



# Polish Hill Voice

*We are the community...we are one voice!*



3060 Brereton Street ✨ Pittsburgh, PA 15219 ✨ (412) 681-1950 ✨ phcapgh@gmail.com ✨ www.phcapgh.org

February 2009

## Contents:

Building the Polish Hill Plan	2
Building the Polish Hill Plan (cont'd)	3
Right By Nature	4
Buyer Beware	
Envelope of Life	
Best of Polish Hill	
Polish Hill Happenings	5
Off the Bluff and Up the Hill	6
Resident's Message	7
Community Calendar	
Paczki Sales	
Art 'n Garden	8
Ridgeway Fire	9
Home Loans	
Local Politics	10
Light Up Night	11
Council to Go	

## New Signs of Life on Brereton

The renovation trend in Polish Hill continues with many residential properties in the neighborhood, but recent renovations on Brereton Street of commercial buildings are showing some exciting signs of life.

Alfred's Deli, at 3041 Brereton Street, reopened right around Christmas, bringing the neighborhood a much needed necessity. Polish Hill has been lacking a deli or general store since Jerry's market closed several years ago.

The deli currently offers meats, sausages, cheeses, and tasty Polish specialties. It is also a convenient drop off point for mailing international packages. The deli plans to expand its offerings as it gets its feet on the ground.

Stop in and support

your local business.

Right down the street, two other commercial buildings are undergoing renovations. The former Mostowy's Hardware store is being renovated by owner/contractor Dymek Boguslaw. He plans to keep the first floor for commercial use with apartments above. Dumpsters on Brereton Street seem to be filled up frequently as they gut and clean out the building.

There are other exciting developments happening right next door at the former Jerry's market and Jubilee Pantry, 3101 and 3102 Brereton Street. In late December/early January, new



windows were installed on the top two stories of the building. The Jubilee Association owns this building and plans to rent the Brereton storefront with offices on the second floor.

Hours at Alfred's Deli are Tuesday through Friday, 10:30 am—5:00 pm, Saturday 10:30 am—4:00 pm, Sunday 10:00 am—1:00 pm and closed on Monday.



*Renovations at the Jubilee Kitchen and Mostowy's buildings on Brereton Street continue slowly. The installation of new windows on the upper floors at Jubilee and the gutting and cleaning next door have been continuing despite the cold weather.*

This is a friendly reminder to all residents that the City allows residents 24 hours after a snow for sidewalks to be shoveled.



If you know that a neighbor is sick or elderly, please consider checking in on them or shoveling the sidewalk for them. These small acts of kindness are part of what distinguishes Polish Hill and makes it a nice place to live.

# Building the Polish Hill Plan One Idea at a Time

By Alexis Miller

Perhaps it's just good timing, but it looks like the Polish Hill Civic Association will start off its 40th year with some great developments on the horizon. The board and housing committee on the PHCA have started to gather community input about what kinds of developments residents would like to see here. There have been round table discussions and e-mail chatter from local artists, PHCA members and both new and old residents in the neighborhood. The results of the neighborhood surveys conducted last January are also key considerations for these future decisions.

There are many unique aspects of Polish Hill and certainly some wonderful reasons to live here, but most residents express the desire to have a few businesses in the neighborhood where they can get some basic necessities and socialize with their neighbors.

In response, the Polish Hill Civic Association is working hard on craft-

ing a community vision and plan so that future development can happen based around a Polish Hill Plan.

As we seek community input and ideas, we invite all residents to consider not only their personal and emotional reactions, but also consider some of the statistics and information that show the need to adapt and improve.

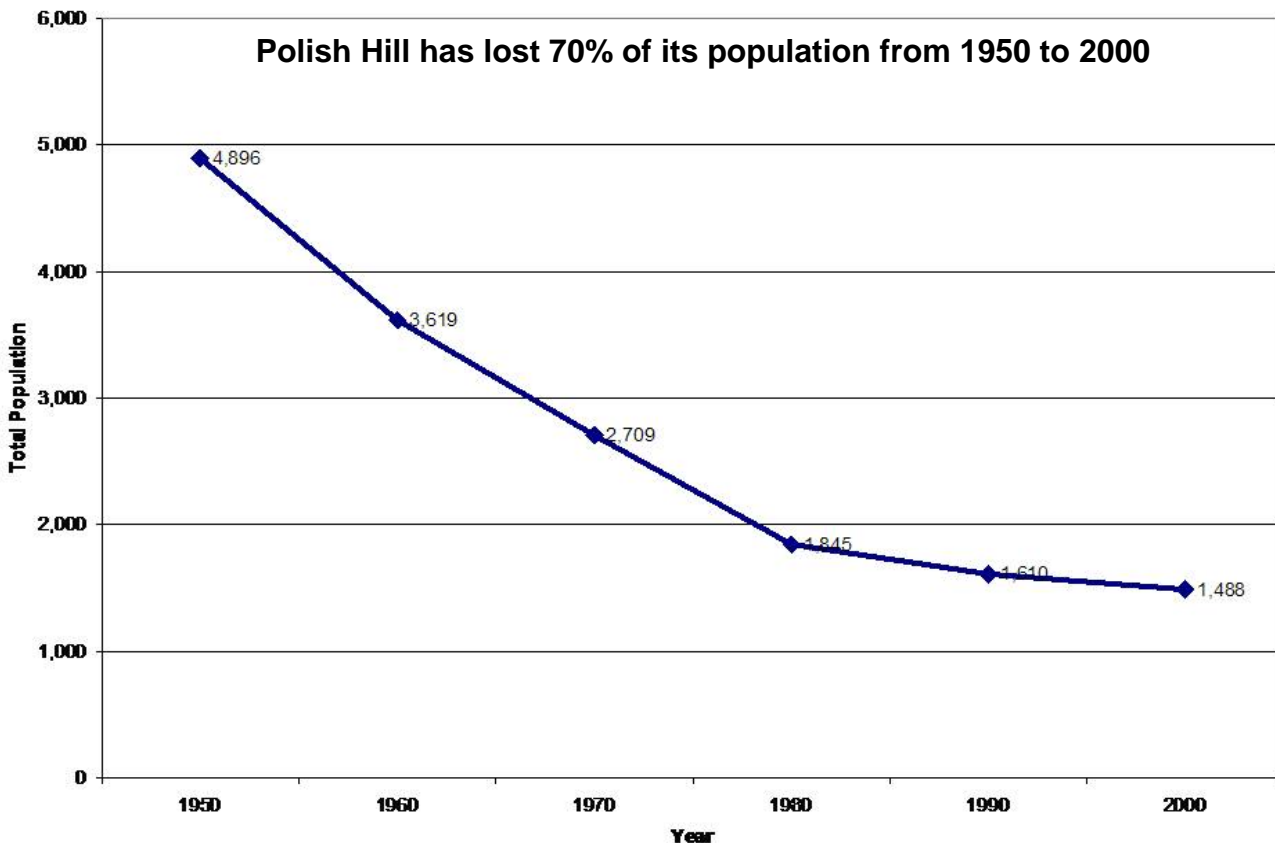
It will be interesting to see how much we have changed in the past 10 years once the 2010 U.S. Census is complete, but for now, we share some data that is available from the 2000 U.S. Census Bureau, the City of Pitts-

burgh and the Urban Redevelopment Authority. The data that was gathered pointed out some interesting things:

Polish Hill has a lower median household income than the City of Pittsburgh, but we also have an older population than the City, which can account for some of the lower incomes.

Many residents remember Polish Hill's better business days when mom and pop shops lined the streets, but there are some good reasons why our businesses have declined. One big reason is our declining population. Between 1950 and 2000, Polish Hill

	Occupied Housing Units	Owner Occupied Housing Units	Median Household Income
Pittsburgh	88%	52%	\$28,588
Polish Hill	84%	50%	\$19,353



(Continued from page 2)

lost 70% of its population. That decline in population has not improved as of yet, so looking at plans to improve existing properties or build new properties is one strategy to get more residents back in Polish Hill. There is certainly a demand for small businesses here as well, which current residents want and may attract future residents.

Everyone who lives here appreciates the affordability to live in this neighborhood and no one is trying to change that, however, the value of homes remains some of the lowest in the City of Pittsburgh.

When looking to purchase a home, Pittsburgh is certainly an affordable option, and Polish Hill has much of that opportunity here as well to get the most for your money. Polish Hill is a neighborhood where you can not only afford to buy a home, but you can also afford to have a life.

In comparison to other

neighborhoods that might have declining populations, low income and poor home values, Polish Hill has some really special qualities that make it stand out from other neighborhoods in Pittsburgh.

We have some of the most beautiful views on our steep hillsides. We are centrally located to Downtown, the Strip District, Lawrenceville, Oakland, Bloomfield and the Hill District with access to two major roads: Liberty Avenue and Bigelow Boulevard, yet we have the peace, quiet and low crime comparable to the suburbs. With wild turkeys and wild flowers here, some may even say Polish Hill is like a little town out in the country side.

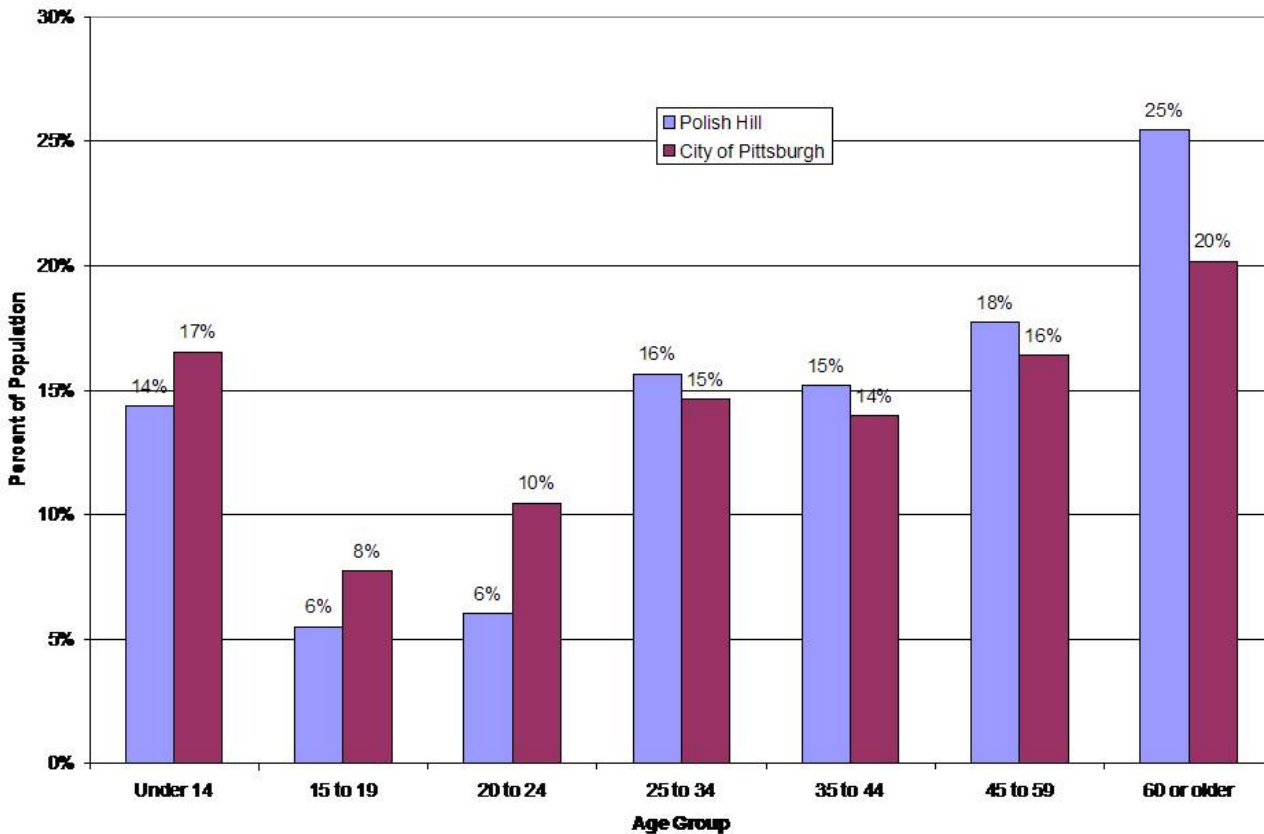
New residents to Polish Hill often remark how friendly their new neighbors are here. After living in other cities or even other Pittsburgh neighborhoods for years, they barely knew the names of people on their street, yet within a few months in Polish Hill (especially if its during BBQ season), residents and neighbors are already on a

first name basis with them (and their dog).

We want to preserve all that, but enjoy it for years to come with new neighbors next to old neighbors, safe streets and attractive buildings and homes. We want to be proud of the neighborhood that we have nurtured when it is finally all grown up.



Polish Hill is older than the City of Pittsburgh. One quarter of residents are 60 or older.



## Envelope of LIFE

The City of Pittsburgh Emergency Medical Services recently launched a creative way to help people save their own lives.

Elderly, sick or handicapped individuals can request an "Envelope of LIFE" from local police or make a request through the PHCA.

This standardized form is a place to write down what medications they are on, what medical conditions they have and any other pertinent life saving information that they may not be able to communicate to emergency personnel in the case of an emergency. This envelope is placed on your refrigerator for emergency personnel to refer to in these uncertain medical crises. With the Envelope of LIFE, you also get a special sticker to place on your front door that alerts EMS responders that you have an Envelope of LIFE providing important information, right on your fridge.

## Polish Hill's Best

City Paper released its Best of 2008 issue and Polish Hill could have had its own subcategory with the number of winners from our little neck of the woods. While everyone on the list deserves their place, the Polish Hill Civic Association would like to take a moment to congratulate the Polish Hill winners.

### Best neighborhood dive whose menu has global appeal

Gooski's—1st Place

### Best local "PC"

Gregg Gillis for his album Girl Talk—1st place

### Best Bartender

Nigel, Rock Room—2nd Place

## Right By Nature: Right in the Strip

By Leslie Clague

Now here's some exciting news: there's a new grocery store convenient to Polish Hill! Right by Nature, a locally owned and operated natural foods market, opened in November at 2305 Smallman Street in the Strip District.

They describe themselves as a market, but Right by Nature is actually a full-size grocery store featuring a very nice produce section, well-stocked meat and cheese counters, an extensive selection of packaged foods (including many gluten free and other special dietary items), a bulk foods section with grains, granola and nuts, a health/beauty section, a bakery, salad bar and a café.

Prices compare to Whole Foods for packaged items--that is to say, a bit on the high side--but healthy or organic things do tend to cost more overall than conventional items. However, the sale prices are excellent and you can find great values, especially in produce. Right by Nature has a weekly sale circular like regular grocery stores; recent items included organic broccoli for .79 cents/lb, boneless New York strip steak for \$8.99/lb., a 3-lb bag of pears for \$2.49, and 25% off all vitamins.

Open from 8 am until 9 pm seven days a week, the store is large, clean and spacious; the staff is friendly and helpful, and there's free parking (if you purchase something) right in the building (the garage entrance is on 24<sup>th</sup> street). If you're the walking sort, it's no farther than the Shur-Save in Bloomfield. Right by Nature is also accessible by the 54C bus: take the North Side bound bus to Liberty Ave at 24<sup>th</sup> or 23<sup>rd</sup> Streets and walk two blocks over to Smallman Street.

Our conclusion: Even if you're not particularly into natural foods, Right by Nature is definitely worth checking out for the sale prices and the convenience.



## Buyer Beware: Keep an Eye on Your Accounts

By Josie Ramsey

These days we do not think twice about using debit cards, credit cards and electronic checks. It is convenient, however, buyer beware.

You should always keep an eye on your checking account to make sure everything is accurate. Watch your statement.

One way that checks can be run twice is if the store runs your check through the cash register but the machine does not have ink to print void on it and print out a receipt. The merchant may clear the check twice—once electronically and a second time using the check.

If everyone had large enough bank accounts that the checks could go through twice and not be noticed, that would be nice. However, in reality, the check going through twice often makes a big change in your checking account.

If a merchant makes an error in overcharging you or incorrectly charging you, it is up to you to notice the problem. You

only have 60 days from the date of your bank statement to identify the problem and notify the bank. Then it could take up to 45 days for them to investigate your claim.

This is where online banking is handy. You can check your account daily without waiting for the paper statements to arrive in the mail, so if a problem occurs, you can catch the problem more quickly.

It is always good measure to be prepared. Check your statements regularly, whether it be paper or online. It also helps to keep track of checks that are processed electronically. If the merchant processed it electronically- make a note in your check register or check stub and keep your receipts for all purchases with your check-book until it has cleared correctly at the bank.

You may also want to check with your banking institution to find out their policies for handling such problems. In these hard times, it is necessary to be alert.

# Polish Hill Happenings

## City Stair Detours

Unlike other city staircases that get little use, Polish Hill has several staircases with high traffic. Recently, two of those staircases have received attention from the city in an effort to make them safer and more accessible.

The Apollo Street staircase was repaired between Melwood Avenue and Cargill Street. It remains closed between Cargill and Melwood until weather improves enough to finish those repairs.

More recently, the Downing Street staircase that connects the end of Hancock and Downing with Herron Ave, providing easy access to the Herron bridge and the East Busway, has been completely closed due to safety concerns. The cement at the last landing had been deteriorating for a long time and was patched with plywood for the past two years. The supports for this landing were also crumbling and put the stability of the entire staircase in jeopardy. It is finally getting serious attention, with construction crews starting work on it in early January. This project is supervised by Bob Vavro of the Construction Division of the City.

In the winter, outdoor construction can happen more slowly due to the extremes of the weather, so the projects will be done as quickly as possible.

In the meantime, the staircase connecting Dobson Street and Herron Avenue can be used until the Downing Street stairs are reopened.

The response to these repairs is a great example of communication between various groups, including the Polish Hill Civic Association, Patrick Dowd's office, the City of Pittsburgh and Lawrenceville United. Because Polish Hill residents made the PHCA aware of the deteriorating condition of these frequented staircases, we were able to get action from the City.



*The supports for the steep staircase connecting Downing Street to Herron Avenue is crumbling.*



*Neighbors pitch in on Melwood Ave by shoveling dirt in the new tree beds during the TreeVitalize planting.*

## Getting a Little Greener

On November 15, Polish Hill got a little greener, thanks to the work of 40 volunteers of all ages. It was a chilly, wet day, but the enthusiasm was not dampened.

As many of you may have noticed, our new trees were planted in larger holes to allow better water absorption.

The trees on the Brereton side of Herron Avenue were planted by contractors prior to November 15. Polish Hill was responsible for organizing volunteers and trained tree tenders to plant on the Melwood side of Herron. Catherine McConnell was the Polish Hill organizer to recruit both volunteers and new homes for the trees.

Friends of the Urban Forrest helped by providing the training for the tree tenders. Caitlin Lenahan, Marijke Hecht and Danielle Crumrine were especially helpful. Lisa Ceoffee, the City of Pittsburgh Urban Forrester, helped to select the species of trees to be site specific to prevent any future problems with utility wires, underground gas and water lines. Thank you to everyone for greening Polish Hill.



CATHERINE McCONNELL, CNRS, CNMS  
Salesperson  
(412) 363-4000 EXT 760 BUSINESS  
(412) 363-7551 FAX  
(412) 621-6674 HOME  
(412) 874-3074 CELL  
catherine.mcconnell@pittsburghmoves.com



REAL ESTATE, INC.  
5857 Ellsworth Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15232



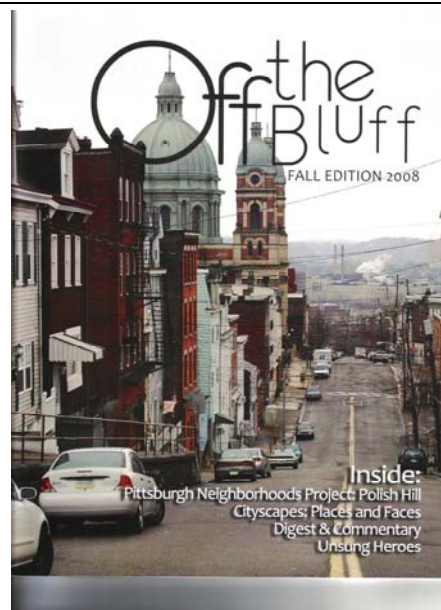
Owned And Operated  
By NRT Incorporated.

www.pittsburghmoves.com

## Off the Bluff and Up the Hill

Polish Hill has seen its fair share of press this year, but nothing as extensive as the dozens of eager interviewers who produced the magazine *Off the Bluff*. Approximately 30 Duquesne University journalism students visited Polish Hill last winter to interview residents of Polish Hill, take photographs and walk through the neighborhood. The previous year, Professor Mike Dillon's class wrote about Uptown. Upon reading the Polish Hill Voice and hearing about some of the developments on Polish Hill, Dillon, Associate Professor of Journalism and Multimedia Arts, asked Terry Doloughty to visit his journalism class and talk about Polish Hill. (How can anyone not like Polish Hill after hearing Terry talk about it?) As a result, Polish Hill's history, but more importantly, its current residents and culture, became the feature story for this glossy publication that was just printed in January. Most of these interviews were conducted in February of last year, so it is interesting to see some of the changes that have already happened here since that time.

Several copies are currently available at the PHCA to borrow and as soon as the electronic version is available, it can be read on the PHCA webpage.



### E-Flea

Clean out your garage while helping a fellow resident. Buy and sell household goods, advertize or find housing, promote your event online and more! The PHCA online classifieds are 100% fee! Just go to the [www.phcapgh.org](http://www.phcapgh.org) website and get started now. You may also call the PHCA office with questions at 412-681-1950.

**TELL EVERYONE IN POLISH HILL ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS**

**HERE!**

**Call (412) 681-1950  
or email [phcapgh@gmail.com](mailto:phcapgh@gmail.com)**



*Let it snow!*

## Polish Hill Voice Editorial and Advertising Timeline

	Advertising Deadline	Editorial Deadline	Publication Date	Months covered
Winter	April 10	April 10	Beginning May	May, June, July

The *Polish Hill Voice* is published quarterly.

Advertisers/Photographers: Acceptable formats include:

- Black & white camera-ready art
- PC-based JPG, TIF or PDF (300 dpi or higher)

Editorial: Contributing writers, artists, poets and historians welcome! Please submit all content to Editor Alexis Miller via email at [phcapgh@gmail.com](mailto:phcapgh@gmail.com) or send to the PHCA office at 3060 Brereton Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15219.

# Resident's Message

Hello Residents, Members and Friends,

We have had our holidays come and go and I hope you all had the opportunity to enjoy the company of family and loved ones. Our times of celebration have given way to the new opportunities of 2009. As we fondly remember the cookies of days gone by, we prepare ourselves to work hard in 2009. Just as 2008 was an active year for Polish Hill and the PHCA, 2009 holds just as much in store for all of us.

We have two new board members at the PHCA. Alexis Miller was elected to the executive board as Secretary. Tom Ogden was elected as a Director of the PHCA. A returning board member, Colleen Helwich, was elected as our Second Vice President/Membership Chair. I would like to thank all the members of the PHCA for their votes and support. I now have the opportunity to serve as President for three more years (don't worry, we have a really good coffee maker at the PHCA). If you see the light on late, it is the PHCA night shift catching up with projects.

This is an exciting time to be on Polish Hill and a part of the PHCA. We have just entered into our 40<sup>th</sup> year of service to our neighborhood. As we reflect on all that the history of our neighborhood and the PHCA has to offer, we now must make plans for the years to come. We hope our efforts make the next 40 years of the PHCA fondly remembered.

In 2008 we met new neighbors and friends, as our community continued to be rediscovered. I encourage all residents of Polish Hill to introduce yourselves to our new neighbors and welcome them. We have a unique neighborhood with a long history. Pass it along, share what you have experienced here. Let our new friends and neighbors know why we love it here. You might remember the family that lived in the home for many years before or the candy store from your youth that is now a home. Share the history of Polish Hill; don't worry, we will make more.

Polish Hill residents will see continued growth in our business district in 2009. Brereton Street is continuing to reinvent itself. In 2008 we had the pleasure of welcoming Tai+Lee Architects and Alfred's Deli back to Polish Hill. They are bringing valuable goods and services to our residents. The continuing renovations on Brereton can easily be seen. One of our landmark buildings, Mostowy's Hardware, has changed hands. We would like to thank Mr. Dymek and his hard working crew of Bogdan's General Construction for taking on the renovation project. Mr. Dymek will be renovating the first floor as a commercial space. If you have been looking for a place to locate your business on Polish Hill, please contact the PHCA and we will pass your contact information to Mr. Dymek.

The Jubilee Kitchen is moving along with remodeling another piece of Polish Hill history, the former site of Jerry's Market. This will be yet another opportunity for a business returning to Polish Hill. The Jubilee Kitchen will be renovating one of the Brereton Street store fronts as a commercial space available for a business to rent. We at the PHCA will of course be

willing to assist and pass along your contact information to facilitate business returning to our neighborhood. We also hope to see our first coffee shop opening in 2009.

At the PHCA we will continue our efforts on behalf of all our residents. We hope to have good plans in the works for 2009: a Polish Hill plan to improve our neighborhood.

Terry Doloughty  
Polish Hill Civic Association President



## Polish Hill Civic Association Community & Event Calendar

February—March—April

**February 3 | 6:30 PM | West Penn Rec Center**

PHCA Membership Meeting

**February 7 | by 6:00 PM | PHCA Office**

Orders are due to PHCA for paczki orders

**February 21 & 22 | 10:00 AM—6:00 PM | PHCA Office**

Pick up of paczkis

**March 3 | 6:30 PM | West Penn Rec Center**

PHCA Membership Meeting

**March 18 | 6:30 PM | PHCA**

Council to Go with Councilman Patrick Dowd

**April 7 | 6:30 PM | West Penn Rec Center**

Get your tasty traditional Polish "donuts"  
**PACZKI!**  
Orders due: Saturday, Feb. 7 at 6:00 pm  
Cost: \$9.99/dozen  
Choices: Raspberry, Lemon, Custard & Plain  
Pick up: February 21 & 22, 10:00 am—6:00 pm  
Contact: Polish Hill Civic Association

# Polish Hill's Art 'n Garden

## I'm Dreaming of a Green Garden

By Terry Doloughty

Winter gardening is not planting your tomatoes in the snow, but it is a great way to make use of time. During the spring and summer months we all wish we had one more hour to each day to get more done. I have had my neighbors wondering why I work in my yard after dark. There is just so much to enjoy and gain from working with your hands in the garden. The time we spend there is an investment that just makes everything in life better.

A wise investment to get a little more enjoyment out of gardening time is time spent winter projects. On those long winter's evenings, garden craft can be fantastically productive. There are always the planters and pots that we intended to repair. The shovel that needs its handle replaced. There is always the rake that just does not work very well, no matter how much duct tape you add to it. The winter's evenings are a time where a good cup of tea goes well with getting your hands dirty. It is time to sharpen your trowels, fix the handle on a favorite 5 gallon, or build a rain barrel.

Any time that you spend planning now will save you hours in your garden's future. It will also prevent you from planting your carrots in the same place you just planted your beans. Ok, that one does come from personal experience. They taste great together but having a little garden map to plant them separately works a lot better, trust me. Take some time to consider the locations of your crops. Rotate the location for each of your plants so the soil does not become depleted of the specific minerals each one requires. Do you prefer square foot gardening or traditional garden rows?

Many of us grow flowers and plants in container gardens; this can be a great way to be creative. Create a mosaic on an old plastic container. Reuse old lumber to make rustic flower boxes, old watering cans make a great display for cascading flowers. What can hold dirt in your yard? How about an old boot with marigolds growing out of it? It will smell better than it ever did. Stretch your imagination on those grey days, visualize your garden and yard before you plant. You can enjoy creating it as much as actually making it happen in your Polish Hill plot of land.



## Garden Mouse

By Terry Doloughty

A mouse in the garden is not a bad thing, as long as it is of the electronic varieties namely WiFicus Blogskius or the related species Keyboardia-Alphanumericus. This is the time of year when your computer can become a valuable gardening tool.

Use the extra time in the winter months that you would otherwise spend doing yard and garden work to prepare for gardening season. The types of seeds and plants we choose will have a direct effect on the quality of our gardening experiences. Utilize information presented on gardening and garden supply web sites and think about the knowledge gained from your own past garden to guide you in making the proper plant and seed choices. Sun exposure, soil quality, plant size, water requirements and harvest time should all be considered when planning your garden's incarnation.

There are garden supply companies that have developed significant and useful web presences over the years. Using online catalogs and web sites of these companies also helps to reduce the paper waste of unwanted printed catalogs. The wide variety of species available to today's gardener is awe inspiring. Like me, you may wish your yard was twice the size you have now, but remember that there is usually room for a hanging basket somewhere.

There has always been an interest in Heirloom varieties of plants and seeds. The historically sturdy and non-genetically modified breeds have long been sought by gardeners. My background in the Polish Hill community garden has shown me the value of using the seeds provided from your own garden. These seeds and plants have survived for ages by being passed over garden **turn to page 9**

## Tribute to Bettie Page

The famous American model, Bettie Page, became famous in the 1950s for her modeling and pin-up photos. In the late 70s and early 80s, Bettie had a revival of popularity that continues to this day. Many people will recognize her image as a popular icon. Bettie passed away on December 11, 2008 at the age of 85.

Polish Hill artist Malcolm Gittins pays tribute to Bettie with this original depiction of Bettie as a dark fairy.





## Ridgeway Street Fire

By Terry Doloughty

Fire is an unwelcome visitor to any neighborhood. We have had more than our share of fires in the past few years on Polish Hill. In November 2007, there was a big blaze on Brereton St, in March 2008, fire hit Dobson St, and then again in December 2008, Ridgeway St had a devastating fire.

We would like to extend our sympathies to Mr. Eugene Wind and his family for the loss of their family home in December.

We also extend our sympathies to everyone displaced from the previous fires in our neighborhood.

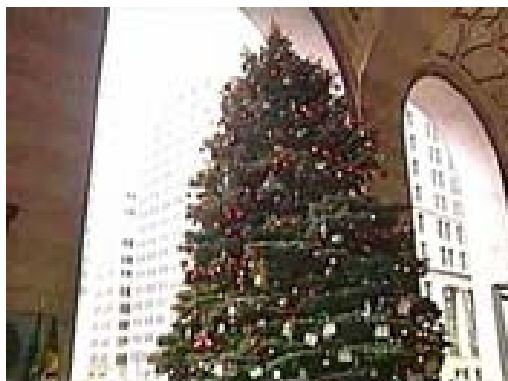
A vacant home adjacent to Mr. Wind's home was the source of the fire. The vacant property was in the process of being remodeled. Multiple homes in the 3300 block of Ridgeway needed to be evacuated. Bigelow Blvd was closed for a time when part of the burning vacant building collapsed. We are very grateful to report there was no loss of life in this fire.



In some ways the loss of Mr. Wind's home seemed an even more unfortunate and ironic fate for someone who had just weeks earlier given a very valuable thing away so all the city could enjoy it. Mr. Wind, an 82-year-old Polish Hill resident, gave a gift to the entire City of Pittsburgh by donating the 36 foot tall Colorado Blue Spruce tree that his family had planted 50 years earlier. He donated it in the memory of his late wife, Ruth. His tree was displayed at the entrance of the City County Building and decorated for the Christmas season. It is an icon that many people recognize and appreciate.

Mr. Wind and his family were present for 2008's Light Up Night and were the guests of Mayor Ravenstahl.

Polish Hill wishes to extend our appreciation to Mr. Wind for making such a heart-felt donation to the City and all its residents. We are sorry for your loss and are touched by your generosity. We wish you and your family a year of good fortune in 2009.



*The Polish Hill tree that was donated by the Wind family stands tall and proud as the City's official Christmas tree.*

## 0% Interest for Home Improvements

You can't get much for free these days, but you can get some good deals without waiting for black Friday to come again. The Urban Redevelopment Authority offers home owners in the City of Pittsburgh a fabulous loan package that leaves no excuse not to fix up your old home. The Pittsburgh Home Rehabilitation Program (PHRP) gives low-income individuals and families the opportunity to borrow up to \$25,000 at 0% interest to help rehab an old home.

The program includes special situations where you may get a grant as well, including repairing or replacing public sidewalks, lead hazard reduction and changes to make a home more accessible for homeowners with disabilities.

The projects must be completed by a URA contractor, but the loan also gives provides a construction advisor to give advice about prioritizing your to do list and making sure that the contractor you hire does a quality job.

At this time of year when you're already digging out your W-2 and completing your 1040, a lot of the paperwork required to apply for the URA for this and other home improvement loans can be found on the same documents as the ones you need for your taxes.

Whether you realize it or not, several of our neighbors in Polish Hill have taken advantage of this program and done wonderful things with their house. Call the URA at 412-255-6666 and ask for a PHRP loan application.

## Online Resources for Gardeners

**cont'd from page 8** fences, transplanted into vacant lots and shared with good friends. These traditional plants and seeds have been abundant producers of quality fruits and vegetables.

There are web sites that will now let us trade seeds and seek plant species with a long pedigree of success in the garden. Heirloom Veggie Seeds has a site, cheapveggieseeds.com. This is a good site to start exploring heirlooms. Seedrack.com is another site with a wide variety of seeds to explore.

Some of the garden web resources offer unusual, exotic and as of yet unseen species. There are always new hybrids coming onto the market. Some of these are disease and drought resistant, which can help to reduce the maintenance time in gardens.

Here are some more long lived garden supply companies that have successfully migrated to the web: Burpee at [www.burpee.com](http://www.burpee.com), Gurney at [gurneys.com](http://gurneys.com), and Jungs at [www.jungseed.com](http://www.jungseed.com) have been my favorite sites to use.

Pittsburgh has good resources to offer as well. Take a moment to visit [www.growpittsburgh.org](http://www.growpittsburgh.org). Grow Pittsburgh also offers a variety of links to gardening events and supplies. The Urban Gardener is also worth a look at [www.urbangardenerpgh.com](http://www.urbangardenerpgh.com). They specialize in plants and materials to aid the urban gardener.

There you have it fellow Polish Hill gardeners, grab a computer and plow into the gray to find all the green you can. Find a new idea to plant, an inspiration to train on the vine until we can get out into the sun again.



## From the Office of Mayor Luke Ravenstahl

Dear Neighbor,

As we begin a new year, we are continuing to put our residents and our neighborhoods first. In response to the many resident public safety concerns that came into my office, we worked to create and implement a new Rental Registration Ordinance and Disruptive Property Ordinance.

The City of Pittsburgh has over 62,000 rental properties. The Rental Registration Ordinance is designed to keep rental properties from falling into decay and causing blight in our neighborhoods. Landlords must register rental properties before renting or leasing units in the City. Landlords have until April 1, 2009 to register or they may face a fine of up to \$1,000. The Registry will ensure that we know who our City landlords are, and that they maintain and correct any violations against their rental property. To register a rental property, please contact the Bureau of Building Inspection (BBI) at 412-255-RENT.

Adding an additional layer of enforcement to protect our residents against neighbors that are engaging in disruptive activities, the new Disruptive Property Ordinance holds both the residents and owners of rental properties and owner-occupied housing accountable. The City's Department of Information Systems created the technology in-house to integrate data from the Bureau of Building Inspection, Police and Animal Control in order to flag disruptive properties. Property owners are now subject to a fine if their properties are cited as disruptive three or more times in a 60 day period. To learn more about the Disruptive Property Ordinance, please contact BBI at 412.255.2175.

You can play a critical role in both of these processes. It was a citizen complaint driven investigation that resulted in the Director of Public Safety, Michael Huss, and the Nuisance Bar Task Force to temporarily shut down a bar in the South Side in November. While the bar has since proven to be in compliance with code and re-opened, the Police will continue to keep a close watch. Please report any nuisance bar activity to the Bureau of Police Vice Unit at 412.323.7761.

While the City has also hired a quality of life attorney and a disruptive property administrator to provide the legal and administrative support to ensure the success of this ordinance, we are unable to knock on every door to find out if it is a rental unit. Please continue to call 9-1-1 to report neighborhood criminal activity and 311 for building and maintenance violations. Let's continue to work together to improve our neighborhoods!

Please contact my Department of Neighborhood Initiatives for more information on these and other initiatives at 412.255.8680.

Happy New Year!

## News from City Legislators

Dear Polish Hill Residents,

I heard from many of you at Council to Go, through 311, and in calls to my office that you are concerned about the state of Polish Hill's steps and stairways. Right now, the Downing Street steps are closed due to unsafe conditions. City crews started to work on them in early January, though we will have to wait until the weather warms to do some of the important concrete repairs.

Steps are vital to Polish Hill, and I will continue to advocate for better maintenance of our pedestrian infrastructure. Last August, Mayor Ravenstahl and I announced a set of initiatives to increase cycling and walking in the City of Pittsburgh, and maintenance is a crucial component. One of the great things about living in Polish Hill is your proximity to other terrific neighborhoods like the Strip District, Lawrenceville, and Bloomfield. We want to make sure you can get there comfortably and safely, no matter how you travel.

I encourage you to come to our next Council to Go in Polish Hill to share your concerns, ideas, or just to get an update on the repair projects already underway. My staff and I will be back at the Polish Hill Civic Association on Wednesday, January 21 at 6:30 p.m. We hope to see you then!

Sincerely,  
Patrick Dowd  
Member of Council

In December, Representative Don Walko's bill to remedy blighted property was signed into law. The new law (Act 135 of 2008) sets up a process to allow neighborhood groups or others to petition the court to appoint a conservator to attend to a blighted property when the owners can't or won't do it. The takeover process can be applied to residential, commercial or industrial eyesores.

The conservator is tasked with restoring the property to productive use and bringing it into compliance with municipal codes. The conservator could place a lien on the property to cover the cost the conservatorship and sell the property after six months if the owner has not successfully petitioned to end the takeover. Rep. Walko has been working for more than 10 years to give communities another tool to use in tackling blighted property. It was finally successful this year and was signed into law by Gov. Ed Rendell.

"Even one abandoned or blighted property can drag down an entire block or neighborhood. I am happy our communities have this new tool to combat blight," Rep. Walko responded regarding the bill. You may contact him at (412) 321-5523.



# Despite Frigid Temperatures, Light Up Night Attracts a Crowd

Even subfreezing temperatures didn't keep people away from Polish Hill's long held tradition of the annual Light Up Night on December 5. The night started outside with holiday songs by the Immaculate Heart of Mary choir and the lighting of the Christmas tree on the corner of Dobson Street and Brereton Street. The party then continued inside with holiday cookies, gifts for the children and visits with Santa Claus (who was particularly well loved this year—thanks Santa Steve!). The generosity of our neighbors was overwhelming this year as well. There were 55 gifts donated for the children and 35 gifts were given out. The remainder will be saved to get us started for next year.



*The line to visit Santa went out the door of the Polish Hill Civic Association on Light Up Night.*



*Santa enjoyed meeting a lot of Polish Hill's children at Light Up Night.*

## Council to Go in Polish Hill Polish Hill Civic Association 3060 Brereton St.

**Wednesday, March 18, 6:30 pm**

City Council is in session on Polish Hill. Council to Go is the mobile district office for Patrick Dowd of City Council. Council District 7 staff will be available to hear your concerns, offer avenues of support, and respond to questions about city services. Future dates for Council to Go will be the third Wednesday of every other month starting January 2009 (March, May, July, etc). For more information and the full schedule of sessions across the district, visit [www.city.pittsburgh.pa.us/district7](http://www.city.pittsburgh.pa.us/district7)

### PHCA Membership Application 2009 (only \$5.00)

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

(Street Address) \_\_\_\_\_ (City) \_\_\_\_\_ (State) \_\_\_\_\_ (ZIP) \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ REGULAR MEMBER (Polish Hill residents only) Or \_\_\_\_\_ SUBSCRIPTION MEMBER (Non-residents; entitled to newsletter only)

\_\_\_\_\_ New Member Or \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal

For office use only:

REC'D BY: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ GOT CARD? \_\_\_\_\_ LOGGED? \_\_\_\_\_

FREE NOTARY SERVICE (with proof of current paid membership)

FREE subscription

Free classified listings at [www.phcapgh.org](http://www.phcapgh.org)

Help build the neighborhood that you want to live in

DISCOUNTED CAR RENTAL through Enterprise Rent-A-Car

A VOICE on community issues

A chance to make a DIFFERENCE

Clip and return above membership application to:  
Jim Stawski, 2nd Vice President & Membership Chair  
PHCA, 3060 Brereton Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15219

POLISH HILL VOICE

3060 Brereton Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Phone: 412-681-1950  
E-mail: [phcapgh@gmail.com](mailto:phcapgh@gmail.com)  
[www.phcapgh.org](http://www.phcapgh.org)  
[blogski.phcapgh.org](http://blogski.phcapgh.org)

The Polish Hill Voice is  
underwritten by PNC.

Photos contributed by:  
Terry Doloughy  
Staffski

Edited by  
Alexis Miller

*The PHCA's mission is to: 1.) Serve as a referral resource for the residents of Polish Hill by accurately responding to questions, comments and concerns on topics such as housing, safety, beautification, and public image; 2.) Participate in initiatives to provide decent single-family housing that is affordable to low and moderate income persons, including the rehabilitation of existing properties as owner-occupied and support for prospective developers of such properties; 3.) Promote the beautification of the Polish Hill neighborhood, the viability of the community and the health, well-being and safety of the residents. Through its membership, the PHCA solicits resident input and follows a democratic process to take action on all matters affecting the welfare of the community.*

## **Upcoming PHCA Membership Meetings:**

**PHCA Membership Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. Meetings are held at the West Penn Recreation Center, 470 30TH @ Paulowna Street**

**February 3**

**March 3**

**April 7**