federal, state and city governments. Other contributors are corporations, foundations, and individuals. Three highly competitive multiyear state contracts through the Pennsylvania Department of Education were awarded to the organization. In addition, Beyond Literacy provides programs for other organizations, for which they receive fees.

Their Workforce Development programs have also expanded to offer energy-sector learning-to-earning opportunities. "With a new 29-month contract from the PA Commission on Crime & Delinquency Violence Intervention & Prevention (VIP) Grant Program," Robinowitz says, "Beyond Literacy collaborates with the Philadelphia District Attorney[s] Office and works in partnership with the Energy Coordinating Agency (ECA) to provide technical training for in-demand green energy careers—a game changer for justice-impacted young adults—along with their GED."

Adult learners find out about the organization through word of mouth, community partner referrals, and internet searches.

David Logan, Class of 2022 graduate speaker, describes first-hand the impact of Beyond Literacy: "When the pandemic hit, I became displaced and had no choice but



David Logan, Beyond Literacy graduate.

Continued on p.16

to return to Philadelphia penniless. Eventually, I got a temp job but they couldn't hire me permanently without a diploma. I felt desperate and stuck. That's when I found Beyond Literacy. It was the perfect opportunity to learn a trade and get my GED. This time, I would have something to show for my effort. Now, here I am. I earned my diploma and multiple certifications. I've learned skills I can use to make a real difference in my community. I've gained an extended family with my classmates and instructors. I've started a new mechanical engineering career and start college this fall. This was possible by pure ambition and a program with dedicated people who help ensure people in our communities succeed."

Garces Foundation, 1901 S, 9th Street, a nonprofit organization founded by Chef Jose Garces, offers classes primarily to Spanish-speaking immigrant restaurant workers. This year they will have educated about 500 students. The demand for these classes is increasing yearly.

The Foundation offers free GED prep classes, free specialized short-term job-training programs, and English language classes for a small fee. Funding comes from grants, individual donors, events, and corporate sponsorships. Participants learn about the programs through word of mouth, fliers, outreach to restaurants, social media, city agency referrals, and other nonprofit referrals.

"When I arrived in Philadelphia," says one participant, "I was very nervous about the new culture and language. I didn't have basic knowledge. With the Foundation I found support not only to learn the language, but they helped me get a job in a restaurant. As

a student Garces opened the doors for me. I am also getting all the tutoring and financial support I need for the GED preparation. There are many students like me, and many parents too, who need help to make it."

The City of Philadelphia and the School District also offer alternative adult education opportunities.

- **YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School**, 1231 N Broad St, is a high school for dropouts ages 17 to 20, combining an accelerated academic program with vocational training and service learning.
- **Educational Options Program (EOP)** is a program offered by the School District for adults 18 years of age or older to continue earning credits towards a high school diploma. The program is offered three times a year, from October through June, after school hours at high schools in three locations—North Philadelphia, Northeast Philadelphia, and South Philadelphia. Students have an opportunity to earn six or more credits towards graduation each academic year.
- The City of Philadelphia offers [Free Online Adult Education](#).

Community College of Philadelphia, 1700 Spring Garden Street, offers college-level courses, career and technical training, and high school courses to help students prepare for college. Scholarships and student assistance are available to help with tuition and expenses.

You can help people achieve the education and training they need by volunteering and/or contributing to these organizations.

Living History

Heritage West Archaeological Project

The University of Pennsylvania and the Penn Museum are [leading an excavation](#) on the 3500 block of Lancaster Avenue from August through November as part of the Heritage West Archaeological Project. Heritage West is a community-informed project created to use archaeology to highlight the stories of individuals living in the Black Bottom neighborhood of West Philadelphia from the 19th century to the present.

The Heritage West Project strives to highlight the Black Bottom neighborhood's love, community, and humanity, and recognize its destruction's violence.

Heritage West aims to bring together the Penn and West Philadelphia communities in uncovering lost stories and uplifting the voices of the thriving Black community that was extinguished through racist practices under the guise of urban renewal.

In striving for a more inclusive, righteous, and welcoming environment, Heritage West recognizes the need to start righting the wrongs done to the Black Bottom community and actively engage with West Philadelphia throughout the project.

For further information and how you can get involved, contact https://www.heritagewestphl.org/?mc_cid=b3ab1770fa&mc_eid=31ce1efc34



CCRA Announces New Corporate Sponsor Program

By Travis Oliver, CCRA Managing Director

CCRA is thrilled to announce our new corporate sponsorship program! Corporate sponsorship provides businesses with the opportunity to support our mission and make a positive impact in the community. Through this program, we are seeking partnerships with companies that share our values and want to invest in the future of our organization.

As a sponsor, businesses will be able to showcase their brand to a large and engaged membership while also supporting the important work we do. In addition to brand exposure, sponsors will receive a variety of benefits, including: recognition on our website, our newsletters, and social media channels; networking opportunities with other sponsors and supporters; and exclusive access to events and initiatives. Each sponsor level comes with its own special benefits.

We believe that corporate sponsorship is a win-win for both our organization and our partners. By working together, we can create meaningful change and make a real difference in the quality of life in our community.

If you are interested in becoming a sponsor or would like to learn more about the program, please contact us at centercity@centercityresidents.org. We look forward to hearing from you!



Our First Sponsor

CCRA is pleased to announce that Solo Real Estate has joined CCRA as a "Believer"-level sponsor.

Solo Real Estate is an independent, family-owned Philadelphia real estate company that's been helping clients for generations. No matter where you are in life, they are there to support you. Buying, selling, renting, real estate investing, property management—Solo agents approach it all with integrity and expertise in order to sustainably invest in our city's communities.

For more information, visit their website at www.solorealty.com.



City's New Home-Visit Program Reduced Gun Violence in Target Groups

By Bonnie Eisenfeld

Group Violence Intervention (GVI), Philadelphia's experiment with a new method of solving the problem of gun violence in our neighborhoods, is credited with reducing shootings among specific groups of young people by as much as 50 percent during a nearly 30-month period from January 2020 to May 2022, according to a [study](#) conducted by University of Pennsylvania researcher Ruth A Moyer, Ph.D, J.D.

During this period, a Mobile Call-In Team identified a small population of people most likely to shoot or be shot, and visited their homes on Saturday mornings to encourage them to avoid gun violence and take advantage of opportunities offered to them for training and social services. The team consisted of police officers, social workers, case managers, and community members such as ex-offenders and mothers whose children had been shot. The project also included enforcement actions and deterrence messages.

The GVI team contacted 276 people in 113 groups over 29 months. Launched in August 2020, the program received \$1 million in city funding from the City of Philadelphia.

In addition to collecting quantitative data on gun violence, confidential interviews were conducted with some GVI participants. People who were visited by the team had positive opinions of the program and had told others about

it. They felt that it demonstrated community concern about them. Respondents reported that it was easy to get guns and there was a strong connection between social media and violence.

Police who participated said that getting the trust of community was an important aspect of the project, and they found it rewarding to see "an at-risk individual have the opportunity to make positive life changes."

Subsequent to the calls, police said the participants and their families began to ask the officers for help when facing issues that could result in gun violence. "This allows us to get ahead of the violence and end it before it even started."

Town Square

Read Center City District's research reports: "Center City Retail Update, July 2023," "State of Center City 2023," and "Shaping the Future We Want." <https://centercityphila.org/research-reports>

Grow Your Own Veggies in Containers

By Travis Oliver

For those who don't have access to a traditional garden or who want to try their hand at gardening in small spaces, growing vegetables in containers has become increasingly popular. Container gardening is an easy and convenient way to grow fresh produce on your balcony, patio, or even indoors.

Growing your own vegetables can be a rewarding and cost-effective way to eat fresh and healthful produce. If you don't have a lot of space for a traditional garden, don't worry! Container gardening is an excellent option.

When choosing vegetables, make sure you pick varieties that are well-suited for container gardening. Some popular options include tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, lettuce, spinach, and herbs like basil and parsley. Here are some of the best veggies to grow in containers:

- **Tomatoes:** Tomatoes are an excellent choice for container gardening because they don't require much space and can thrive in various container sizes. Choose a container that is at least 18 inches deep and wide, and support the plant as it grows—i.e., a tomato cage.
- **Peppers:** Peppers also do well in containers and can add a lot of flavor to your meals. Choose a container that is at least 12 inches deep and wide, and make sure to provide plenty of sunlight.
- **Green Beans:** Green beans are a great option for those who want to grow veggies vertically. Choose a container that is at least eight inches deep and wide, and add a trellis or support for the plant to climb.
- **Lettuce, spinach, and kale:** These leafy greens are easy, fast-growing veggies that are perfect for container gardening. Choose a container that is at least six inches deep and wide, and keep the soil moist.
- **Cucumbers:** Cucumbers can be grown in containers but require a lot of space. Choose a container that is at least 18 inches deep and wide, and provide support for the plant as it grows. Be creative and have them grow vertically by adding a stick in the center of the container. Gently tie the vines to the stick as it grows.

To get started, choose containers deep enough to accommodate the root systems of your vegetables and have suitable drainage holes to prevent water from pooling. You can use anything from plastic pots to wooden boxes, or recycled items like old tires or buckets.

Next, select the right soil mix. Vegetables need nutrient-rich soil that drains well, so consider adding perlite or vermiculite to your potting mix to improve drainage. You can also add compost or fertilizer for extra nutrients (cheat code: save money by purchasing soil that includes fertilizer).

Experiment with different colors and textures by mixing and matching different vegetables in one container. To ensure your veggies thrive, make sure they get enough sunlight. Most vegetables need at least six hours of direct sunlight daily, so choose a sunny spot for your containers (be careful of the intense summer heat). If you're growing indoors, consider using grow lights to supplement natural light.

Finally, water your plants regularly, but be careful not to overwater them, as this can cause root rot. Check the soil moisture level regularly, and only water when the top inch of soil feels dry to the touch. By following these simple steps, you can easily grow fresh vegetables in containers.

Not only is container gardening a fun and rewarding hobby, but it also allows you to enjoy the taste of homegrown produce even if you don't have a traditional garden. With a bit of care and attention, you can enjoy fresh, homegrown veggies all season long!



The author's eggplants growing in a container on his balcony.

It's Academic

Greene Towne Montessori School Announces Lower Elementary Program

By Julie A. Kaeli, Alumni Parent '14 and '12

Greene Towne Montessori School, Philadelphia's longest running and only accredited Montessori preschool and Kindergarten in Center City, is excited to announce the expansion of their Montessori program to include Lower Elementary, ages 6-9 in a mixed class for grades 1-3, effective September 2023. "Over the past five decades, Greene Towne has established itself as a leader in early childhood education and is the ideal school to bring Montessori elementary to Center City," said Head of School Sarah Sweeney-Denham.

The Lower Elementary program continues the Montessori philosophy of a mixed-aged classroom, individualized instruction and evaluation, and includes expanded instruction designed to tap into what Maria Montessori called the "second plane of development," the phase of development for the lower elementary age group.

The program will be co-led by current Greene Towne Montessori-trained teachers Shelby Feldman and Brandon Och. "This program will not only benefit the children in Lower Elementary but the entire school community," said Feldman. "Elementary students will have opportunities to serve as leaders to their younger Greene Towne friends, which is a powerful addition to our school," said Och.

The Montessori curriculum is interdisciplinary by design and Greene Towne's LE students will develop a deeper understanding of each curricular area, including the functional aspects as well as the history of the subject while incorporating practical applications. The surrounding city also will serve as an extension of the classroom.

"I could not think of a better location for a lower elementary program than Philadelphia. We are centrally located to so many cultural institutions," Feldman said. In addition to having access to the city, Greene Towne LE students will have access to a kitchen for cooking, plus art, music, movement and Spanish classes.

"It's exciting to give families an additional option for elementary in Center City Philadelphia, and one that builds not only a strong educational foundation, but also gives young people a true experience in contributing to their own and their peers' learning through the collaborative Montessori approach," said Sweeney-Denham.

Greene Towne serves children 18 months old through third grade and is the only Montessori school in Philadelphia that is accredited by the American Montessori Society. Greene Towne holds a four-star rating through the Pennsylvania STARS program and is accredited by the Pennsylvania Association of Independent Schools. Greene Towne is accepting applications for 2023-2024. Please visit www.gtms.org to learn more.



Sarah Sweeney-Denham and Lower Elementary School students at GTMS.

Don't keep us a secret!

Encourage a friend to join CCRA today.



Join as a Resident or a Business



Email:
centercity@centercityresidents.org

2025 Sansom St., Philadelphia BOLO

By Leo Levinson—*The Center City Foodie*

We are lucky to have the 2000 block of Sansom Street in our district because it has truly become a solid "restaurant row," with Wilder, Melograno, Porcini, Village Whiskey, Shake Shack, and at least two other major restaurants on the way. Add to that list Bolo, having opened just a few months ago, and serving what I'd call gourmet Latin fusion.

Bolo has one of the more original menus to be found in our neighborhood, or anywhere, for that matter. Although Puerto Rican cuisine inspires the menu, Chef Yun Fuente's creativity and vision have grafted culinary innovation onto a foundation of Latin cuisine, to make the Bolo dining experience fresh, fun and delicious.

By the way, when I use the word "gourmet," don't get the idea that I mean stuffy. Bolo is gourmet because of the imaginative layers of flavors, the creative recipes, the attractive plating and the engaging service. Bolo's inventive menu is large, and its portions are large too, encouraging sharing for a night out with friends. Yet Bolo makes a good neighborhood place too, where you can just stop in for a quick Mojito and a couple of small plates on the way home.

Anchoring Bolo's small plates are the ceviches—tuna, salmon, shrimp and red snapper; you can order one ceviche or a three-fish sampler to taste a few. Bolo's ceviche dishes keep the fish the star, yet subtly enhance them with flavors spanning Latin to Asian to Caribbean. Noteworthy was the Red Snapper Nikkei ceviche with a tasty Latin/Asian fusion blending lemongrass and soy flavors with the Latin chiles and garlic.

In addition to ceviche, there are a selection of small-plate categories including salads, snacks, skewers and Cuchifrito (fried). We loved the octopus skewer—big chunks grilled very tender, and the pork belly skewer flavored by a marinade was tasty too.

Bolo's salads are unique, as well. Even the typically pedestrian green salad (Salad Verde) was unusual in its construction, and delicious, with greens, pitipuas, fried cheese, green plantains, avocado and a flavorful sherry vinaigrette. The other salads are distinctive too, such as the hearts of palm salad with dates, blue cheese, bacon, endive and coconut vinaigrette. I mean, seriously!

We also enjoyed the "snack" section and fried dishes, especially because the latter was only lightly breaded and fried, not overbearing. Tasting this small-plate section, we enjoyed the Bacalaitos, a beautifully plated dish of codfish fritters, horseradish, and blue crab. We also loved the Chicken Chicharron, a sinfully delicious chicken fried in pork lard with garlic mojo and lime; I was going to eat only half of the dish but could not hold back and ate it all!

We also liked the Lamb Picadillo Empanadas because of the perfectly crispy outside with a unique stuffing of lamb-shoulder stew, sauce gribiche and cumin. Once again, Chef Fuente riffs on a traditional Latin favorite, and then kicks it up a notch to "amazing" by pairing it with his version of this French sauce.

Many patrons make a dinner just of the small plates at Bolo, but doing so is a shame because they miss out on some of Chef Fuente's signature entrees that put the "Gee (whiz)" in gourmet. Especially, we liked both steak dishes and the Red Snapper. The snapper is a whole fish served light and flaky with shrimp on top, vegetables, and a flavorful sauce, adding in cachuchas pepper aioli, springtime sancocho and chives that do not overpower the fish. We also liked the Bistec Palomilla, a tender filet mignon topped with cippolini onions, together with perfectly crisped yuca frites. I loved its deeply rich sauce, which possibly was rum-based and delightfully decadent.

My only nit-pick is with Bolo's bar, not that it isn't a good bar—it is—but it could be so much more. For example, Bolo promotes itself as a rum bar, yet there is no rum menu that I saw, nor rum tasting flights. Waiters were not able to recite a rum list or discuss the rums in order to make recommendations.

Also, it seems that their regular bartender, Kevin, is amazing, but if it's his day off, the bar misses a beat. For example, I enjoy the Brazilian cocktail Caipirinha with muddled limes and Cachaça, a Brazilian liquor distilled from sugar cane. Kevin makes them when he's there, but two out of three times when I visited Bolo, Kevin was not there, nor was anyone who could make a Caipirinha. That said, the specialty cocktail list is clever and looks tasty, and those are available even when Kevin is not there.

If you're looking for a restaurant that is original and delicious, I recommend Bolo, the neighborhood's newest addition to our "restaurant row."

Leo Levinson, our roving food writer, is a board member of Philadelphia's premier gourmet club, the Chaine 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 fois gras. Follow Leo on Instagram @theleolevinson



Bolo's grilled octopus skewer served with toasted Cuban bread and accompaniments.

2023-24
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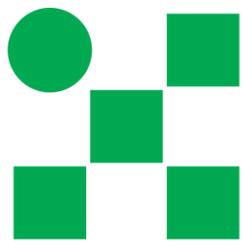
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CCRA Fall Calendar – You've Beaten the Heat; Now Hit the Streets

Center City District Restaurant Week 20th Anniversary

Sunday, September 10 to Saturday, September 23

<https://www.centercityphila.org/explore-center-city/ccd-restaurant-week>

Rittenhouse Square Fine Art Show

Friday, September 15, 11 am – 6 pm

Saturday, September 16, 11 am – 6 pm

Sunday, September 17, 11 am – 5 pm

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

Peace Day Philly 2023 Benefit Concert

Philadelphia Ethical Society

1906 S. Rittenhouse Square

Sunday, September 17, 7 pm

\$15 suggested donation

All proceeds to [Nationalities Service Center](#) and their Victim Services program. Pianists Annette and Regina diMedio, flutist Robert Cart, String Quartet (violinists Philip Kates and Luigi Mazzocchi, violist David Giles, cellist Patricia Daniels), bassoonist Peter Schoenbach, and soprano Marta Zaliznyak, performing works by [Leonard Bernstein](#), [Cesar Franck](#), [Valerie Coleman](#) and [Florence Price](#).

Peace Day Philly and International Day of Peace

Philadelphia Ethical Society and Granny Peace Brigade
Rittenhouse Square

For complete program info check website.

Thursday, September 21

<http://www.peacedayphilly.org/>

Halloween Nights at Eastern State Penitentiary

2027 Fairmount Avenue

Friday, September 22 through Saturday, November 11

<https://www.easternstate.org/halloween/schedule>

Ball on the Square

Friends of Rittenhouse Square

Thursday, September 28, 5 pm – 11 pm

<https://www.friendsofrittenhouse.org/ball-on-the-square>

Cooking Demonstration & Book Signing with Michael Solomonov & Jake Cohen

[Weitzman National Museum of American Jewish History](#)

Thursday, September 28

[Stranger at the Gate](#), Film Screening & Panel Discussion

[Weitzman National Museum of American Jewish History](#)

Thursday, October 12

Philadelphia premiere of the Academy Award-nominated documentary.

Philly Bike Ride

Saturday, October 14

<https://phillybikeride.com/>

Philadelphia Film Festival

Thursday, October 19 to Monday, October 30

<https://filmadelphia.org/festival/>

Secret Chord Concert featuring Nefesh Mountain

First band to sing in Hebrew at the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville. Will be recorded as an episode of the [Secret Chord Concerts](#) series.

[Weitzman National Museum of American Jewish History](#)

Thursday, October 19

Philadelphia Open Studio Tours

Center for Emerging Visual Artists

West of Broad St., Saturday, October 21 and Sunday October 22

<https://www.cfeva.org/philaopenstudios>

Election Dates

Last day to register to vote: Monday, October 23

Last day to request a mail-in or absentee ballot:

Tuesday, October 31

Municipal Election: Tuesday, November 7

Head of the Schuylkill Regatta

Schuylkill River

Saturday, October 28 and Sunday, October 29

<https://hosr.org/>

Philadelphia Museum of Art Contemporary Craft Show

Convention Center

1101 Arch Street

Friday, November 3 to Sunday, November 5

<https://www.pmacraftshow.org/>

[Paths of The Righteous: Conversations with Allies who Stood Up for Jews in the Face of Antisemitism](#)

Book Talk

With author [Ari Mittleman](#) and two of the book's subjects: Lt. Aston Bright and Olga Meshoe Washington.

[Weitzman National Museum of American Jewish History](#)

Thursday, November 9

Philadelphia Jewish Film & Media 43rd Fall Fest

[Weitzman National Museum of American Jewish History](#)

Saturday, November 11 to Saturday, November 18

Debut Concert of Piyut Rising

[Weitzman National Museum of American Jewish History](#)

The new ensemble is composed of Mizrahi Jews (of Middle Eastern and North African descent) based in the US and Israel, and led by Yoni Battat and Yosef Goldman, collectively of Iraqi, Syrian, and Yemeni descent.

Thursday, November 16

Philadelphia Marathon

Friday, November 17 to Sunday, November 19

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

For more events in Center City, go to Center City District:

<https://centercityphila.org/news?topics=news&search=>

For more events in Philadelphia area, go to Visit Philly:

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

Center City Spotlight

A Chat with the Captain

By Richard Vaughn



Captain Tyrell McCoy of the 9th District.

Capt. Tyrell McCoy has been the Commanding Officer of the 9th District since February. Center City Residents' Association recently had the opportunity to get to know him and be informed of his plans for the 9th District.

CCRA: Could you tell us a bit about your background?

Capt. McCoy: My mother is from Ohio and my father is from Virginia. I grew up in North Philly, and in a household where education was emphasized. I attended Fels High School. I earned a Bachelor's degree in business from Holy Family University and a Master's degree in business administration from Eastern University.

Were you always interested in a career in Law Enforcement?

Actually, no. I thought I was headed into a career in music, as I've played the piano, tenor sax, bass, and organ.

What changed?

There was an incident where someone drove a stolen car into my parents' property. It stopped about two feet short of the back door. My parents were very upset. The policewoman who responded was able to calm my parents down. She became the person that people looked to in times of crisis, and that was appealing to me. A part of me thought "Maybe I could do that." That encounter inspired me to apply to the Philadelphia Police Department. I was hired and started in December 2007. I was on my way.

Fast-forward to February of this year, when you became Captain of the 9th District. What it was like coming to the 9th?

This is my first assignment in Center City. I will say one thing that is truly commendable is the support we get from the residents of Center City. Throughout the 9th District, people want a better quality of life. Leveraging those professional relationships that we all have, to accomplish common goals, is key. I'm really encouraged to know that this has the potential to be the model of how to effectively resolve problems with police and community involvement. As I have previously said, there's a common thread throughout the entire city. We're all facing some of the same issues. What affects one neighborhood affects the other.

Quality-of-life issues are important to Center City residents. What would you say are the elements of quality of life in Center City?

There are a number of quality-of-life issues. A top priority is looking at our homeless population in the Center City area. We have to determine what resources are needed and what resources are immediately available. We have homeless-outreach associates that attempt to reach the homeless population and provide needed services. There are also issues surrounding illicit drug use and related activities in certain sections of the 9th District as well. I also plan to address sanitation and blight-related issues to improve the appearance of the community as well.

What about the homeless population? What's the best approach to handle that?

Realistically, providing resources is the top priority. We all must contribute ideas and resources to provide a sustainable solution to the problem. We can't allow for a quick fix. We must participate in grassroots efforts to provide food and shelter. We must find ways to provide extended resources for the homeless population as a catalyst to change their situations. These sources should include permanent housing, counseling, employment and skills training. We must take a real case-management approach in making sure that resources and needs are individualized to that one person. Every effort should be made to follow up on assisted individuals to determine the effectiveness of all efforts and whether they are sustainable.

What is your guidance regarding dealing with panhandlers?

One of the biggest things we see downtown is panhandling. And I'm guilty of "Here you go, here's this, here's that." Everybody wants to help. That's just human nature. What I would encourage people to do is to see what resources they need. That may be a better avenue than a quick fix. I never want to tell someone not to give wholeheartedly, but I do think we need to ask deeper questions: "What can we do to really make sure that you're not here anymore?" Sometimes it's something as simple as needing ID in order to receive city services.

In closing, what message would you have for the members of CCRA?

I have one message and it would say to be encouraged. I've seen the success of this collaboration thus far, and I've only been here since February. Be encouraged, because I see the change. I have worked in a various neighborhoods and communities, and I am encouraged with our success. We will not take our foot off the gas!