Reclaiming our streets: De-emphasize cars, put people first

How connections became thoroughfares

Traffic challenges are nothing new for Polish Hill. With the exception of Brereton, the streets are narrow. The neighborhood’s original transportation plan was designed before the automobile, when the primary goal was creating connections to rail and streetcar lines. Even when the automobile was first introduced, the streets were shared with bicyclists, pedestrians and carriages.

Today cars dominate our streets. This domination is compounded by the limited number of neighborhood gateways, which were dictated by our terrain and scale. There are only five entry/exit points to our community, so traffic is funneled along just a few roads. But perhaps the biggest challenge is that Polish Hill is a popular cut-through neighborhood: our once-quiet residential streets are the only direct route between Liberty and Penn Avenues and Bigelow Boulevard.

It seems incredible that drivers travelling between Oakland and Downtown have no other way to connect to these major thoroughfares. Yet Polish Hill residents who live on the most-travelled streets are reminded of this every day -- particularly during rush hour.

Many non-resident drivers move through our neighborhood at high speeds with a careless attitude. This dangerous combination is becoming a serious problem, particularly on the Gold Way / Melwood Avenue corridor. The ‘secret’ shortcut from Oakland through Polish Hill via Baum Boulevard / Gold Way / Melwood is not so secret anymore.

And while Melwood Avenue appears to be where most accidents and property damage are occurring, speeding and excessive traffic are problems on all of the main streets in Polish Hill. Herron Avenue, which narrows considerably as it enters Polish Hill (and has a 15 mph speed limit on the S-curve), is used heavily not only by commuters, but also as an official emergency-vehicle route. Paulowna Street down to the 28th Street Bridge to Liberty is bumper-to-bumper during rush hour, subjecting residents to exhaust fumes and noise. Vehicles fly through Brereton and Dobson.

Recent accidents reinforce the need for action

In late May, around 7 p.m., a motorcyclist was struck by a car and seriously injured on Gold Way at Denver Street, coming in to Polish Hill. The driver fled the scene. The motorcyclist was knocked unconscious and

Continued on page 5
Our Readers Reminisce

Thank you for the Polish Hill Voice. It brings back many memories. Having lived on Polish Hill for most of my 87 years, there are so many things that come to mind. I’m sending 3 family trees and perhaps someone may add more information. Some have passed away and some I have lost touch with but would appreciate any news.

My mom Mary Walkoski was one of 13 children. My dad John Rudzki was one of 8, so there are a lot of cousins with which we had many reunions during Dad’s later years. Happy times.

During the building of Immaculate Heart of Mary Church Dad had something to do with the tabernacle, don’t know any details.

My precious neighbors on 3316 Ridgway Street were the Szalinski family. There was Agnes, Sophie, Jacik, Ted, Joe, Cecelia, Laura and Mary. Also the Wesolek family, Rembisz, and Grochowskis and many more.

West Penn Recreation Center was a godsend for activities. We made many scatter rugs on looms. There was tap dancing and acrobatics in the Baby Hall. Last but not least at age 16 I was allowed to attend my first dance at West Penn.

Congratulations to those who deserve a salute! The best of everything to those who will carry on! You are all doing wonderful work!

Marian Sarnowski here, born on Harmar Street, 1928!

PS - I am so glad that you finally recognize the Polish Eagle mistaken by the Falcon! Here’s trivia for you; the "Polish Falcons" (housed in the Kaufmann building) had the female club version called "The Filarettes" back then. Us kids got to perform on the stage in that building, I was a "Snowman" then a "cricket" and it was all in Polish!

Marian Sarnowski
Los Angeles, California via email

I hold dear to my heart Polish Hill. My father Robert Altman and his family talked dearly when they lived here about how wonderful and what treasured memories they had. Miss him but visiting "the Hill" makes me close to him.

P.S. Father was yo-yo champ when young! I was very proud of it too!

Thanks sincerely,
Cynthia Foust
Youngstown, Ohio

Wrapped in Love
Foundation’s mission inspired by former Polish Hill resident

Darvina Emmerich contacted the PHCA to tell us about her foundation, Wrapped in Love. The foundation was formed in memory of Darvina’s husband James Emmerich, a former Polish Hill resident. James was a member of the Aloysius Emmerich family of Melwood Avenue. His mother, Irene Szepietowski, grew up on Polish Hill as well.

Darvina said that she got the idea to start Wrapped in Love when James had cancer. She explained, “He always felt so cold that he carried a blanket with him everywhere he went while going through chemotherapy treatment. Jim fought a courageous battle and inspired many by his fortitude of spirit. He passed on February 14, 1997. We miss him dearly, his strong spirit and love carries on through Wrapped in Love’s mission: To provide blankets to cancer patients and seriously ill patients around the world to bring comfort, peace and joy, and remind all of us that we are children at heart.”

To find out more about Wrapped in Love, or to volunteer to make a blanket, you can write to Wrapped in Love, P.O. Box 13486, Pittsburgh, PA 15243; or call 412-983-7274.

By Leslie Clague
Photo courtesy of Darvina Emmerich
New Leadership for the PHCA

In early June, the Polish Hill Civic Association announced that Alexis Miller would be the new president of the Polish Hill Civic Association Board of Directors. Alexis takes over from Terry Doloughty, who dedicated an enormous amount of time and energy as president for the past seven years. Terry’s work and impact on the community has been invaluable, and he plans to continue to provide support to Alexis and the organization as a volunteer.

Alexis moved into this position from being vice president, and previously served three years as secretary on the board. Alexis has lived in Polish Hill for fifteen years. Her dedication to the neighborhood and her neighbors is deeply rooted, and her education and work experience make her a great candidate for the position. She comes into this position with tremendous momentum.

In particular, the PHCA recently finished a Polish Hill Community Plan focusing on housing and buildings, art and open spaces, traffic and gateways, and community building. Alexis is looking forward to leading the implementation of the plan, mobilizing more volunteer support and growing the organization.

Alexis is lucky to be joined by three extremely supportive and passionate executive board members with whom she will be collaborating and relying on to build an even brighter future for Polish Hill: Vice President Myra Falisz, Treasurer Erica Moulinier, and Secretary Valerie Testa. Please join the PHCA in welcoming Alexis to her new position and offering all four of them your support.

Meet the Executive Committee

President Alexis Miller is a dedicated, organized and results-oriented leader who loves food, hiking, traveling and her dog. She is at her best when building informal networks, collaborating with others and implementing change. On the professional front, her experience includes freelance, education, non-profit, public and private sector work, using skills that range from writing and event planning to program evaluation and financial management. Alexis’ first full-time job was teaching English to elementary and middle-school students in Takasago, Japan. Her current role at UPMC Health Plan keeps her busy with project management, process improvement and program evaluation reports. On the personal front, she is most proud of recently hiking the Inca Trail in Peru and renovating her 100-year old Polish Hill home.

Vice-President Myra Falisz is valued for her right-brain creativity and left-brain resourcefulness that have energized an array of art, communications and technology initiatives. As a software marketing executive, she successfully introduced products in the United States, Japan, Australia, Singapore and Western Europe. During a sabbatical from software, she attended The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. As an artist, she enjoys social narrative, discovering connections that re-imagine a framework and reveal a story. As a newcomer to the neighborhood in 2009, her proudest Polish Hill moment was teaming up with the City’s Department of Public Works to create sidewalk stamping at the corner of Dobson & Herron, echoing the pattern of 100-year-old bricks.

Treasurer Erica Moulinier is a traveler, crafter and steward of social justice. She is passionate about a variety of professional and personal pursuits, from financial management to community building. Her accounting and finance experience spans both for-profit and non-profit organizations, from Starbucks’ Coffee Company in Seattle to The Simple Way, a neighborhood faith-based organization in Philadelphia. She conquered her fear of public speaking, and now serves as a guest panelist on economic and social equality for religious and justice organizations. Erica has taught neighborhood knitting classes and hosted a pączki-making session in her kitchen -- a gathering space that she dubs as one of Polish Hill’s largest.

Secretary Valerie Testa is a self-starter known for stepping up, digging in and taking action. As Polish Hill’s Green Team leader, she’s not afraid of getting her hands dirty, and as the PHCA’s newest executive board member, she is not afraid of advancing her skills. Valerie is a graduate of Pittsburgh’s Civic Leadership Academy, which provides education about and access to various levels of local government and their services. She bikes to her job as a buyer at Whole Foods and is especially concerned about our corridors, gateways and getting around Polish Hill in general. She is a stair steward for the Dobson/Herron city steps during the winter months and a “litter gitter” during the warmer ones. Valerie spent this spring beautifying two small parcels of land that flank the steps from Phelan to the Immaculate Heart of Mary schoolyard.

In upcoming issues of the Voice, we’ll introduce you to other PHCA board members.
More News and Announcements

President’s Message

Summertime may be a time to sit back and relax for some. Take a dip in the pool or see some summer movie blockbusters. While I have been lucky enough to make it to the pool a few times, I’ve been mostly busy working on our own “blockbusters” with my new role at the PHCA.

This is an exciting time to be leading the PHCA. Behind the scenes, work includes renovations to apartment 3 in our building, wrapping up the arts festival and setting aside funds for next year, working on our budgets and proposals for the next fiscal year, future fundraising and capacity-building plans, and finalizing our financial report and 990s.

Much more attractive coming attractions, however, include tree and flower plantings on Brereton, Herron, Gold Way and Melwood. A new website design should be developing soon.

Traffic calming is another rising star (but we hope it is not a big “hit”). Plans for a new Halloween party are brewing. Development of the Dobson/Brereton fire site is also high on our list of priorities for the coming years.

And of course it is important for Polish Hill to have a voice in what is happening at our borders. Community meetings will be held this fall to give input on an incredibly important master plan for the redevelopment of Iron City Brewery. The historic importance and economic development potential of this property is huge.

As always, the Polish Hill Civic Association’s activities are about 90 percent volunteer led and implemented, so we want not only your ideas and feedback, but also your help — we can’t get anything done without you.

Alexis Miller

Help Welcome One Young World Delegates to Polish Hill

On October 20 from 7:00 – 10:00 p.m., join Polish Hill residents in welcoming 10 international young leaders to Pittsburgh for the 2012 One Young World Summit.

A total of 1,500 young delegates from more than 190 countries will come to Pittsburgh for the One Young World Summit to discuss some of the world’s most pressing challenges. Home dinners, coordinated by the World Affairs Council of Pittsburgh, will provide an opportunity for international and domestic visitors to interact with Pittsburghers.

Please join the PHCA as we host a potluck dinner for these visitors. This will be a progressive dinner — each course will be at a different location. Location(s) and details to be announced soon. Contact Alexis if you are interested in attending or making a dish to share: alexis@phcapgh.org.

PHCA Fundraising Yard Sale Sept 15

The PHCA will hold its next fundraising yard sale on Saturday, September 15, from 11:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. We welcome donations of household items, books, toys, antique and retro items, furniture in good condition, lamps and more.

Items must be clean and not broken; tools and appliances much be in working condition. We are not able to accept clothing, very large or upholstered furniture, or items that are dusty or dirty.

Donations may be dropped off at the PHCA during office hours, between Tuesday, September 11 and Friday, September 14. Proceeds from the yard sale will go toward community events.

Community & Event Calendar

Sep/Oct/Nov

Sep 4 | Monthly Community Meeting
6:30 p.m. | West Penn Recreation Center (Senior Center, lower level)

Sep 12 | Council-to-Go with Councilman Patrick Dowd
7:00 p.m. | PHCA office, 3060 Brereton St.

Sep 15 | Fundraising Yard Sale
11:00 a.m.— 5:00 p.m. | PHCA office, 3060 Brereton St

Oct 2 | Monthly Community Meeting
6:30 p.m. | West Penn Recreation Center (Senior Center, lower level)

Oct TBA | Halloween event
As of press time, the Halloween event has not been scheduled. Contact the PHCA in late September to find out more.

Nov 6 | Monthly Community Meeting
6:30 p.m. | West Penn Recreation Center (Senior Center, lower level)

Nov 14 | Council-to-Go with Councilman Patrick Dowd
7:00 p.m. | PHCA office, 3060 Brereton St.

Interested in volunteering? Stop by the PHCA office or a community meeting and fill out a volunteer profile form. Tell us what skills you have to share!
doesn’t recall exactly what happened, but it appears that the speed of the vehicle and lack of visibility at that blind turn were factors. On May 31, a woman in a sedan was hit head-on by a small transport van at the intersection of Melwood Avenue and Finland Street. A resident witnessed the accident and told us that an off-duty firefighter pulled over to help the woman, who was injured. In mid-June, a speeding driver ran over a dog—which was on a leash, being walked by its owner. The driver stopped briefly, then left the scene. A few days later, a cyclist on Bethoven Street was hit by a car. The cyclist was injured; the driver fled the scene.

These accidents, and many instances of hit-and-runs involving parked cars, illustrate the increasing problem of excessive speeding and traffic throughout Polish Hill. The problem is particularly bad on Melwood Avenue. Almost every resident along the street has stories about damaged vehicles, near-misses and accidents. The PHCA started keeping an accident log in late May, and within ten days, we heard about three accidents with injuries and six hit-and-runs involving parked vehicles. Most of these incidents occurred in the Melwood Avenue area during rush hour, supporting the impression that the majority of problems are caused by non-residents using Polish Hill as a short cut.

And residents concur. We asked people to tell us about speeding-related incidents and heard many stories. Deb Jozwiak said that her son’s car was hit by a pass-through speeding car last year, sustaining $1,500 in damage. This spring, his car was hit again. Melwood resident Patricia Dees reported two incidents across from her house within two days. One car was damaged so badly it had to be towed.

Patricia says, "My car never sits on Melwood, I paid the price too many times, not once did anyone ever stop. Even if I have a ton of groceries to unload, I park in my garage and unload. Should not be this way but it is. I cannot tell you how many times I had to pick up broken car mirrors laying in the street due to hit and runs—almost weekly."

Immaculate Heart of Mary Church Festival

Saturday July 7, the day of the Immaculate Heart festival, was the hottest day of the year thus far, with the temperature reaching 100 degrees.

The extreme heat impacted the daytime attendance, but after the sun went down and things cooled off a bit, more visitors came out for Polish food, games and visiting.

To the many church volunteers who worked hard all day in very uncomfortable weather, we can truly say: you are champs. A special appreciation goes to Mark Dobies, who does so much work on these days.

Here’s hoping that next year is cooler!
The fifth annual Polish Hill Arts Festival was a lot of fun, and we were grateful that the heat wave of the previous day broke in time to give us a beautiful, tolerably hot day.

The arts festival has become the community event of the year for a new generation of residents. This year the arts festival featured more neighborhood talent than ever. Whether as artists and craftspeople, performers or volunteers, this eclectic mix shows that Polish Hill is becoming a vibrant neighborhood again.

So many people help make the festival a success, and we send thanks to every one of you.

Artists and craftspeople

Food vendors
The Immaculate Heart of Mary Church and their volunteers, led by Mark Dobies; Laura Gershman (with Andy and Tessa), Caleb Gamble (and friends), Todd and Franktuary, Cindy Nicolacco and her Tiki Hut treats, Joy and Naomi of Pig Hill Brewing, David Harris, and the Life’s-Work Ben and Jerry’s cart (who donate 50% of their proceeds back to us, for next year’s festival).

Art activities
Elizabeth Bashur and Lindsay of Little House, Big Art, Andy Scott and friends, Mollie Kritchen and Carnegie Library, and Elizabeth Fisch, with her poetry collecting project.

Performers
Zout (klezmer fusion), Kayla Slicker (Americana/folk singer/songwriter), Steve Pellegrino and the Big Concept Band (Americana, folk), Bob Lampenfield and the fine gentlemen of Truth and Rites (reggae), Timbeleza (Brazilian samba drumming) and Uncao Pittsburgh (capoeira performers), Doug Orvis and The Frantic Heart of It (punk/pop), Lungs Face Feet (Cumbrian brass band), Jayke Orvis and the Broken Band (alt country/Americana).

Authors
Lori Jakiela, Dave Newman, Bob Pajich and Karen Lillis (for pulling it together.)

Local businesses
Gooski’s, (with special thanks to Marcus for letting us have the readings in the back room on a very busy day), Sarney’s (which opens on Sunday just for this event), and local businesses Urban Gypsy, Lili Coffee* Shop, Mind Cure Records and Copacetic Comics for being cool places to go, and so supportive of the festival.

Neighborhood and PHCA volunteers
Terry Doloughty, John (Ducky) McClure, Laura Zurowski, Leigh Kish, Doug Ramsey, Brian Seklecki, Catherine McConnell, Mark Knobil, Josiah Parkinson, Valerie Testa, Erica Moulinier, Tom Ogden, Janice Heagy, Rose Hudson, Hannah DuPlessis, Dave Lyle, Myra Falisz and Alexis Miller. Also thanks to the two deputies from the Allegheny County Sheriff’s Office who volunteer to do security for the festival.

And, of course, thanks to all the visitors who came out. Everyone coming together is what makes this such a great festival.
Left: Carey, Kevin and Doug of The Frantic Heart of It. All members of the band live in Polish Hill.

Below: The live music went on all day, attracting residents of all ages.

Right: Timbeleza on the move. During one number, they marched around the performance tent — still playing all the way.

Below: During the Lungs Face Feet set, most of the audience got up to dance.

Right: As it got dark, visitors settled in to enjoy the music and eat.

Top: The church is a great backdrop for a community festival.

Left: Lungs Face Feet, a Polish Hill-based, gypsy-style brass band.

Below: Outside Sarney’s enjoying the evening.
Many Polish Hill streets are cut-through streets, but none is quite as treacherous as Melwood. Its very narrow width, sections of densely parked cars on both sides and several blind curves, all compound the risks of speeding on this road. The Polish Hill Community Plan outlines the concerns local residents have about this problem in general terms, as well as mentioning Melwood in particular as an area of considerable worry. There have been numerous accidents this summer, some with injuries. What can we do as a community to slow down the traffic speed on a stretch of road that has a growing population of young children living there and increased bicycle traffic?

We continue to seek the help of our councilman, Patrick Dowd, who is working to help get a stop sign installed at the blind intersection of Gold Way and Denver Street, where a motorcyclist was badly injured by a speeding car in late May. There have been lots of proposals including speed humps, “SLOW” signs and speed limit signs on Melwood. Residents have suggested flashing lights at intersections, lighted speed-recording signs and more stop signs. We may not get our lights and signs from the City, so perhaps we need to try to come up with a few inspired solutions! Here are some ideas I’ve heard from Melwood residents:

- Make small flags that say “SLOW” to attach to our driver’s side mirrors -- imagine 50 flags along Melwood!
- Place posters in our car windows on Melwood addressing the issue and also feature bumper stickers.
- Host community “commuting hour” meetings on the corners (Finland & Melwood), carry signs and pass out cards to drivers at the stop signs voicing our concern for speeding cars on the street.
- Create banners that address the topic and hang them along Melwood.
- Make sandwich boards with messages that we can put on the sidewalk in front of our homes and on the corners of concern.
- Get City permission to install artwork on the Melwood curves addressing the issue.
- Get City permission to create road painting to address the issue.
- Lobby the City for traditional speed limit signs and “SLOW CHILDREN AT PLAY” signs.
- Lobby the City for “SPEED LIMIT 15 Miles” signs.

If you have any interest in participating in a meeting devoted to discussing Melwood traffic solutions, let me or the PHCA know. I hope to gather some residents to see if we can come up with creative ways to raise awareness on our own.

Contact Catherine if you’d like to meet as a group to discuss these issues. Call her at 412.874.3074 or send an email to: catherine.mcconnell@gmail.com.

Traffic, continued from page 5

She added, "Crossing the street on foot is getting more dangerous by the day, even in the early morning hours, at this time EVERYONE speeds and they have no regard for anyone or anything, don’t even slow down if they see you trying to cross." Dan Pagath has lived on Melwood Avenue at the border of Polish Hill/Oakland since the mid-1980s, and has seen many accidents since the road was opened to through traffic. He expressed concern at a community meeting that it’s "just a matter of time before someone is killed."

The high cost of being a cut-through neighborhood has become a heavy burden, and residents are worried and demanding action from state and local authorities.

Sticking to our values & finding solutions

During the public meetings for the Polish Hill Community Plan, residents overwhelmingly agreed that transportation policies should put people first rather than cars, and that quality of life is more important than speed or efficiency. There is a strong desire to protect and preserve the walkable character of the neighborhood, which harkens back to the neighborhood’s original transportation plan and spirit.

As a result, traffic calming measures are an important component of the plan. The PHCA is collecting data on incidents to make the case to City and state officials that some combination of speed humps, speed limit changes, road-access limitations and creative signage are needed to reduce the impact of cut-through traffic and speeding in the neighborhood.
Polish Hill Rain Garden

By Catherine McConnell
Photos by Mark Knobil

When Mark Knobil and I bought the four-unit brick building on Cargill right behind the Rock Room, we were both excited and daunted by the scale of the backyard. The property stretches from Cargill in the front to Melwood in the rear. It was an unusually large lot of weedy grass, flat, with little to inspire us. I loved the idea of some vegetable garden space for tenants to use, perennial flowers, grasses and lawn for people to nap on in the sun. We knew we had some pretty great soil as most of this lot is actually fill from the creation of the Melwood retaining wall built in 1907, as featured in the last PHCA newsletter. We had no clay! Mark thought whatever we decided to do it shouldn’t require continual maintenance and watering. Ha! Little did he know what was in store for us in this regard!

We worked on a design with landscape architect Lisa Orr of Radish Studios and master gardener Jenn Urich. Lisa was working with our contractor Matt Clifford of Forecast Design/Build on the drawings for the rowhouse building, and she offered to do some concepts for the yard and manage the implementation. Somehow, I always thought I was quite capable of tackling the landscaping, having been a big gardener all my life and preferring to do my own digging. This job didn’t seem like such a big deal except that it was BIG and then there’s the fact that my current job now allows me little time for gardening of any kind except tending to my array of potted flowers outside my house on Beethoven Street. So we agreed to have Lisa pitch us some ideas and make it happen.

This spring I was helping a friend who was buying a house and planting an orchard in Beechview. She wanted to use swales and rain barrels as a way to contain run-off water from her roof to meet PWSA guidelines after failing a dye test there. After an arduous struggle on her part, Allegheny County Plumbing Department and PWSA were convinced that this solution could really work. Hopefully she’ll be the first of many self-watering orchards in Beechview! This was my first exposure to the idea of creative use of run-off water to help prevent extensive overflow in the municipal sewer system. So although the City of Pittsburgh doesn’t require most of the city neighborhoods, including Polish Hill, to comply with run-off management solutions, Beechview is an exception.

It never dawned on me that we could volunteer to implement a more environmentally friendly system of water reuse in our landscape design. With Lisa's guidance we embarked on a plan to allow run-off from each of the three large downspouts to flow into two large containment basins full of water loving plants and grasses.

These swales were created by mounding the soil up around deep long trenches that were filled with gravel and more layers of soil. The depth and length of the swales was calculated by figuring out the estimated amount of water runoff from the roof, number of downspouts, average rainfall and the absorption rate of the soil. Thirsty, water-tolerant plants, including bee balm, were planted in the centers with various grasses encircling the rims. The rich blue hues of the fescue grass and purplish flowers on the Walker’s Low are also very sweet!

We picked the not-so-perfect summer to tackle this planting project. We’ve had a record-setting draught, relentless sunny skies and blasting heat. Mark’s idea of low maintenance became a running joke as we (mostly he) diligently watered morning and evening trying to keep the newly planted garden from wilting away. We lost a number of tender plants and the small area of lawn grass -- buffalo slow-mow grass, which only germinated seven percent. The dogwood tree probably won’t make it but the two hornbeams are hanging in there despite some premature yellowing. It now appears, as I write this article, that we’re having massive amounts of rainfall, which will challenge the rain garden to do its job. So far, so good. We have some flattened bee balm and ornamental grasses which will hopefully be resilient enough to stand back up in good time.

We have registered this Cargill garden with the Three Rivers Rain Garden Alliance. Check out the website at: http://raingardenalliance.org/. The site has lots of great information, including a map of other registered rain gardens in the Pittsburgh region. We plan to have a garden open house in the future with information about creating rain gardens. It will be an opportunity for folks to talk with some experts. We’ll let the PHCA know when we’ve got a date.

Sometime soon, I’d love to tackle my side lot of knotweed and maybe turn it into something … perhaps another rain garden? Is it possible? Lisa and Jenn, are you up for the challenge?

Mark and I want to thank everyone who worked so hard on our amazing building restoration and inspirational garden on Cargill Street.
Why I Moved to Polish Hill
by Laura Zurowski

One year ago this summer, I decided to buy a house in Pittsburgh. Over the years I had visited the city several times for both work and pleasure, and had fallen in love with its character, vibrancy and innovative attitude. But as any serious property owner knows, finding a suitable house is about making a long-term commitment. It’s different from planning a vacation; Disneyland can be fun to visit with the family but would you really want to LIVE in the middle of the Magic Kingdom? No way! Areas like the Strip District and the South Side have an abundance of restaurants and entertainment, but living there could be noisy and crime-ridden. On the flip side of the coin, the suburbs adjacent to Pittsburgh are safe and have plenty of parks and gardens, but are far removed from the arts and culture I found so appealing.

I knew I was setting high expectations. What I wanted was a neighborhood that had everything: proximity to museums, entertainment, shopping, dining and interesting activities; safe, with neighbors who know one another, and care about keeping their streets clean and their eyes open for possible dangers.

I wanted green spaces cared for by people who understand their value and beauty. I wanted a local coffee-shop where I could read or study or relax. I wanted a neighborhood where people say, “hello,” or wave and smile when you pass them on the street.

The moment I drove up Brereton I knew I had come to a special place. The Immaculate Heart of Mary Church took my breath away and I wondered if a person could ever grow tired of looking at those majestic domes silhouetted against the sky. Over the next several days, I toured a variety of neighborhoods and looked at all styles of houses. In between showings and appointments, I spent hours at Lili Coffee® Shop on Dobson. People quickly came to know I was from out of state and looking for a house, and the friendly conversation, helpful advice and information about the neighborhood’s past, present and future flowed like endless cups of coffee and iced tea. The stories about the Polish Hill Civic Association immediately captured my interest, and it amazed me how many people volunteered and the myriad projects they undertook: an annual arts festival, monthly meetings about safety and traffic concerns, keeping the stairs free of snow in winter months, turning abandoned lots into gardens, holiday celebrations, discussions with local elected officials, maintaining an historical archive. It made me realize that in this place, people truly cared about their neighborhood and didn’t want to see it slide into disrepair. I knew then that Polish Hill was where I wanted to be!

Soon after, I found my house – right on the ”border” of Polish Hill and the Upper Hill District. While I’m not technically a resident of Polish Hill, I’ve volunteered for a number of PHCA activities, attend the monthly community meetings and have taken some of that can-do spirit to my street: cleaning up an overgrown set of stairs, picking up trash and calling to report long-dark street-lamps. No effort, regardless of how small, ever goes unnoticed and I’m pleased to do my part every day to keep this part of Pittsburgh a truly wonderful place to live.

Seeking submissions for the November issue of the Polish Hill Voice!

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<th>Deadline</th>
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<td>October 15</td>
<td>Early November</td>
<td>Nov/Dec/Jan</td>
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Submissions of news items, articles or photos relating to the interests and concerns of Polish Hill residents may be emailed to phcapgh@gmail.com, or by mail to the Polish Hill Civic Association, 3060 Brereton Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15219. Images may be JPEGs (200 dpi or higher) or camera-ready art.

Due to space and content constraints, we may not be able to accept every submission. If you have any questions, please call us at 412.681.1950.

Council-to-Go

Every other month, District 7 Councilman Patrick Dowd and staff bring Council-to-Go to Polish Hill. Come share your concerns and hear what’s going on in City Council. The next meetings are:

Wednesday, September 12
7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, November 14
7:00 p.m.
at the PHCA office,
3060 Brereton Street

BLOGSKI

With new postings and pictures each week, Blogski is the most up-to-date source of news and information for residents and friends of Polish Hill.

Just type in this address:
blogski.phcapgh.org
Polish Hill Civic Association Membership Application 2012
Membership term is by calendar year. Join now for this special offer:
Just $7 makes you a PHCA member for the remainder of 2012, through December 2013!

PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION

NAME: ____________________________

(Street Address) __________________

(City) __________________ (State) ______ (ZIP) ________

PHONE: __________________________

EMAIL: ____________________________

☐ I’m not currently subscribed to the PHCA e-blast which comes out every other week — sign me up!

REGULAR MEMBER ~ Or ~ SUBSCRIPTION MEMBER

_____(Polish Hill residents) ~ Or ~ _____(Non-residents)

_____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 this application to:
Polish Hill Civic Association, Membership Chair, 3060 Brereton Street, Pittsburgh PA 15219

Polish Hill items benefit the PHCA—order here!

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<td>Red t-shirt</td>
<td>Qty</td>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth S M</td>
<td></td>
<td>Short sleeve 15.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults S M L XL XXL</td>
<td></td>
<td>Long sleeve 20.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black t-shirt</td>
<td>Qty</td>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth S M</td>
<td></td>
<td>Short sleeve 15.00</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adults S M L XL XXL</td>
<td></td>
<td>Long sleeve 20.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish Hill button</td>
<td>.50 ea.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pierogi pin</td>
<td>5.00 ea.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pierogi ornament</td>
<td>5.00 ea.</td>
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<td>Postcard</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postage</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>5.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Make your check out to the Polish Hill Civic Association .

Ship to:

Name ____________________________

Address ____________________________

Phone, email ____________________
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:
Sep 4
Oct 2
Nov 6

Community meetings are open to all residents of Polish Hill — you do not have to be a PHCA member to attend!

Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m.
in the Senior Center on the lower level of the West Penn Recreation Center,
450 30th Street at Paulowna Street.

It’s that time of year: United Way of Allegheny County is beginning their campaign for donations to your favorite local organizations. Please consider supporting the Polish Hill Civic Association. Our organization number is 258.