Polish Hill Festival Weekend
Celebrating old traditions and new arrivals

A nighttime view of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church festival.
(photos above and right, by Mark Knobil)

For almost eighty years, the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Polish Hill has held a festival in mid-July. On Friday night, the intersection of Brereton and Dobson streets would be closed and tents and tables set up. The festival, which primarily attracts members of the parish who are both current and former residents, features games of chance, Polish food, a bake sale and a polka mass.

A few years ago, the Polish Hill Civic Association saw an opportunity to start a new tradition, and organized an arts festival. During the first arts festival in July of 2008, a fierce storm hit, soaking vendors and attendees. But under the big tent, the bands kept playing, the sun eventually came out, and the festival was counted as a rousing success. In its second year, the arts festival saw greater neighborhood participation and the addition of arts activities for all ages.

The arts festival is now in its third year, and Polish Hill’s festival weekend continues to grow.

(continued on page 6)
Dear Mr. President and Staff;

The 'May' issue of 'POLISH HILL VOICE' for me is like a good movie that needs a box of Kleenex handy. Having been born right there on Harmar Street in the same bedroom that saw the birth of my two brothers and three sisters, I in 1928 bc (before computers), my younger brother and sister in modern times (going into the 30's).

My visit home last October was the most enjoyable visit since leaving Pittsburgh in the early 40's! The changes after the Depression years seemed to be slow in coming, but every visit I made since then had something new and fresh and always "hope" of getting better. For me it was great to see grass growing between the bricks in the back yard and seeing birds arriving other than the sparrows and pigeons, and the snow became whiter!

I could go on and on, but my excitement over this May issue hit me to the heart! The photos especially got to me. Being born next door to "baleeya beach" and seeing Mrs. Adamiec with her brood of grandchildren got to me--as well as the old baseball team photo with the building in the background that housed the upper grades of the school, as well as Alice Burek who lived in that building with her parents. Her father was the resident custodian.

Back then Brereton Street was known to us as Brereton Avenue. After all it was our own private downtown with two butcher shops and an A&P store where you could buy 8 O'clock Coffee--two drug stores one with a dentist upstairs (next to Sarney’s bar--that used to be Orie’s--Orzechowski), a hardware store, shoe store, dry goods store, shoemaker, produce store, horses in a barn on Pulaski Street (now Pulawski Way). Right there by the 'now' Harmar Street garden (hooray!) were two bakeries! Candy stores--even right there at the point of Harmar and Wayne (now Wiggins) The list goes on!

Pardon me for dragging you down my memory lane, but after all, that was home sweet home for me! Anyway--I am proud of the old Polish Hill, and even now and then, here in Los Angeles California, I wear my "Sarney's Saloon" sweatshirt. After all, he is one of my very few remaining cousins!

I thank you all!

Marian Sarnowski
Los Angeles, CA
May, 2010

Hi,

I enjoy and read every article -- I am anxious to read about all the changes and of course there are quite a few. All of you are too young to remember me but Polish Hill will always be home to me. It will always have a special place in my heart.

Whomever writes for the paper is going straight to heaven because reading it does wonders for me.

Take care and when it snows, think of me.

Dorothy Sarney Kozlowski
St. Augustine, Florida

About a third of PHCA members don’t live in Polish Hill. But many of them used to, and no matter how long ago they left, they still consider Polish Hill home. We’ve gotten some really nice notes and letters lately, and wanted to share them with you.

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To the residents of Polish Hill,

I was born on 328 Harmar St. in 1949 and left at age 6 but have vivid memories. Many of my relatives continued to live there. "Herron Hill" declined years after I left, but I am utterly amazed at how you folks have resurrected and nourished my home neighborhood. My sister still lives on Brereton St. and has become an integral part of your community.

Having lived in Raleigh, NC for 24 years now, I would seriously consider returning to your wonderful community upon eventual retirement. Your community involvement and spirit is simply wonderful. You all have my deepest admiration and respect.

Adam Adams, M.Ed., LPC
(Adam Adamiec)
Forensic Psychotherapist

PS. When I was but a child, this beautiful and bountiful garden was but a patch of dirt.

(Does your family have old photos or other material from the heyday of Polish Hill?

Please consider sharing them for the PHCA archive!

We can scan your photos or other memorabilia and return them to you.
Or, have a friend or family member scan them and email us the files. Scans should be at least 200 dpi, but preferably 300 dpi.

Please contact the PHCA for more information about contributing materials to the archive.

The folk art designs used in this newsletter are from Polish Wycinanki Designs (1984) by Frances Drwal. The book is still available in paperback for $7.95, from Amazon.com.)
President’s message

As I write this, summer is in full swing on Polish Hill. Gardens are growing, and vegetables, flowers, and herbs are being traded around the neighborhood. Get out and enjoy a good long walk around Polish Hill. Try a walk down a street that you haven’t explored yet. Our community offers hidden little treasures. Through a space in a fence you may glimpse a garden with picture-perfect flowers. Perhaps it’s time for your own yard to become a treasure, a place to relax from the labors of the day. This is a wonderful time to get some dirt under your fingernails and break a sweat.

Just like we did last winter, take a moment to help out your neighbors. While you’re pulling weeds or cleaning up, go a few feet farther. These extra bits of effort really add up. If you fight the weeds a little each day, they will not spread as far next year. I have to remind myself that community improvements are a process, and the process takes time.

We all get a better place to live because of the people doing good works in our community. But we do need to take the time to enjoy what we have worked so hard to build. We have fantastic views from our hillsides. Pick out a good spot and take an occasional evening to view a few sunsets this season. We could all use more sunsets.

As we walk and bike through the neighborhood, there is more of a chance to encounter friends and neighbors. Our four-legged friends take their owners for long walks these days and are the facilitators of many a conversation.

With the opening of The Urban Gypsy, Lili Coffee Shop, Mind Cure Records and Copacetic Comics, we now have new spaces where our residents have an opportunity to gather. These new businesses give residents more destinations and entertainment options right here in Polish Hill, and provide a few of our residents the chance to live and work within their own community. I hope to see this trend continue. To all of our Polish Hill businesses owners, new and existing, I would like to extend a “thank you” for being here.

Late summer is also a time to fix up our homes and apartments. I encourage residents and property owners to take advantage of the materials that are available at Construction Junction in Point Breeze. You can save money and find quality materials to repair, renovate or redecorate your space. If you have leftover building supplies or architectural salvage, like old fireplaces, radiators, stair posts, and the like, please donate them to Construction Junction. Your leftovers could be exactly what someone else needs to finish their project. Along with saving money and keeping materials out of a landfill, there is always a thrill to finding something just a bit different for your home.

So take some late summer advice from a Polish Hill resident: add a few enjoyable items to that project list. Take a walk, go out and do some gardening, spend some time with friends, and enjoy our community.

Terry Doloughty

The photo of Terry was taken by Julie Gonzalez, whose black and white portraits of Polish Hill residents are on display at Lili Coffee Shop. Julie hopes to eventually photograph every resident of Polish Hill!

If you’d like to be included in this project, get in touch with us and we’ll let you know when the next photo session is planned.

Seeking articles and ads for the November issue of the Polish Hill Voice!

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<th>Submission Deadline</th>
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<td>October 15</td>
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The **Polish Hill Voice** is published quarterly.

**Advertisers/Photographers:** Acceptable formats include:
- Black & white camera-ready art
- PC-based JPG, TIFF or PDF (300 dpi or higher)

Editorial: Contributing writers, artists, poets and historians welcome! Please submit content via email at phcapgh@gmail.com, or send to the PHCA office at 3060 Brereton Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15219.
At the July community meeting of the Polish Hill Civic Association, I brought forth a proposition to honor an important historical event that happened at the base of our hill 133 years ago. This idea came to me as I strolled on the youth-filled playground at West Penn Park and thought of the historic significance of events that took place right here.

In 1877 the great railroad strike raged at the foothills of our neighborhood, which was then called Springfield Farms or Herron Hill. The strike began in West Virginia, and quickly spread to Maryland, Pennsylvania, and west to Missouri. Locally, it included the Strip District and Lawrenceville.

But 28th Street, right at the base of the Hill, was the scene of the most labor resistance our country had ever seen. Media reports of the day identified the rabble of 20,000 workers as immigrants. It is certain that among them were many residents of Herron Hill. The strikers are remembered by a hard-to-see plaque on the tiny median island at 28th Street and Liberty Avenue.

Local authorities and businesses, who were being extorted and exploited by the robber barons who owned the railroads, sympathized with the strikers. The national guard was called up from Philadelphia to put down the strike. So many workers responded that they forced the Guard to withdraw to the only safe place, the Roundhouse at 28th Street. The National Guard fought their way out of the Roundhouse to safety, but not without killing 26 immigrants who had come to this country for a better life.

It’s a shame that the sacrifice of these workers has mostly been forgotten by us and our country. My initial proposal was to rename West Penn park. As West Penn Park has its own long history, an idea was brought up at the community meeting to reclaim a parcel of land across from the park, on the north side of Brereton Avenue, from 28th street up to 30th street. This parcel of land near the heart of our community, which is owned by Port Authority, has been neglected for decades and is the site of grotesque billboards. Instead, the spot could be a wonderful scenic overlook to the site of the great railroad strike of 1877.

As a lifelong, third-generation resident, I am grateful for the positive response I received from other residents at the July community meeting. The name “Roundhouse Park” was most well received by the attendees. Other suggestions are being solicited.

It is my hope that this parcel of land will be a walkway and green area which will recognize the solemn sacrifice that our predecessors made to ensure that future generations would have better than they had. They fought, were injured and sometimes died in hopes that someday their children could thrive in a land of dignity and respect for their labor. We should recognize these heroes of our country and our community.
The proposed site for Roundhouse Park is on property owned by the Port Authority. Most of this land on the north side of Brereton Street between 28th and 30th Streets is steep hillside that drops down to the railroad tracks, with a narrow wedge-shaped strip of level land next to the road. This block-long strip contains two billboards.

Ideally, the property could be acquired and added to the city's Greenway, the billboards removed, and the site becomes a dedicated park, overlooking the former site of the Roundhouse. We believe this would be an improvement to the neighborhood.

Our first steps towards that goal are to circulate a petition and gather letters of support from residents and local officials. If you would like to see Roundhouse Park become a reality, please consider signing the petition.

Letters of support can be mailed to the PHCA at 3060 Brereton Street, Pittsburgh PA, 15219. Letters can also be emailed to phcapgh@gmail.com.

Why do you volunteer?

Volunteering is often associated with going somewhere you don’t usually go, doing boring, menial labor, and perhaps interacting with people you aren’t comfortable with. But volunteering can simply mean working in your own neighborhood, doing things that you feel should be taken care of. Instead of expecting a cash-strapped City to pick up trash from the streets of our neighborhood, or shovel and salt the public sidewalks we use, residents step forward to do it themselves.

Many of the most visible PHCA efforts - neighborhood cleanups, community gardens, and large events such as the arts festival, are carried out by a small group of dedicated volunteers. It’s often the same few people who show up and come through, and we couldn’t do what we do without them.

Here, two dedicated neighborhood volunteers share why they choose to work, unpaid, to make Polish Hill a better place to live.

For me, volunteering is a legacy. My mother’s long-standing tradition -- for eighteen years in a row -- was using her vacation time to bring medical care to remote villages in the Dominican Republic, Jamaica and Mexico. This global outreach stemmed from her local church in Ohio, where a small group of medical professionals would journey together every fall with others of like mind from across the U.S.

Being part of this unified team was a heartfelt adventure for her, and created an amazing legacy for me. My mother also served as a youth mentor, a volunteer tutor for Ohio Reads, and a driver for Meals on Wheels. She was a vital part of the heartbeat of her hometown.

After living in southern California for more than a decade, I longed to return to my Midwestern roots and rediscover what it means to be part of a community, and perhaps make a difference in the lives of others. I have found this incredible sense of place ... a strong sense of connectedness ... right here in Polish Hill.

Myra Falisz

This is a question that people ask me on a regular basis. It is not a simple question to answer. I want to say that “volunteering” might not be the right word to describe my experiences. Actually, "participant" might be more accurate. I had to thoughtfully consider why I dedicate time to the PHCA and Polish Hill. In some ways the answers seem a bit selfish.

As our community improves, my own quality of life improves. My connections to neighbors and friends have greatly increased. Some of the people I have become fortunate enough to call my friends came out of my efforts as a volunteer.

People have asked, “How can you take so much time out of your life?” I have a different perspective on time. My view is that I have added valuable time to my life. I have filled days and evenings with engaging activities, and challenges that have offered me the opportunity to grow as a person. My volunteer life has been more of an education and adventure than I could have ever imagined.

There are some lessons that I am working on applying to my volunteer life, and I hope to keep gaining experience and knowledge in the years that follow. The best experience of all is the feeling of community that we have fostered.

So to my neighbors and friends, thank you for being a part of my education and my volunteer adventures.

Terry Doloughty
This year, music played a larger role in the arts festival. Project 53, a musician’s resource center located on Melwood Avenue, received a Sprout grant to present a Free4All, a two-day music festival which included workshops and musical performances at multiple locations in Polish Hill. The music festival drew performers not only from Pittsburgh, but also Michigan, North Carolina, and Minnesota.

The arts festival, on Sunday July 18, included almost 30 artists and craftspeople selling their work. Most of the vendors reported very good sales and are eager to return next year. We surely had the most diverse group of vendors of any Pittsburgh arts festival. They ranged from nuns to punks!

Hands-on art projects were presented by artists Carley Parrish, who did a plaster-cast project; and John McClure, who taught kids how to do origami. There were also activities tables presented by the Andy Warhol Museum, which helped visitors make greeting cards decorated with rubber stamping and colored pencils, and the Mattress Factory, which sent a fun make-your-own-magnet project.

There was live music all day: in a nice instance of overlapping resources, the Free4All festival events for Sunday took place in the big tent at the arts festival. The musical performances included Brazilian drumming, a marching band, an old-timey acoustic trio, and much more.

Members of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, who had also worked the day before at the church festival, manned the grills for the second day in a row and provided delicious Polish food. There were also vendors selling ices and sweets.

Many Polish Hill businesses were open: Mind Cure Records, Copacetic Comics, The Urban Gypsy gift and flower shop; and Lili Coffee Shop, which hosted readings organized by literary magazine The New Yinzer. A film element was introduced to the festival, with a post-apocalyptic-themed short films by local filmmakers in the back room of Gooski’s bar. And Sarney’s bar was open, providing an air-conditioned respite from the heat.

The growth of Polish Hill’s festival weekend reflects the re-growth of the neighborhood itself. Polish Hill’s population is about a third of what it was 40 years ago, but after years of decline, the neighborhood flourishes once again.

Bottom: Volunteers take a break outside the PHCA office.
The population of Polish Hill has become a very diverse group. It was wonderful to see all these people come together to create this festival weekend.

There are so many people to thank for helping to make this happen. First and foremost, the volunteers: Myra Falisz, Brian Seklecki, Josiah Parkinson, Ben Paul, Doug Ramsey, Josie Ramsey, Janice Heagy, Jennifer Kirk, Leah Durand, Catherine McConnell, Mark Knobil, Ji-Hye Park, Sindy Kang, Alexis Miller, and Andy Gutierrez.

And many thanks to those who donated their services: Jake Petersen, for the poster design; Guyasuta Printing; Breadworks; the Sheriff’s Reserve of Allegheny County; Jessica Fenlon, for organizing the films; Savannah Guz, of The New Yinzer; the Andy Warhol Museum and the Mattress Factory.

And we thank our neighborhood partners: Joe Reichenbacher, Cary Miller and the other folks of Project 53; and the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church and all their volunteers. We particularly want to thank Mark Dobies, who takes care of the festival permits, gets the tents set up (and takes them down), and who also spearheaded the IHM food committee.

These festivals are the biggest neighborhood event of the year. It was a great weekend and everyone seemed to have a good time. We are excited for next year and hope that all of the Polish Hill festivals will continue to grow and flourish.

Community & Event Calendar
August/September/October

Aug 28 | PHCA Fundraiser Yard Sale
12-5 p.m. | PHCA office, 3060 Brereton St.

Sept 7 | PHCA Monthly Community Meeting
6:30 p.m. | West Penn Recreation Center

Sept 9 | Council-to-Go with Councilman Dowd
6:30 p.m. | Lili Coffee Shop 3138 Dobson St.

Sept 25 | Polish Hill Flea Market
12—5 p.m. | West Penn Park playground

Oct 5 | PHCA Monthly Community Meeting
6:30 p.m. | West Penn Recreation Center

Oct 16 | Neighborhood Clean-up
10:00 a.m. | meet at PHCA office

Nov 11 | Council-to-Go with Councilman Dowd
6:30 p.m. | Lili Coffee Shop 3138 Dobson St.
Photo archive grows, oral history project begins

The photo archive, begun last year, is slowly growing. But our interest in preserving neighborhood history isn’t limited to collecting photos. An oral history project has been initiated in collaboration with Mark O’Connor, a Polish Hill homeowner who is also professor of English at Slippery Rock University. Mark is partnering with the PHCA to interview and record the remembrances of long-time current and former residents who were here during Polish Hill’s heyday.

We hope to create a more in-depth record, and would like to talk to anyone who lived in Polish Hill in times past. You do not need to be living in the neighborhood now to participate. The interviews can be done at your home, at the PHCA office, or by telephone. If you are interested in sharing your memories of living in Polish Hill, please contact us at 3060 Brereton Street, Pittsburgh PA 15219, or call 412.681.1950.

Left: Jan Davis (Avon) shared this photo, one of a series taken in front of VFW Post #6. The date might be 1940 (see the Civil Defense uniforms). This building now houses Tai+Lee, Architects.

Eileen Goralski shared this photo of her parents Ray and Clara, taken on upper Brereton Street in June 1958. Behind them is Cohens, which sold lamps and rugs.

Jan Davis also lent us an old photo of Avon’s Fruit Market, at 3045 Brereton Street. The building is still there, but like so many of the old storefronts, it’s been converted into a home.
More photos from the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church festival

Above left and center: The Sinicki family provided prizes and staffed this booth, which made a great showing! Center: Dorothy Sinicki sells tickets.

Above right: A young festival-goer leaps to score a basket.

Bottom: Ed Librecht (facing camera) and friends relax in front of Sarney's. On the right: Cookie Mizgorski and friend, selling Polish-themed items, take a break to share a smile.

(Photos by Mark Knobil, Susan Constanse, and Leslie Clague)

Polish Hill items benefit the PHCA—order here!

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Make check or money order out to the Polish Hill Civic Association and mail to the PHCA, 3060 Brereton Street, Pittsburgh PA 15219.
Polish Hill Crossword
Test your knowledge of neighborhood places!

By Josie Ramsey

Across
4. Lasky’s was what kind of business?
8. This street shares a name with a type of flooring

Down
1. During the 1800s, some of the land on Polish Hill was part of ...
2. Melwood used to be called ...
3. What building stands on the site of the former public school?
5. There once was a hardware store called ...
6. This street was once called Preeble
7. Gooskis bar was formerly known as ...

Answers on page 11.

The Urban Redevelopment Authority has programs to help low and moderate income residents buy, rehabilitate, renovate, or improve homes.

New at the URA: the Pittsburgh Home Rehabilitation Program (PHRP) has been enhanced to promote energy efficient improvements to owner occupied homes in the City of Pittsburgh.

Check out URA programs and income guidelines on their website http://www.ura.org/pittsburgh_residents/pittsburgh_residents.php
Or visit the PHCA office for forms and information.

Council-to-go
at the
Lili Coffee Shop
3138 Dobson Street
(at Hancock St.)

Thursday September 9
6:30 p.m.

Thursday November 11
6:30 p.m.

Come share your concerns and questions with District 7 Councilman Patrick Dowd and his staff.

For more information, call the PHCA at 412.681.1950.
PHCA Membership Special: $7.00 takes you through 2011!

Membership is typically $5 per member per calendar year. Because more than half the year is over, we’re offering a special. Join or renew now for $7, and your membership will be valid through 2011. Please include names and $7 for each person in your household who wishes to take advantage of this special offer.

NAME: ______________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
(Street Address) (City) (State) (ZIP)

PHONE: _____________________________________________________________

EMAIL: _____________________________________________________________

______ REGULAR MEMBER Or ______ SUBSCRIPTION MEMBER
(Polish Hill resident) (Non-resident)

____ New Member Or _____ Renewal

For office use only:

REC’D BY: ________ DATE: ________ GOT CARD? _______ LOGGED? _______

Make checks payable to the Polish Hill Civic Association and mail with the membership application to:

PHCA membership chair, 3060 Brereton Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15219

All members get a free subscription to the Voice (4 issues a year)

Members who are also Polish Hill residents get:

An invitation to the monthly community meeting and a vote on neighborhood issues

An invitation to the bi-monthly Council-to-Go sessions

A voice on community issues

Help build the neighborhood that you want to live in!

TELL EVERYONE IN POLISH HILL ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS!

To advertise in the Voice, call (412) 681-1950 or email phcapgh@gmail.com

Crossword puzzle answers

7. Nibbies
6. Pulmonary
5. Mostoway
3. John Paul Plaza
8. Linwood Mtrp
2. Freeewood
4. Deer Distributor
1. Deny Estates
Across down

Visit us at: www.tapluspluslee.com
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catherine.mcconnell@pittsburghmoves.com
The PHCA’s mission is to respect and preserve the sense of community in Polish Hill while promoting economic and housing development opportunities, and improving the quality of life for our community.

Upcoming Community Meetings:

PHCA Community meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. Meetings are held in the Senior Center on the lower level of the West Penn Recreation Center, 470 30th @ Paulowna Street.

Sept 7

Oct 5

Nov 2