Hit Hard by Reassessments?

Collecting documentation to file an effective appeal

By Leslie Clague with assistance from Myra Falisz and Catherine McConnell
Photo-collages of Brereton Street by Yoko Tai, with images from Google Maps

At the end of December, reassessment notices went out to Pittsburgh and Mount Oliver property owners. A collective howl of dismay went up around Polish Hill, where some residents are reporting increases as high as 200 to 400 percent.

Now, this isn't reason to panic. We don't really know what impact these assessments will have on our tax bills until the millage rate is established once all the assessments are done. Because there can't be more than a 5 percent increase in tax-revenue windfall, the millage rate (the factor used to calculate the actual tax bill) will likely go down.

As Chris Potter explained in the January 4 issue of Pittsburgh City Paper, "When a reassessment takes place, state law requires governments to offset increases in property values with a decrease in tax rates. So as long as your property's value grew by less than the city average you'll pay less in taxes once the rate is recalibrated later this month."

In his article on January 12, Mark Belko of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette wrote, "Under state law, the city and the Pittsburgh school district must lower their millage rates to prevent revenue windfalls from the reassessment. Overall, residential and commercial values in the city have increased about 58 percent, meaning anyone whose assessment has jumped less than that likely will be in line for a tax decrease."

The judge has since ruled that the new reassessment figures won't be used until 2013. But the reassessment figures will come into play eventually, so property owners who feel their reassessment was too high still should appeal. There are two ways to do this: an informal hearing or a formal appeal.

An informal hearing is a one-on-one meeting with a representative of the Office of Property Assessments who will review information on the value of your property. You may bring pictures and written documentation supporting a change in assessment, as well as provide corrections to your property characteristics that may have an effect on your value. If you wish to request an informal hearing of your property for the 2013 court-ordered reassessed value, you may do so online at http://apps.alleghenycounty.us/InformalReviews/ or by calling the office at 412-350-4600. You will need your parcel ID number when scheduling. All requests for informal hearings must be made by February 15, 2012.

The City is recommending that property owners apply for both the informal and formal hearings. If you are satisfied with the results of your informal hearing, simply withdraw your application for the formal hearing by sending a letter to the assessment office. If you aren’t happy with the judgement from the informal hearing, proceed with the formal appeal. The deadline to apply for the formal appeal has been extended to April 2, and it’s easy to file. Just fill out a 2012 Assessment Appeal Form (you can find it online at http://www.alleghenycounty.us/opa/2012CurrentBaseYearValue.pdf, or pick up a copy at the
From Our Readers

The email updates and the Polish Hill Voice are a treasure. Though it has been close to 70 years since leaving there, the "Hill" is still strong in my thoughts. Really miss those "bygone days" of sled-riding on the slopes and in the streets, as with the steel roller skating as well. Oh, for the good ole days!!!

We wish you much success in the redevelopment of the neighborhood and offer our prayers for its success. Best wishes for a Blessed and Merry Christmas to all.

Thank you,
Frank Harnett
Las Vegas, Nevada

I'm glad the "Dinky School" I sent you is a help for the lady that needs it for a reunion. See, how much good your work produces.

Another tidbit: The picture of "Dinky School" you sent to St. Augustines, Florida to my friend Dorothy Kozlowski provoked her as she gets mad when I call it "Dinky School." She says it's Penn School. The reunion lady should get a note to Dorothy as she attended there.

Flo -- Pinky -- Kaczynski

President's Message

By Terry Doloughty

An unending supply of projects, both short-term and long-term, keep the PHCA busy. Some projects take years to complete. Initiating something that has not existed before, or changing a long-term pattern of thought on a subject, is very time consuming. Some projects you think can be completed in a month are still in the works a few years later. Such is the life of a creative community group. This is when stubbornness and an abundance of patience serve us well.

2012 starts off as a big year for the PHCA. This little community group has evolved and grown during the last few years. Creating the strategic plan has been one of the largest and most complex processes we have undertaken. Thanks to all the volunteers who gave up time and dedicated their skills to make our plan a truly inspired vision for our community's future. Hopefully we can set an example and inspire other communities to try some of our ideas.

On a personal note, the membership has given me the opportunity to serve as president for one more three-year term. I am grateful for that opportunity and will do my best to keep Polish Hill on a good path of improvement. When I reflect on the challenges and opportunities, being the president of the PHCA is simultaneously exhausting and thrilling. The education this has given me is incredible. I am not sure if there is any university experience that could have offered as much. Polish Hill is my volunteer effort. This is perhaps a bit of a selfish act, because I live here too and benefit from our works.

I see leaders emerging who will take up the challenges and form the future of Polish Hill -- volunteers who have the skills, patience and passion to get the job done. These volunteers will be called upon in the coming years to help make the plan a reality. This living, breathing community is always in some form of change, and that is the way it should be. Implementing this plan will ensure that Polish Hill is a great place to live long into the future. We are looking at some history ready to unfold. Take note, and take part in it. You will be able to say you were here and made a difference.

Have you renewed?

Only current PHCA members receive the Voice in the mail. If you wish to continue receiving this newsletter, renew your membership at the PHCA office or mail in the form on page 11.

Are you online? Please check out

BLOGSKI

Polish Hill's online bulletin board

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: http://blogski.phcapgh.org/
News and Announcements

Nominating Committee Report on the results of the 2011 PHCA Board Election

By Janice Heagy

There are three basic requirements to be eligible for a PHCA board nomination. A nominee must:
— Be a Polish Hill resident
— Be a current paid member of the PHCA for the current year
— Have attended at least four monthly community meetings in the last 12 months.

Taking these requirements into consideration, the nomination ballots were prepared by PHCA staff and mailed to our current members. After the nomination ballots were returned to the PHCA, The Nominating Committee (Janice Heagy, Debra Jozwiak and Tom Ogden) determined that 15 residents/members, out of 126 paid members as of October 2011, were eligible for nomination.

The Nominating Committee then made a list of those eligible nominees according to the positions for which they were nominated and proceeded to telephone each one to see if they were interested in running for the respective positions of president, vice president, VP membership, secretary and two board positions. Out of four eligible nominees, only one was interested in running for president: Terry Doloughty.

Out of nine eligible nominees, only one was interested in running for vice president: Alexis Miller.

Out of four eligible nominees, only one was interested in running for vice president, membership chair: Myra Falisz.

Out of three eligible nominees, no one was interested in running for the position of secretary.

Out of five nominees, only two were interested in running for the two board positions: Tom Ogden and Josiah Parkinson.

A summary of this report was presented to the PHCA members at the community meeting on November 1, 2011. It was agreed by the members at that meeting, since all positions were running unopposed in a field of qualified nominees, we would spare the PHCA the expense of sending out voting ballots. Therefore, all positions are now filled, with the exception of secretary, for which a special election will be held next year, or the board may name a qualified member to fill that position for one year until the next official election.

New Monument Committee Debuts with Winter Decor

The new monument committee presented its first effort in November. The committee, consisting of Janice Heagy, Deb Jozwiak, Rose Hudson, Valerie Testa and Najeeb Khouri, decided on a winter theme in blue and silver for the tree, since the decorations would stay up through the winter months. More holiday-specific decorations at the monument area included lit trees and deer figures donated by Michele Wanek, sister of PHCA board member Myra Falisz. Terry Doloughty, Tom Ogden, Doug Ramsey and Tom Hendrickson helped committee members install the decorations, and Jaime Tully helped with the electrical supply.

The neighborhood’s central intersection of Brereton and Dobson streets looked very festive this holiday season, with lights at the rectory, the PHCA, Sarney’s and the monument. The monument committee will take down the winter decorations at the end of February. They are seeking volunteers to assist -- contact the PHCA if you would like to help.

Community gardens

Starting on March 15 the PHCA will begin accepting applications for plots in the Wiggins Street or Harmar Street community gardens.

Spaces are limited. Applicants must be Polish Hill residents. If accepted, there will be a $10 fee to help cover maintenance and materials. Contact the PHCA by phone (412.681.1950) or email (phcapgh@gmail.com) to apply.

Community & Event Calendar

February/March/April

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<tr>
<td>Feb 7</td>
<td>PHCA Monthly Community Meeting</td>
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<td>Feb 22</td>
<td>Fish Fry Dinner</td>
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<td>Mar 6</td>
<td>PHCA Monthly Community Meeting</td>
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<td>Mar 11</td>
<td>Tree pruning workshop with Tree Pittsburgh</td>
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<td>Mar 14</td>
<td>Council-to-Go with Councilman Patrick Dowd</td>
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<td>Apr 3</td>
<td>PHCA Monthly Community Meeting</td>
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<td>Apr 7</td>
<td>Easter Egg Hunt</td>
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<td>Apr 21</td>
<td>Redd Up Neighborhood Clean-up</td>
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Community gardens
Two house fires in December

**Sometimes Polish Hill** is a little too exciting. Case in point: two fires occurred within the space of one week. On December 14, a one-hundred-year old apartment building at the end of Bethoven Street, right next to the Bloomfield Bridge, caught fire. All the tenants escaped without injury, but most of them lost everything, and one lost a beloved pet. Reports indicate that the fire was started by improperly extinguished cigarettes that were tossed into a bucket of butts on a porch. The building, which is owned by Wylie Holdings, is now uninhabitable.

Three days later, on December 17, the home of Lucille Zolkoski, 3550 Cargill Street, caught fire and quickly burned to the ground. Lucille escaped safely, but one lost a beloved pet. Residents loved the idea of a park on the hillside overlooking the strike site. A perfect location is the narrow strip of land along Brereton Street between 30th Street and the bridge. It was agreed that Roundhouse Park should be established on this site.

The only challenges: the property is currently owned by the Port Authority of Allegheny County and there are three unsightly billboards on the land. Almost 150 residents signed a petition to support the creation of a park. The next step is to gain control of the property. This is the point at which we have been stalled for more than a year.

We are still waiting for the Greenway to be approved. Once Polish Hill’s portion of the Greenway is approved, the stage is already set for the City to acquire the property from the Port Authority.

Residents are still very interested in seeing this park become a reality, and often ask us what progress has been made. Although the reply is, “Not much recently,” rest assured, the PHCA is very committed to this idea. It’s taken a lot longer than we expected to move forward, but we have not forgotten.

Above: Firemen were unable to save the Cargill home, but did manage to prevent the fire from spreading to the house next door. (Photo by Leslie Clague for the PHCA)

Update on Roundhouse Park

**At a community** meeting in the spring of 2010, George Waksunski brought forth a great idea: a proposal to establish a park to commemorate the workers and the Great Railroad Strike of 1877. Our neighborhood is directly above the site of the Pittsburgh strikes, during which the Pennsylvania Railroad roundhouse, located at the 28th Street Bridge, was burned.

George’s suggestion struck a chord with many residents, old and new. The Railroad Strike was a seminal event in labor history, but the only marker is a small sign on a tiny traffic island at the base of the 28th Street Bridge.

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Continued on page 9
The PHCA and Allegheny Cleanways Partner to Clean Illegal Dumping Sites

By Sarah Koenig

Volunteers gathered with Allegheny Cleanways and the PHCA for two events late last year to remove nearly seven tons of trash from neighborhood hillsides and roadways. More than 180 tires and 2,800 pounds of scrap metal were among the removed debris. Volunteer attendance was exceptional during both events. We look forward to holding additional clean-ups this year.

The first event took place on November 5 and focused mainly on the Gold Way stretch to Oakland, beyond the Bloomfield Bridge. The hope of a more attractive gateway to our neighborhood was the inspiration for the event. Effort was split between cleaning the roadside and removing large items from illegal dumping sites along the hillsides. The removed garbage included 128 tires, 15 bags of recyclables, fast-food trash and a ‘No Dumping’ sign.

The second effort took place on December 10 and focused on several illegal dumpsites along lower Melwood. Despite freezing temperatures and challenging work conditions, the volunteer turnout was even stronger, with nearly 30 people in attendance. The dumps contained items that appeared to span many decades. The removed garbage included a ton of scrap metal, 58 tires, full bags of concrete, a car windshield and a conch shell.

Our neighborhood’s collaboration with Allegheny CleanWays illustrates the success of its mission to "engage and empower people to eliminate illegal dumping and littering in Allegheny County." Our combined efforts resulted in an immediate improvement to our environment and quality of life, and hopefully will discourage people from future littering or illegal dumping. Please visit www.AlleghenyCleanWays.org for more information on getting involved. Please keep your eye out for more clean-up events in the community.

Sarah Koenig is an environmental scientist and GIS analyst who moved to Polish Hill in July 2011. Sarah took the initiative to organize these two cleanups after noticing these illegal dumping sites during her daily commute.

Special thanks to all who volunteered and Allegheny CleanWays for making both events a success!
From 1957, a look back in time

Excerpts from The History of My Neighborhood, a high school theme paper written by Toni Wojciak

In 1957, Antoinette Wojciak, then a senior in high school, wrote a theme paper titled "The History of My Neighborhood." Her older sister Teresa helped her do the research; Toni even went Downtown to City offices to get information. The essay covered the early history of the area and compared the neighborhood's streets, buildings and population of the mid 1950s to those of previous decades.

In the essay, the neighborhood is referred to as "Polish Hill," in quotations. That is because at this time, the official name of the neighborhood was Herron Hill, and often referred to by residents simply as "the Hill." Polish Hill didn’t become the official name of the neighborhood until the early 1960s. Many older residents, and those whose families have been here for generations, still refer to the neighborhood as "the Hill."

The area in which I live, Herron Hill, in the section known as "Polish Hill," has had many significant changes during its development. Many street names have changed during the development of "Polish Hill." Herron Avenue and Herron Hill are named for the prominent political leader, John Herron.

At one time this section was called Minersville because of the many and good mines located here. The Excelsior Line was the best known mine line. The wagoneers brought down close to two hundred loads of coal from the mine on the top of the hill and sold it to the house holders. Herron Avenue was once known as Miners Street because of the coal mines located at the top of the street.

A definite nomenclature cannot be found for this section of the city, known as "Polish Hill," but after a study of the city records it seems that the only correct one is Herron Hill. At some time, however, this section was divided into three sections: Brereton Avenue, the area west of Bigelow Boulevard and Herron Avenue; Melwood or Milwood, the area to the east of Bigelow Boulevard and Herron Avenue; Ridgeway, the area to the south of Bigelow Boulevard.

Of these three areas, Melwood is the most historic. This area, as others in Pennsylvania, was named by William Penn. Records show that he named this area Milwood, but today it is known as Melwood. Many oldsters in this area recall the name Fleetwood that has many times been given to Melwood Street.

The Dennys and Dicksons owned a large part of this area. One of the streets was called Dickson Street, but presently it is known as Dobson Street, named for General Dobson. Harmar Denny and Josiah Harmar both claimed that Harmar Street was named for them. Harmar Denny was a prominent citizen in political, social and religious affairs. General Harmar led an ill-fated expedition against the Indians.

Bellefield Street on the eastern boundary of "Polish Hill" was changed to Blessing Street. Grant Boulevard was a thin path along the side of the hill. It is presently known as Bigelow Boulevard, named for General Bigelow.

Map of the western section of Polish Hill (then called Herron Hill), from 1914. This map was produced by the G.M. Hopkins Company for the City of Pittsburgh. From the Historic Pittsburgh Archive, in the collection of the University of Pittsburgh.
Finland Street was once known as Jefferson Street and at that time connected Melwood and Brereton Streets. Paulowna Street was known as Preble Street and named for the Preble sisters who once lived there.

Phelan Way is named after the Bishop Phelan who was bishop of the Pittsburgh Diocese when the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church was built. Pulawski Street was named after General Pulawski who fought in the American Revolution. Many people think Bethoven Street was named for the famous composer.

The streets were not as low as they are today. They were about ten feet higher than they are now. Although many of the street names have changed during the development of "Polish Hill," the cobbled stones on these streets are the same original ones.

Sub Plan detail (from the upper left corner of the map below)
Continued from page 7

Thirtieth Street, the street on which I live, was called Smith Way. Tracks from the coal mines to the steel mills ran along this dirt street. Thirtieth Street was paved shortly after my family moved on this street about 25 years ago. My neighbors Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Lewandowski said that before Thirtieth Street was paved in 1931, there was a little hill in the middle of the street. A pair of steps was on this hill and many people would fall down these steps because there were no lights on the street in those days. In the evening around eight-thirty it would be pitch dark.

Behind my home, just below Bigelow Boulevard, is what was once the shortest street on the hill, Mingo Street. All that remains now is just a dirt path and it no longer is a street. Originally there were two homes on the street, now only one home remains.

Mrs. Lewandowski remembers coming to live on the hill when she was eight years old, about sixty-five years ago. She said that there were only a few houses on the hill and that my home was one of them. Most of the homes on the hill were built by a Polish contractor, Mr. Ratajewski. Many neighbors would get together to build a home of a friend.

There was a large stream that came down from Ridgeway Street to Brereton Avenue and Harmar Street. When people bought homes on Brereton Avenue they said this stream kept on coming into their cellars and was breaking the foundations. A few men got together and made a crock for the stream to go into. Many people claim this stream is still under the homes.

When Mr. Lewandowski just moved here there were no grocery stores on the hill. Mr. Lewandowski remembers he had to go down to Twenty-eighth Street to the grocery store for his family. As the years passed a few grocery stores opened on the hill. One was located on Wiggins Street and was owned by Mr. Jarzynka. Mr. Lewandowski got up at five o’clock in the morning to go to the store because by six o’clock there wasn’t any food left. One morning Mr. Jarzynka, who owned the store, was found dead. It is believed he was shot in an attempted robbery.

The streets were made of dirt and when it rained it became very muddy. Before Immaculate Heart of Mary Church was opened, the people had to walk down the muddy streets to Saint Stanislaus Church. The mud would be up to the top of their high shoes and boots. At the bridge they would take off their muddy shoes and boots, and clean them in a stream that came down the hill from the Tuberculosis Hospital. Only a few people on "Polish Hill" owned a horse and wagon. If the horse and wagon got stuck in the muddy streets it would take several men to pull them out.

A large brick factory was located on the hill and some of the bricks made here were used to build the White House. Today "Polish Hill" has no industries such as the brick factories and the coal mines. Only a few of the mansions remain and they are in a very poor condition. Many of the mansions and estates are today replaced by large three story homes. Certainly today there are more stores than when Mr. Lewandowski moved here. On Brereton Avenue, there are many grocery stores, a drug store, a dry goods store, a candy store and even a furniture store. Today the dirt streets are covered with cobble stones and some even paved with asphalt.

The horse and wagons have been replaced by Fords and Chevrolets. "Polish Hill" is still the highest point in Allegheny County, but generally its overall appearance has changed for better living conditions during its development.

30th Street and Phelan Way in 1908.

Photo from the Historic Pittsburgh Image Archive.

URA home improvement loan products help low and moderate income homeowners rehabilitate or renovate their property.

(You must live in the home to qualify)

Pittsburgh Home Rehabilitation Loan Program (0% interest)

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Check the URA website www.ura.org
for loan programs and income guidelines
To look up a specific property, just enter the street name and the house number. To look through a list of all the properties on a street, enter just the street name. Your goal is to find three properties that have been sold within the last two years and are close to your property in size and condition. For each, print out the information page, the second page with property condition, and the page with the photo. That’s three sheets for each comp; make three copies of each. You will need to leave the paper documentation with the officers at your hearing. The county website does provide comps, but it’s much better to choose your own; you will do a better job of identifying properties that have things in common with yours.

If there are reasons why your property is worth less than comparable properties, you’ll need to prove it and provide documentation. Maybe your house hasn’t been renovated in 25 years, the roof leaks, it needs new windows or a furnace. Take pictures of all conditions that would reduce the value. Other good forms of documentation are receipts for repairs or estimates from contractors. If your house has been appraised by a licensed professional in the past couple of years, take that document.

District 7 Councilman Patrick Dowd’s office has been keeping track of properties sold recently and is compiling a list of recent sale prices. Seniors and others without internet access can call them at 412.255.2140 for help in finding comps. The office will then mail copies of the information gathered.

The PHCA office also can provide limited assistance. And as we go to press, the Mayor’s office is in the process of asking City Council to approve help for homeowners by having the City pay for part of the cost of getting an appraisal. The plan includes counseling and legal help. More information can be obtained online at www.pittsburghpa.gov/mayor/appealassistent.

The work involved in appealing your property-tax reassessment may sound daunting. But if you believe your home was assessed much higher than its current-market value, the potential tax savings might be worth the effort.

Ultimately, this is a decision each property owner must make individually. These issues are changing nearly every day; residents might want to call or check in with the PHCA and/or their councilman’s office to find out what the latest proposals are.

Looking Forward to Planting and Gardening

by Valerie Testa

It's January. I'm cold and cantankerous. My couch is well occupied and the cupboards have been getting their fair share of attention too. Although it's been a mild winter, the first sign of snow and cold temperatures engage my attitude into a hibernation/comfort mode. There is a saying that goes along the lines of "There is no such thing as bad weather, only inappropriate clothing." I keep this in mind when friends want to go for a bike ride around the city and my first reaction is not a response so much as a whine. And yet, the time goes so quickly!

In the next several days I’m expecting seed catalogs and the thoughtfully purchased Christmas present of an organic gardening magazine. Gardening hasn’t been something I’ve done for very long. This will be the my fourth year at it, and my second of writing down lessons learned from years past.

Most of the things I’ve learned have been based on my own reluctance at overcrowding the garden. Every year I eke out a few more plants in a small space and learn more about successive gardening. You can always pull or transplant something, but you can’t make it grow if you never plant it! Once the ground can be worked, chances are, growing things will be all that I want to talk about. It seems that everyone has some piece of knowledge to share, or at the very least, an opinion.

The slow steadiness of the winter’s rhythm enables me to consider where to plant things this spring. My reluctance is turning into a sort of brash "go big or go home" excitement. Our shady little brick backyard won’t know what hit it. There is no sure sign of warm times ahead than a planting of annual favorites or the tunneling of cool vegetable crop seeds into the ground. Spring fever in Polish Hill is a beautiful thing.

With that being said, there will be quite a few opportunities around the bend to help spring clean the neighborhood. The Western PA Conservancy sponsors a flower garden on the corner of 30th and Breerton every year. The planting date is yet to be determined, but it’ll be sometime in the beginning of May. Many hands make light work, and who doesn’t like flowers? Crazy people, that’s, who. Or maybe people with allergies. Also, there’ll be a neighborhood cleanup in April. If you’d like to help out with these, or any other of the many spruce up events that will be happening, contact the PHCA at 412.681.1950, or phcapgh@gmail.com and ask to added to the contact list.
Garden Projects for the Winter Months

by Terry Doloughty

While snow and cold have their time in the garden, take advantage of the free time they provide. It may seem strange to consider that cold weather gives us an opportunity for garden projects. During the warm months when every day is filled to the limit with projects and chores, there are tasks which get put off till "someday." Well, "someday" is every day in the winter. I am as guilty as anyone for having a long list of projects that I didn't complete while the weather was ever so enjoyable. Now I have the time to get ahead of the season yet to arrive. An extra light or two in the workshop, a good music selection and a few hours will yield a harvest of garden projects that will help you all year. Here are some of the things on my list.

Sharpening

Nothing makes work go easier than a tool in good working order. I just cleared a spot on my work bench and started to clean, oil and sharpen my pruners, loppers and garden shears. Months from now when I pick them up, they are ready to go, which will save a lot of time, and I won't have to force the tool to do its job. Plus, it's just safer working with a sharp tool rather than a dull one. Remember to sharpen your shovels, hoes and mattocks. They will cut through the soil so much easier, saving your back and getting the job done much faster. This makes the hard work of gardening seem less like a chore. Having your tilling gear sharp also cuts the weed roots and other materials in the soil, creating raw materials for good compost. And remember to inspect your small hand tools, which are used just as much as the big soil-moving tools. With some care and sharpening, they will last longer, making your work easier.

Handles

I have a pile of broken shovels, rakes, pitch forks and hoes. You can repair these and change them up a little as they wear out. By filing off old rivets and knocking out the rotten bits of wood from the sockets, you can really make a tool your own. Sometimes shovel handles are still in good shape -- they just broke off at the joint where steel meets ash or oak. I can spend a little time with a spoke shave, chisel and knife to make the handle fit the tool socket again. The shovel might be a little shorter, but it will work just fine. Other than me and a cup of tea, it was free. Depending on how you use a tool, perhaps a creating a custom-length handle or extending the handle from another tool, would make your tasks in the garden easier. Consider not just fixing your tools to be what they were before, but making them as useful as possible. If you're like me, your tools end up all over the place, a unique tool stands out, and you can always find yours.

Rustproofing

Water and time do more damage to tools than any gardener. I have some very old tools, but they aren't decorative. A good solid tool that performs its function is timeless and priceless. Find yourself a huge can of olive oil. You can use it for more than pan searing your kale. Using a laundry tray, or a big old bucket, soak the mud and dirt off. Use an old scrub brush to get the big bits of debris off, and wash the handle down. Dirt left on the handle will pull the moisture out of the wood and lessen the lifespan of your tools. Once the tools are clean, let them air dry for a day. Find two old rags, keep one for the handles and one for the metal parts of the tools. Coat the metal of the tools and wipe in the oil until the metal is good and saturated. You will notice that metal will actually absorb the oil. This could get a little messy, so keep some newspapers around for a place to lay freshly oiled tools. Using a much lighter application of olive oil, wipe down the tool handles. This will get into the cracks and the areas where the varnish has worn off. The wood will be nourished and the useable lifespan of the tool will be increased.

Mapping And Planning

Crop rotation is necessary for a good healthy garden. Do you remember where all the different plants were located in your garden this past season? Take a scrap of paper and draw up a little map. This is the time of year to do research online or in seed catalogs to plan out your next crops. Every plant takes in and needs different trace elements and nutrients, which vary between species. This is the core reason for crop rotation -- to keep the soil healthy. Composting over the winter has its challenges, but the nutrients provided to the garden offer good plant nutrition for many seasons as the biomass breaks down and changes. Consider adding a worm compost bin to your kitchen. It is an easy addition, and just becomes part of your routine after a while.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Publication Date</th>
<th>Months Covered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 15</td>
<td>Early May</td>
<td>May/Jun/Jul</td>
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</table>

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.
Polish Hill Civic Association Membership Application 2012

Dues are $5.00. Membership term is by calendar year and expires each December 31. Join now and enjoy the advantages of membership through December 2012!

**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!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REGULAR MEMBER ~ Or ~</th>
<th>SUBSCRIPTION MEMBER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Polish Hill residents)</td>
<td>(Non-residents)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Member ~ Or ~</td>
<td>Renewal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Qty</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Polish Hill t-shirt</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Available in red or black, adult or youth sizes.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Short sleeve $15.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Long sleeve $20.00</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pierogi pins and ornaments $5</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Handmade from felt</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Button .50 ea.</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Falcon on red background, 1½ diameter</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Postcard .50 ea.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>A colorful sunset view of Brereton Street by Mark Knobil</td>
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Make your check out to the Polish Hill Civic Association. Ship to:

<table>
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<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<th>Address</th>
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<tr>
<th>Phone, email</th>
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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:**

**February 7**

**March 6**

**April 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.