I am in no way a native of the region, but I am starting to call myself a yinzer. I’ve lived in the ‘burgh for almost a decade now, and I think what makes me comfortable claiming heritage or kinship with the city is my ability to give directions.

I obsess over maps of the city, looking for strange streets and roads, new ways of traveling from A to B, new understandings of not just the “how” of the city street grid, but the “why.”

Why does it feel like Polish Hill is only connected to other places by bridges? Because Bigelow was built as a throughway early on, dividing Polish Hill from Ridgeway and the rest of the slope. Because the railways cut along the base of the hill since the time that the hillside was a farm, not a community. Because the rails and the busway are not just in a flat space, they are in a big darn valley, and bridges are the only real way to cross such land.

It is these kinds of questions and answers that keep me up at night, and urge me to explore the city by any and all available means. And what do I take away from all of this wandering and analysis?

Polish Hill was built right. The physical structure of the neighborhood has carried it through rough times in the past, and will carry it through rough times in the future. By physical structure, I mean both the street and infrastructure layout and the buildings themselves. The retaining wall along Melwood is many feet thick, overdesigned and overbuilt to last hundreds of years. It’s already lasted for 105 years, and shows few signs of deterioration.

Continued on page 5
From Our Readers

Just thought I'd bring your attention to the "Falcon" buttons and t-shirts that you sell. They are really Polish Eagles (with the crowns) not Falcons as advertised. You may want to research that.

(You do a great job with the newsletter)

Thank you,
Merle Addams
(uncle of Judy Adamiec Cain)

Editor’s note:

The Polish falcon is a symbol of Polish heritage in this country, relating to the fraternal organization the Polish Falcons of America, which was founded in 1887. The image on our t-shirts and buttons, which came from a Polish source, is actually the white crowned eagle, which is on the national coat of arms of the Republic of Poland. It was adopted in 1295, and last modified in 1990.

Merle Addams is a long-time, prominent member of the local Polish community, and we thank him for reminding us that the description on our order form was not strictly accurate. That description has been updated.

President’s Message

Hello everyone!

We had a quick taste of summer before Mother Nature decided to bring winter back for a visit. Many an outdoor project was started or dreamed about on those warm days. As a test, we now need to be patient before moving forward with some of our projects.

No matter what the temperature, we still have bright and sunny days with more daylight hours.

I think the cold temperatures were actually a gift from the seasons. We all got motivated then to plan and prep for the outdoor projects. Many of us have plants growing in our basements, seed catalog orders already placed, and maps made for how our gardens will change this year. Most of these were crafted over a hot cup of tea on a cold night, or perhaps even better, over coffee with a neighbor at Lili Coffee Shop.

When I saw neighbors collaborating, I wanted to put forward that concept for everyone to consider. After taking a moment to just soak in the energy of it happening and having a smile cross my face, I wanted to share it along. Plan with your friends and neighbors to make your garden the best it has ever been. Share some work days, combine trips to the garden center, and perhaps co-fund bulk purchases of topsoil and compost. Maybe you have similar garden tastes -- can your two yards complement each other? As neighbors, you have the chance to participate in changing the views you enjoy from your windows. One never knows where classic heirloom perennials may just be waiting to be shared in a new garden space. And, if you have a physically challenged neighbor on your street, consider spending a day helping them.

As you can tell, the green places of Polish Hill hold a special place in my heart. Admittedly the season has me concentrating on those green parts of the community for the moment; however there is much to do and appreciate throughout our neighborhood. Everyone works really hard to improve the quality of life for our residents, which is the core value behind our work. It’s also wise to remember ... that while the projects lists are long and much needs done, take the time to enjoy the community we have all worked so hard to build.

There are a few items on our project lists that should be priorities -- long Polish Hill walks, a cook-out in our yards, meeting new friends and neighbors, and making the time to slow down a bit. You will be surprised, when you are recharged and having some good times, you will be more productive and the project list will not seem so daunting.

Looking forward to hard work followed up with some simply stunning Polish Hill sunsets. See you around the village!

Terry

A big thank-you to Julia Sinicki

Redstone Candies is a family-owned company which has been based in Republic PA since 1947. Resident Julia Sinicki has organized Redstone candy fundraising drives for the PHCA at Christmas and Easter for many years. Julia does all coordinating, handles the orders, and gives the proceeds to the PHCA for neighborhood projects.

We’d like to take this opportunity to thank Julia and express our appreciation for all the work she’s done over the years on behalf of the PHCA.

Unprecedented demand for community garden plots

The application period for the community gardens opened up March 15, and by March 30, all the available plots had been spoken for. Polish Hill currently has just two small gardens, one on Wiggins and one on Harmar Street. The interest in the community gardens is great, but there simply isn’t much space to accommodate everyone. We thank everyone who applied, and to those who didn’t get a plot this year — try next year. Who knows; by then, maybe we’ll have found space for a third community garden!
Iron City Brewery Site Sold

by Leslie Clague and Alexis Miller

The Iron City Brewery site, just next to the Herron Bridge on the northern border of Polish Hill, was sold in February to James Cargnoni of Collier Development.

The sale includes 20 buildings on 8.25 acres. According to a deed recorded in Allegheny County, the price was $1.725 million, but other sales documents indicate the complex sold for $2.375 million.

Cargnoni may be best known for owning Trader Jack’s flea market off Interstate 79 in Collier, but he specifically stated that he has no plans to move the flea market to the ICB site. Cargnoni also owns other buildings in the Strip District within several blocks of the ICB site.

There’s no word yet about what Cargnoni might do with the property. District 7 Councilman Patrick Dowd met on March 2 with Cargnoni, his project manager Timothy Frew and representatives from neighborhood groups that border the brewery site. PHCA Vice President Alexis Miller attended the meeting on behalf of Polish Hill. Lawrenceville Corporation and Lawrenceville United were also in attendance. Neighbors in the Strip were invited but unable to attend the meeting.

The meeting was organized by Councilman Dowd, as he believes this property to be one of the “most important in the city.” Councilman Dowd is keenly interested in community input into the development of this property, which borders a few District 7 neighborhoods. The March 2 meeting was successful at laying the ground work for future collaboration between the new owners and neighboring communities.

Collier Development has agreed to re-start the master planning process for the site. At the meeting Collier discussed a wide variety of options for developing the site, but nothing specific. At the time of the meeting they already had two tenants: Pittsburgh Brewing Company and TransportU. TransportU is a company owned by Cargnoni that operates vans to transport elderly and handicapped individuals. They are using the site to park about 60 TransportU vans.

According to District 7 staff, Collier has agreed to not seek any demolition permits prior to the completion of the master planning process. Instead, they are cleaning, assessing and stabilizing structures on the property. They discussed the desire to get community input and create a ten-year site plan, and mentioned their intent to clean and improve the Liberty Avenue façade of the building as one of their next steps.

Under the direction of Lawrenceville Corporation, an Iron City Brewery Master Planning Steering Committee has been assembled and will interview three design/planning firms on April 10 to facilitate the master planning process. PHCA President Terry Doloughty and Vice President Alexis Miller will be members of this steering committee.

District 7 staff said, “We are optimistic that this process will lead to a community-informed re-use of the site and re-establish the vitality of this key gateway to East End.” This site, which is next to the east busway and has the potential to become a major development, is also of high interest to the PHCA and Polish Hill residents.

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Community & Event Calendar
May/June/July

May 1 | Monthly Community Meeting
6:30 p.m. | West Penn Recreation Center (Senior Center, lower level)

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

May 5 | May Day Parade
12:00 p.m. | Begins on Gold Way, ends at West Penn Park

May 9 | Council-to-Go with Councilman Patrick Dowd
7:00 p.m. | PHCA office, 3060 Brereton St.

Jun 5 | Monthly Community Meeting
6:30 p.m. | West Penn Recreation Center (Senior Center, lower level)

Jul 3 | Monthly Community Meeting
6:30 p.m. | West Penn Recreation Center (Senior Center, lower level)

Jul 7 | Immaculate Heart of Mary Church Parish Festival
1:00 p.m. | Intersection of Brereton and Dobson streets

Jul 8 | Polish Hill Arts Festival
12:30 p.m.— 9:00 p.m. | Intersection of Brereton and Dobson streets

Jul 11 | Council-to-Go with Councilman Patrick Dowd
7:00 p.m. | PHCA office 3060 Brereton St.
More News and Announcements

Meet the new PHCA Board Members

After the PHCA board elections in November 2011, the PHCA had one new board member, Josiah Parkinson, and one remaining vacancy, that of secretary, to be filled on a temporary basis by board vote. In February, the board voted to bring in Valerie Testa as interim secretary. Valerie will fulfill those duties until the board elections in November 2012.

So who are these new board members? Josiah is a radiologic technologist in cardiology at UPMC Passavant in McCandless. He lives on Brereton Street and has been active on the PHCA’s Green Team for three years, as well as helping out with community events such as the arts festival. Josiah was also a member of the planning team for the recently finished Polish Hill Community Plan.

Valerie describes her position at Whole Foods as “cheesemonger.” She lives on Dobson Street and is the stair steward for the nearby City Steps. Valerie has been volunteering on the PHCA Green Team for a couple of years, and recently took over the planting and maintenance of the flowers along the Brereton side of West Penn Park. Her involvement in the community inspired Valerie to attend the City’s Civic Leadership Academy and to become involved in local issues.

We welcome Josiah and Valerie to the board, where they join continuing board members Terry Dologhtry, Alexis Miller, Myra Falisz, Erica Moulinier, Janice Heagy, Rose Hudson, Catherine McConnell, Tom Ogden and Josie Ramsey.

Birdhouse Decorations for the Community Tree

by Janice Heagy

The birdhouse decorating contest was a success! The PHCA Monument Committee spearheaded this first-time ever event for the Polish Hill community tree. We had a total of 45 entries, combining the children and adult categories, and each submission was unique in its own way. The variety and ingenuity was impressive as was the artwork and detail on the small to large birdhouses, including a Frank Lloyd Wright type house, a boot, a church, a pirate ship, a cabana and many other classy birdhouses.

Some members of the Monument Committee and others met on March 18 to decorate the tree with all of the birdhouses we received. Helping that day were Debbie Jozwiak, Jean Kowalecki, Janice Heagy, Terry Dologhtry and John (Ducky) McClure. Passersby stopped to see the work in progress, including a visitor from England who was in Pittsburgh on a business trip and decided to take a walk through Polish Hill. Also, many birds seemed to be excited as they were flying over our heads or perching nearby to investigate their possible new dwellings. It seems that everyone is “tweeting” about the new additions to the tree.

We would like to thank everyone who took the time and effort to participate in the contest. At this time, all entries have been judged and the winners are: First place, Joe Pietruszka; second place, Elizabeth Bashur; third place, Bernie (we never did get his last name); and the children’s category winner, Connor Jozwiak.

If you would like to add a birdhouse to our tree, we would be most happy to accept it. Just drop it off at the PHCA office and we’ll make sure it is properly hung. Even though the official contest is over, there are still a few available spaces on the tree.

The Monument Committee is open to all who would like to share in taking care of the community tree, which is the centerpiece of our neighborhood.

The Polish Hill Community Plan

Now Available Online

The final document for the Polish Hill Community Plan is now available online. This document is the result of a yearlong planning process. Last year, the PHCA planning team and Pfaffmann + Associates held a number of public meetings and workshops to gather feedback from neighborhood residents. We took that feedback and created a strategic plan -- one that truly represents a community vision for our future and projects that reflect the values of our neighborhood.

There has been a lot of interest from residents about the plan. We realized that this large, 41-page, full-color document would be too expensive to distribute in printed form. The solution was to make the plan available online. To view or download the strategic plan, go to the PHCA website (phcapgh.org) and click on the Strategic Community Plan link on the front page. This is a large document, so it might take a few seconds to download. The printed plan will also be available for viewing at the PHCA office.
Planning
By Terry Doloughty

Implementation and execution seem to be cold words, but the description fits where we are currently with our plan. After the years of work, our duties now shift toward actually making the items brought forth in our planning process a reality. We have started to reach out to our local political offices, neighboring communities, local organizations and our own volunteers to start the next steps in making our dream for Polish Hill come true.

Focus and responsibility are the other words that echo in my mind. We now have, for the first time in many years, a focused vision for the future. Ideas come at us from all directions, and we need to make sure our plan is the map that guides us in how we use our limited resources. We also have a responsibility to our residents and ourselves to ensure that all the hard work of our planning process has been well spent. Our plan is a living document and will, for years to come, be the guidepost against which our efforts and successes are measured.

This is an exciting time to be involved with the PHCA. Execution and implementation will not be easy, but the eventual outcomes are worth the effort. Stay tuned. As we find ways and means to accomplish our goals, we will need your help. The participation and passion of residents and volunteers will be the best way to bring about the Polish Hill we want and need.

After much work we have arrived at the beginning. I am ready ... let’s go!

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, May 9
7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, July 11
7:00 p.m.

at the PHCA office, 3060 Brereton Street

Solid Bones, continued from front page

329-31 Hancock, the former apartment building recently purchased by Brian Seklecki, may have the spongiest of roofs, and most of its interior has fallen into the basement, but the foundation is two feet of well-mortared field stone, and the walls are 18 solid inches of brick. He has a long road ahead of him when it comes to rebuilding the interior, but as for the structure itself, a bomb could go off over that house, and the bones of the thing would be no worse for wear.

Brian Seklecki, who just turned 30, is one of the wave of young people buying and renovating buildings in Polish Hill.

Here, he stands in the doorway of his building at 329-331 Hancock Street. Notice the thickness of the walls.

(Photo by Myra Falisz)

This well-built, finely crafted physical environment allows for incredible experimentation and diversity and change in shorter-term realms. Though the majority of them have been converted to be entirely housing realms, most of the buildings in Polish Hill have first floors appropriate for street-level storefronts, and some of them have already been converted back.

Polish Hill is rife with spaces that could become amenable to short-term, low-impact rental, which can allow for a host of innovative young businesses to work (and presumably spend) in the neighborhood.

Each building in Polish Hill is built to last, but any given use of those long-lasting spaces can be very short term. Small businesses come and go, but the walls stay.

Such an ecosystem of long-term buildings and short-term inhabitants is, among other qualities, incredibly resilient. That is to say, it weathers city- and statewide changes well, because the spaces are of such quality that their use can change rapidly and intelligently.

What gives me hope about Polish Hill is what gives me hope about giving directions in the city: Knowledge of our past, understanding of our land, and appreciation for the quality, skill and specificity with which our built environment was crafted allows one to look at our beautiful city and visualize the path towards a bright future, and the steps one needs to get there.

The City steps leading from the end of Downing and Hancock streets to Herron Avenue, in 1936. There are still steps in this location — now made of steel and concrete instead of wood.

(From the Historic Pittsburgh Archive)
The First Holy Communion and the Ugly Green Coat

By Judy Adamiec Cain

Sitting on the edge of our kitchen table on the early morning of May 16, 1948, while the sky was still dark, I knew it would be a day "to change my life," as the nuns had been reminding me for weeks now, in our Second Grade Class at Immaculate Heart of Mary School, Polish Hill, Pittsburgh, Pa.

My Mother had just lit the kitchen stove burners and oven in a hurry to heat the room. Everything I was to wear that day had to be new and white, as was evidenced by all my clothes that had been neatly laid out on the table before we went to bed the night before. For me, "bed" meant the couch, in our one-bedroom apartment for Mom, Dad, me and my two younger brothers. In 1948, right after the end of WWII, work was still scarce for my Dad, and despite FDR's promise of a "New Deal," we still had to "deal" with pinching pennies, as did most everyone on Polish Hill (at that time Herron Hill).

And there, hanging from the dim light over the kitchen table, was my dream come true, my First Communion Dress! Mom was a wiz at the sewing machine and my frock was exactly as I had requested -- more like demanded, if truth be told. She had painstakingly copied it from the dress I "liked the best" at Gimbel's, downtown Pittsburgh, which was far beyond our budget. But as Mom was scrutinizing it in the store, I could hear her whispering "...yes...I think I can do that" and "uh huh, no problem."

So there in the kitchen hung my knock-off copy in all its glory, made to my specific and over-budget demands, complete with white rosebuds on the bodice, from which satin ribbons cascaded, underscored by rows, upon rows, upon delicious rows of ruffles covering the entire skirt! Oh! It was fit for a princess! And, of course, I just "had" to have a dress that would be the prettiest of all, when process-

ing down the main aisle of the church with my class!

So after donning my new white knee socks, white patent leather shoes, underwear, slip and dress, the final step was to dismantle my metal helmet of bobby pins, letting loose a fall of ringlets. Uncomfortable as it had been, trying to sleep with my head being pricked and poked that night, I was terrified of the alternative of having my hair cooked that morning, with a curling poker that had been heating in the fire -- yeah fire -- of our kitchen stove burners! Looking like Shirley Temple was my Mom's idea, not mine!

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Mom had now moved to her battle station in front of the mirror hanging over the kitchen sink, her usual post where she'd stand and mumble, which translated to "someone's gonna get it!" This was followed by "Go wake your Father." This was one Sunday when he would sacrifice his weekly ritual of early morning golf with his brothers. No breakfast before Holy Communion, but Mom was mumbling at the sink again, and knowing that I was the subject of attention that morning, I worried. I was, however, relieved when upon listening to her further mumbling, I heard my Dad's name mentioned as the object of something about "burn in hell." But I wasn't worried because I knew my Dad was a good guy and he would never go to hell. On the other hand, he might have to spend some time in purgatory, but that wasn't bad. Everyone knew that while hell was a terrible forever fire, purgatory was just a ginormously huge campfire out near North Park Lake, around which all souls had to form a circle and pray. Then, if you got too hot, you could move to a back row or even jump in for a swim from time to time. Then at your appointed hour St. Peter would appear above the lake and take you to heaven. So with my heart somewhat eased, I called Dad and my brothers to hurry up and get dressed for church.

As we prepared to leave for church, I noted that Mom was again donning her ugly old coat, which somehow or other was always getting passed over on the list of new things we needed to buy. Now believe me, I still vividly remember it as the most horrific coat I had ever seen in my life! A terribly ugly threadbare green monster with a shawl collar of matted orange fur. I mean this was not a soft subtle fawn color, or even perhaps a muted bronze fox. It was a loud, dead ORANGE, the same icky orange as my Aunt Kate's hair when she dyed it trying to look like Rita Hayworth! I could not understand how Mom could be seen in public in that ugly green embarrassment. And as we hastened along the sidewalk, I kept tugging at her hand with every hurried step, complaining "C'mon Mum, 'S'ter' said if I'm late, I don't get to carry a flower in P'seshn."

Our destination, the church basement (now Rosary Hall), was filled with a flurry of nun's veils flying hither and yon, surrounded by a sea of little white outfitted dwarfs, emoting chitters and chatters of "S'ter, me first" and "S'ter, he pushed me," and "S'ter, my flower looks dead!" But somehow, the whole theatrical production managed to timely fall into place, and all the screaming little crea-
tures, as if by magic (or a miracle?) turned into a flow of white angels -- quietly, with shiny faces, stepping once, and once again, as rehearsed, down the center aisle of the church, to approach the Altar of God, for that long-awaited moment of the children's triumph and the Nun's relief!

That morning, I had no way of knowing that in my advanced eight years of a self-absorbed life, I was about to be dealt an overwhelming blast of reality. We had been told this would be a day of miracles, and no doubt miracles were indeed abounding in that house of God. For as I walked in line slowly down the main aisle of the church, proud as a peacock, the procession hesitated, and I found myself standing right next to my mother who was seated at the end of her pew.

She had tears in her eyes and was aglow with a smile that covered her entire face, as she gave me a quick wink of the eye, assuring me that all was well. It was obvious that she was so proud of me, but it was more obvious, as I looked up at her, that her pride left no room for any possible awareness of the ghastly old green coat she was wearing! For a moment, standing there, I felt time stand still, as if struck by lightning! And then it hit me, that she really didn’t care about that shabby coat which was such a source of embarrassment to me! Her whole countenance was one of pride and joy!

Walking home that morning, the sun had now fully risen in a crystal blue sky, with white billows gently moving in the breeze. God had indeed given us a glorious First Communion Sunday to remember. And as I pensively walked, dragged my feet, following a few steps behind my mother, as if from nowhere, I found teardrops managing to run down my cheek.

And when my mother turned with "What's the matter, Sweetie?"

I said nothing . . .

. . . I just . . . kept . . . walking.

Other First Holy Communion Days from the PHCA’s Polish Hill photo archive

Editor's note:

After I received Judy’s wonderful article, a look through the PHCA’s Polish Hill photo archive seemed in order. Surely there would be a few other photos to share from this special day — and there were a few, from different years.

Top: From Jane Pelczarski, a group of girls descending the steps from the Immaculate Heart of Mary school yard (late 1940s).

Middle: From Eileen Goralski, a photo of her sister Evelyn (right) and friend Margaret Marchwinski, taken at IHM School in 1956.

Bottom: From Jim Huminski, a First Holy Communion group shot on the steps of Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, from about 1957.

We’d love to see your photos of Polish Hill past — the streets, the buildings, the people, the everyday life. Contact the PHCA to find out how you can contribute to the PHCA’s Polish Hill Archive.
The Polish Hill Dog

Article and photo by Alexis Miller

I admit it. I have fallen off the vegetarian wagon a few times over the past six months. They were usually special occasions paired with mouth-watering meaty temptations, but nothing as special as this. To be honest, it wasn’t that the meat was terribly mouth-watering. I hadn’t exactly been craving this guilty pleasure. In fact, it was one of the meats I gave up eating first as I grew closer to being labeled vegetarian. Yes, it has definitely been at least 15 years since I ate a hot dog.

But this wasn’t just a normal hot dog. This was THE Polish Hill dog. And I ate it at PNC Park as I watched the Pirates win, making it an extremely extraordinary day. I just couldn’t help myself. How could I possibly pass up eating a hot dog named after my neighborhood in one of the finest ball parks in America?

New this season at PNC Park, the Polish Hill dog is a foot-long hot dog nestled in a bed of mayonnaise-based coleslaw, piled with onion straws (thin strips of onion deep fried, like mini onion rings) and mini deep-fried potato pierogis. All of this was spilling out of a bun that could barely handle the weight of all the toppings – definitely worthy of a tall stack of napkins and a plate to catch the drippings.

I may not ever eat one again, but it was certainly worth the sacrifice to savor the glory of Polish Hill. If you’re looking for it at the next game, it is on the 100 level towards the middle of the food options at one of the grills. Look for the picture of the footlong hot dogs or just follow your nose.

Renovation Report

By Leslie Clague

Empty for many years, 3031 and 3033 Brereton Street have been the subject of much speculation during the time they’ve been vacant. Along a very visible stretch in the center of the neighborhood, the buildings stood out as the only deteriorating properties on that block. PHCA has received many inquiries about these buildings from people who were looking for properties along this street.

The buildings were purchased by Jason Perry a few years ago. Jason spent a lot of time clearing out the interiors in preparation for renovation, and recently, bigger changes are afoot. Although you can’t tell from the street, 3031 is now in the midst of some major work. Jason is in the process of enclosing the porches, which will increase the living area on each floor by about 200 square feet. He says that he’d like to remove the Insulbrick siding to reveal the original wood siding, which is an unusual narrow width. The building will be rental units when he’s finished.

We’re happy to see this building being fixed up, and wish Jason all the best in his endeavors on this project.
Green Team Grows Stronger with the Help of New Tools and Equipment

By Chris O'Shell

It started in 1992 with a small group of Polish Hill residents who took on the project of planting the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy flower beds at 30th and Paulowna Street. From the spring planting to the fall harvest, these individuals could be seen every weekend tending to the flowers that beautify the neighborhood’s busiest intersection.

Last year, the crew partnered with Allegheny CleanWays to identify and remove more than seven tons of debris, separated and recycled by a collective total of 49 volunteers. During the off-season, the Green Team’s sub-group of Stair Stewards assembles to clear the neighborhood’s City Steps and public sidewalks of snow and ice.

What the Green Team has accomplished already is truly impressive. But knowing that it’s all been done with borrowed, donated, broken and twice-mended tools (and yards of duct tape), makes their story nothing short of amazing.

This year, thanks to a grant from The Laurel Foundation, the Green Team received a truck load of brand-new, state-of-the-art tools, commercial-grade equipment and industrial safety gear to make the job of greening Polish Hill a little bit easier ... and a lot more enjoyable.

It is this article, among many others published over the past year or two, which reminds me that our secret is getting out. Others in Pittsburgh and nationally are recognizing what I have known for many years -- that Polish Hill is a special place, where pierogi and rock-and-roll really do live side by side as part of a close-knit community that cares about each other and the future of the neighborhood.

Ethnic Charm 'n' Rock-and-Roll

by Alexis Miller


What do these places all have in common? They were named by National Geographic Traveler magazine as several of the distinguished winners of the “Best of the World: 20 Great Places to Experience in 2012.” The only other destination in the United States to make the 2012 list was Sonoma, California. The subheading for the Pittsburgh part of the article reads “Extreme Metropolitan Makeover.” The article highlights some of Pittsburgh’s most notable attractions: bridges, riverfront trails, PNC Park and the Carnegie Museums.

The article also highlights Pittsburgh as an incubator for creativity due to the affordability of the city. But what may surprise some people (though not me) is that Polish Hill is an example (alongside Garfield and East Liberty) in this article of a neighborhood that embodies ethnic and creative charm. In fact Gooski’s is really the star of the article. How could you not be intrigued to check out Polish Hill, where “the pierogi at Gooski’s come with a side of rock-and-roll?”

The group grew each year, and so did the number of beautification projects they initiated. As a pool of talented gardeners and environmentally-minded friends formed, the green events took on a life of their own. Today, the Green Team tends to seven vacant lots, conducts at least a dozen neighborhood clean-ups, coordinates a “green bank” for seed and plant swapping, works tirelessly to eradicate invasive knotweed along the City Steps and community gateways, and plants, prunes and educates others on caring for our street trees.

The West Penn Pool will open on June 14.
Where Are They Now: Jim Huminski

Jim Huminski lived at 3521 Melwood Avenue and attended Immaculate Heart of Mary School from 1955 to 1963. Jim left Polish Hill in November 1970 to join the Air Force, where he served until 1976. While in the service in Korea, Jim met his future wife C.C.; they were married in July 1975. They have two sons: Andrew, now 36, an FBI agent who lives in New Jersey; and Michael, 28, a federal police officer who lives in Maryland.

Jim worked at the National Security Agency in Fort Meade, Maryland from 1977 to 2010, when he retired. Since 2010, he has worked at L-3 Communications.

Jim and C.C. now reside in Hanover, Maryland (south of Baltimore). Jim’s father Al Huminski has lived with them since September 2006, following the death of his wife, Anne, in November 2005. Jim has provided his email address, pieface1720@verizon.net, in case anyone from the old neighborhood wants to get in touch.

Former Polish Hill resident Jim Huminski had a great suggestion for a new regular feature, and even suggested a title. Jim said, "Such a column would allow former residents to tell Polish Hill about where they are now, what they've done career-wise, and about them and their families. Inclusion of contact information might be a catalyst for some renewed friendships.”

Many people who moved away years ago still think of Polish Hill as home. We love the thought that Polish Hill is a community that reaches far beyond the physical borders of this small neighborhood.

Left: Jim Huminski in 1957, age 8.

Below: The Huminski family, Christmas 2011. Top: Al and Jim Huminski. Bottom: son Michael and wife Bianca (and pet dog Kirby); son Andrew, and Jim's wife C.C.

Little House, Big Art

By Leslie Clague

Looking for something to do with kids? Polish Hill has a new art studio, and it's open for anyone to walk in and do art projects. Little House, Big Art, operated by Elizabeth Bashur, is located on the first floor of the former Emma Kauffmann Clinic (also long known as the Polish Falcons building). You can use tools and equipment for free, bring your own supplies or buy just what you need. Teaching is available (but optional).

Little House, Big Art is a friendly, welcoming space where you can make jewelry, ceramics, and mosaics. You can sew, paint, draw and more. If you don't know how to start or what to make, Elizabeth has fun projects to choose from.

Everyone is welcome -- kids especially, but teens and adults, too. The hours vary a bit, but the studio is open several days a week. Stop in as you're walking by, or call 412.444.5278. You can also email Elizabeth at insightprojects@gmail.com, or find Little House, Big Art on Facebook.

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

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<th>Deadline</th>
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<td>Early August</td>
<td>Aug/Sep/Oct</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 phapsg@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.
Polish Hill Civic Association Membership Application 2012

Dues are $5.00. Membership term is by calendar year and expires each December 31.

**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!

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<th>(Non-residents)</th>
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<th>Renewal</th>
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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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**TOTAL**

Make your check out to the Polish Hill Civic Association .

Ship to:

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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:**

**May 1**

**June 5**

**July 3**

*PHCA 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.