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Dear Members, Residents and Friends:

Hello everyone! Well as you can see, I’m back after having a year to explore the other avenues. I was very glad to come back to my first love. Unfortunately, my first year back was very hectic, with health issues being a major draw back, and issues involving the City cut backs and budget cuts being another.

We have been forced to make changes within our organization. But please believe any changes being made are done so with our community’s best interest at heart. One of the major changes was the staffing of our office. Due to the “possibilities” of funding loss due to the City budget situation, as of November 6, after two years of service to the PHCA, Stacey O’Toole has left to take on a new position as a transportation/job analyst. We wish her all the best in her new career venture.

However this situation found us maintaining our office with only Board members as their time permits. After much discussion, it was agreed to hire someone on a part time basis for a few hours a week to handle the most important issues at hand. We knew the only thing left to do was to make the call and hope for a positive response. I am pleased to inform you that Chris O’Shell is back!

Since Chris is still working at Life’sWork full-time, I am sad, however, to say that she is not manning the office on a daily basis. She will be working for us for 10 hours a week, usually on the weekend. We greatly appreciate her dedication to the PHCA and our community. We knew she couldn’t stay away.

Welcome home Chris!

Even though our office is not staffed during the week, please know we are still here to serve your needs. Simply call the office and leave a message at (412) 681-1950. If you see a Board member, you may also give them your concerns. As you know, I am here for you 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Most of you always know where to find me.

As before, we are all here for you, just let us know.

Praying for those who are far away, thankful for those who have come home

In 2003, the PHCA partnered with the Morning-side Veterans of Foreign Wars and Wired Blocks Network to create the Support Our Troops project. The purpose of the project is to display names and pictures of servicemen and women in a prominent place to show community appreciation to those serving in our military, like the display on the front doors of the PHCA office.

At a special ceremony, each group also presented a mother or grandmother with a plaque to recognize the sacrifices that family members endured while their loved one was stationed in Iraq.
For those who fight on distant shore, who give without a word; defending us with honor, so gallantly they serve.

For every boy who leaves his home, returning here a man; and every woman who made a choice, to make serving part of her plan.

For every fallen soldier, who gave all they could give; to guarantee our liberty, and the freedom that we live.

Each one who served with honor, the brave, the tried, the true; America gives thanks today, for we see a hero in

If you have a family member or friend in the Armed Forces whose name or picture you would like to add to the Support Our Troops project, please send it to the PHCA office.
As part of the Support Our Troops project, the PHCA also pays tribute to the brave men and women of September 11, 2001 with a display inside the PHCA office.

Let's Pull Together

It’s times like this when we realize just how precious life is. Let’s cherish every breath and be thankful for the life we live. Let’s no longer take freedom for granted.

Let’s pray for everyone who lost a loved one and give thanks for those who survived. Let’s praise the brave fireman and firewomen, policemen and policewomen, the nurses, the EMTs, and the other everyday heroes who rose to the occasion and helped, some risking their lives and others losing their lives.

Let’s trust and support our President and our government as they redeem our country and defend the freedom that this great nation was founded upon.

Wired Blocks Network Executive Director Mary Jo Bradley said the Support Our Troops project is a successful collaboration between neighborhood organizations.

“In the aftermath of the 9-11 terrorist attacks on America, we realized that our public safety concerns today are more than just crime prevention in our neighborhoods,” she said.

Wired Blocks Network is an online, neighborhood-based crime prevention organization that connects residents and community groups to form a public safety network.

Here’s how it works: a resident with access to a computer serves as the e-mail contact (e-contact) for the neighborhood to receive regular electronic messages or alerts. The e-contact then posts the public safety information on their block for neighbors who are not online. Because everyone receives the same information at the same time, rumors and misinformation are eliminated.

Created in April 2002 with the assistance of the Duquesne University Law Clinic, Wired Blocks Network is a non-profit organization that emerged from a pilot program called Watching and Wired, a crime prevention model aimed at educating and serving concerned citizen community groups.

For more information, please visit the Wired Blocks Network website at:

http://groups.msn.com/wiredblo
“Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night...”

It’s not only the motto of the U.S. Postal Service

The wet weather didn’t deter Santa from showing up right on schedule at the Seventh Annual Polish Hill Light Up Night on December 10. As usual, his much anticipated arrival culminated the festivities, which included the singing of Christmas carols by the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church Choir and the traditional lighting of the tree at the Veteran’s Monument at the corner of Brereton and Dobson Streets. The evening ended with refreshments served in the PHCA office.

Our thanks to the decorating crew of the Monument Committee, Jenny Lee Bakery for their donation of cookies, Mary O’Malley for her donation of pizza from Vocelli’s Pizza and Councilman Leonard Bodack, Jr. for his support of the event.

PHCA Fundraiser Update

The PHCA’s holiday candy sale raised $393.30. Thank you for your support.

TIPS TO AVOID A HOME INVASION

Rule #1: Keep all doors locked whenever possible.
Hide a spare key outside in case of a lock out.

Reminder: copies of Our Best Home Cooking cookbook are still available. At only $8.00 per book, it makes a great gift! Proceeds benefit the PHCA Capital Fund for building renovations.

Rule #2: Always keep window shades closed at night, especially in the kitchen. Believe it or not, most kitchen windows do not have treatments. Exposed windows can tell the criminal element a lot about how vulnerable you are! What they can't see (Continued on page 6)

Training with the City’s Finest:
Citizen’s Police Academy

Each year, the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police sponsors an opportunity for the residents of the community to become acquainted with the police function. The Pittsburgh Citizen’s Police Academy (CPA) draws the police and the community closer together in a setting that brings the sense of police training to each participant.

During the twelve-week academy session, citizen members receive three hours of training one evening each week in many of the varied functions of law enforcement. They experience firsthand some of the highlights of police training and are exposed to the real inside workings of the police bureau. Participants are taught the basics of criminal law, search and seizure, patrol tactics, firearms and many other subjects. They participate in the investigation of a crime scene, experience a traffic stop, and see how police canines are used. Academy members meet and talk with many of the street officers as well as the command staff that serves them. All this takes place in a safe and entertaining training environment.

Instructors are all law enforcement professionals who teach both veteran and recruit police officers. Students come away from this training with a deeper...
With the “extermination” of Environmental Service’s Rodent Control Division last summer, City residents have been put on rat patrol.

While it has always been our responsibility to take preventative measures, extermination assistance is no longer just a phone call away. So as we tighten our belts to survive the City’s financial crisis, we must also work together to roll up our sleeves and get about the business of rodent control.

If you search the internet, you will find that you could spend hundreds of dollars on do-it-yourself products, including Ultrasonic, Ionic and Electromagnetic repellers (such as the patented “Rat Zapper”).

Or you can save yourself a lot of time and money by following these simple common sense tips:

1. Rodents are very resilient creatures, but they cannot survive without food, water and shelter.
   - Be vigilant about cleaning up animal waste, especially when you walk your dog through the neighborhood.
   - Place all trash in a watertight garbage can with a tight-fitting lid, including miscellaneous litter and debris. Be sure to drain and bag your garbage before disposing of it.
   - Keep all drains covered and secure.
   - Eliminate any standing water in your yard.
   - Popular rodent hiding places include junk, lumber, boxes, discarded appliances, and furniture, so eliminate them from your yard.

2. If infestation does occur, baits and poisons are effective. But use extreme caution, especially if you have children or pets.

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**DIYRC: Do It Yourself Rodent Control**

The PHCA would like to congratulate and welcome the 2004 members of City Council:

- **Luke Ravenstahl** (District 1)
- **Alan Hertzberg** (District 2)
- **Gene Ricciardi** (District 3)
- **James Motznik** (District 4)
- **Doug Shields** (District 5)
- **Sala Udin** (District 6)
- **Len Bodack** (District 7)
- **William Peduto** (District 8)
- **Twanda Carlisle** (District 9)

We are looking forward to working with each of you.

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**Tribute to a friend**

On November 24, 2003, the PHCA mourned the loss of Robert T. “Bob” Moffatt. Bob was a long-time inspector for the City of Pittsburgh’s Bureau of Building Inspection, and a friend to many residents of Polish Hill. He will be missed.

The PHCA would like to send our heartfelt sympathy to his family.
“Stop Static” and Refuel Safely with Every Fill-up

The American Petroleum Institute (API) and the Petroleum Equipment Institute (EPI) have joined together to remind motorists how to avoid potential problems with static electricity at the gas pump.

Static electricity may build up when a motorist re-enters the vehicle during fueling. When you return to the vehicle fill pipe during or at the end of refueling, the static may discharge at the fill point, potentially causing a flash fire or a small sustained fire with gasoline refueling vapors.

Static electricity-related fires at retail gasoline outlets are extremely unusual, according to API and PEI, but in rare circumstances, these incidents have caused a few injuries and property damage.

The primary way to avoid static electricity problems at the gas pump is to stay outside the vehicle while refueling. It may be a temptation to get back in the car when it’s cold, or for any number of reasons. But the average fill-up takes only two minutes, and staying outside the vehicle will greatly minimize the likelihood of any build-up of static electricity that could be discharged at the nozzle.

In the rare event that you experience a fire when refueling, leave the nozzle in the fill pipe of your vehicle and back away from the vehicle. Notify the station attendant immediately to shut off all dispensing devices and pumps with emergency controls. If the facility is unattended, use the emergency shutdown button to shut off the pump and use the emergency intercom to summon help. Leaving the pump nozzle in the vehicle will prevent any fire from becoming much more dangerous.

If you cannot avoid getting back into the vehicle during refueling, you should discharge any static away from the fill point upon exiting the car before going back to the pump nozzle. Static may safely be discharged by touching a metal part of the vehicle, such as the vehicle door, or some other metal.

brings reluctance on their part, and they move on.

**Rule #3:** Home alone? Never let it look that way! Use the "camouflage approach" — turn on lights, a radio, the TV — utilize the entire house. A television in a dark room flickers and gives the appearance of more than one person in the room, as viewed from the outside.

**Rule #4:** Be alert every time you drive home (especially women). Criminals have been known to follow a potential victim home after stalking them. They may only want to see

(Continued on page 7)
Winter Preparedness Safety Tips

Experts agree that the following preventative measures can be effective in dealing with the challenges of severe winter weather:

- Store drinking water, first aid kit, canned/no-cook food, non-electric can opener, radio, flashlight and extra batteries where you can get them easily, even in the dark.
- Keep cars and other vehicles fueled and in good repair, with a winter emergency kit in each.
- Know the warning terms for each kind of disaster. For example, a storm watch means a storm is likely, while a storm warning means to take action because the storm is in or entering the area. A weather advisory means that weather conditions are expected to cause significant inconveniences and may be hazardous, especially to motorists.
- Know safe routes from home, work and school.
- Know how to turn off gas, electric power and water before evacuating.
- Winterize your house, detached garage, shed or any other structure that may provide shelter for your family, neighbors, or equipment.

If you think you might want to volunteer in case

Home Invasion (continued)

(Continued from page 5)

where you live, only to return later.

SHOULD THE UNTHINKABLE HAPPEN

Rule #5: Cooperate with the intruder. This will have a calming effect and lessen the chance of being injured. Remember, it’s better to give up your possessions than your life.

Rule #6: Never look the intruder directly in the eyes. By doing so he may feel you will be able to identify him, thus placing your life in danger.

Rule #7: Should you possess more than one gun, hide one in a master bathroom. Intruders often put a family member in this room. It is the least threatening room and the best place to store a weapon.

Rule #8: Have a telephone code among family members and close friends. If the telephone rings during a home invasion, tell the intruder that you are expecting a very important call, and if you don't answer it, the caller will suspect something is wrong and notify your neighbor. Should he allow you to answer and it is someone who knows about the code, get it across in a natural tone and hope your caller dials 9-1-1.
By taking responsibility for your children's online computer use, parents can greatly minimize any potential risks of being online. Make it a family rule to:

Never give out identifying information, such as home address, school name, or phone number in a public message such as chat or bulletin boards. Be sure your teen is dealing with someone that both you and your child know and trust before giving it out via E-mail. Consider using a pseudonym or unlisting your child's name.

Find out what types of information your service provider offers and whether there are ways for parents to block out objectionable material.

Encourage your child to never respond to messages or bulletin board items that are suggestive, obscene, threatening, or make them feel uncomfortable. Forward a copy of such messages to your service provider and ask for their assistance. Should you become aware of the transmission, use, or viewing of child pornography while online, immediately report this to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children by calling 1-800-843-5678 or visiting the CyberTipLine online. You should also notify your online service.

Our country has one of the world's most extensive and dependable telecommunications and broadcast systems, however, unusual conditions can put a strain on them.

The following information will help you to better understand how to use these systems during a crisis or disaster.

There are three main components to emergency communications: 9-1-1 telephone call processing; the Emergency Alert System; and radio and/or broadcast or cable television station news and updates. All of these components must operate effectively in order to achieve a successful response to an emergency.

This article, which is part one of a series that will be continued in

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United for a Stronger America: Citizens’ Preparedness

“On the morning of September 11, 2001, America faced both an indescribable tragedy and an extraordinary challenge.”

This is the first sentence of a message written by Attorney General John Ashcroft that introduces a publication called United for a Stronger America: Citizens’ Preparedness Guide.

Published by the National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC), this 25-page guide provides suggestions for preparedness in our homes, neighborhoods, schools, workplaces, places of worship and public areas.

The booklet is packed with common sense advice that could save your life, such as:

- General emergency planning
- Home and work evacuation procedures
- Safe mail handling
- Preparing your children
- Proper response procedures

The booklet also contains four pages of addresses and telephone numbers for resources from the American Red Cross to the National Sheriffs’ Association.

As Attorney Ashcroft said in his closing statement in the publication, “It is only your

How to Stay Young

Throw out nonessential numbers. This includes age, weight, and height. Let the doctor worry about them. That’s why you pay him/her.

Keep only the cheerful friends. The grouches pull you down.

Keep learning. Learn more about the computer, crafts, gardening, whatever. Never let the brain idle. “An idle mind is the Devil’s workshop.” And the Devil’s name is Alzheimer’s.

Enjoy the simple things.

Laugh often, long and loud. Laugh until you gasp for breath.

The tears happen. Endure, grieve, and move on. The only person who is with us our entire life is ourselves. Be ALIVE while you are alive.

Surround your self with what you love, whether it’s family, pets, keepsakes, music, plants, hobbies, whatever. Your home is your refuge.

Cherish your health: If it is good, preserve it. If it is unstable, improve it. If it is beyond what you can improve, get help.

Don’t take guilt trips. Take a trip to the mall, to the next county, to a foreign country but NOT to where guilt is.

Tell the people you love, that you love them, at ever opportunity.

And always remember:

Life is not measured by the number of
An Open Letter from a Retired Firefighter — Author Unknown

I wish you could know what it is like to search a burning bedroom for trapped children at 3 a.m., flames rolling above your head, your palms and knees burning as you crawl, the floor sagging under your weight as the kitchen below you burns.

I wish you could comprehend a wife’s horror at 6 in the morning as I check her husband of 40 years for a pulse and find none. I start CPR anyway, hoping to bring him back, knowing intuitively it is too late. But wanting his wife and family to know everything possible was done to try to save his life.

I wish you knew the unique smell of burning insulation, the taste of soot-filled mucus, the feeling of intense heat through your turnout gear, the sound of flames crackling, the eeriness of being able to see absolutely nothing in dense smoke-sensations that I’ve become too familiar with.

I wish you could read my mind as I respond to a building fire, “Is this a false alarm or a working fire? How is the building constructed? What hazards await me? Is anyone trapped?” or to call, “What is wrong with the patient? Is it minor or life-threatening? Is the caller really in distress or is he waiting for us with a 2x4 or a gun?”

I wish you could be in the emergency room as a doctor pronounces dead the beautiful five year old girl that I have been trying to save during the past 25 minutes who will never go on her first date or say the words, “I love you Mommy,” again.

I wish you could know the frustration I feel in the cab of the engine, squad, or my personal vehicle, the driver with his foot pressing down hard on the pedal, my arm tugging again and again at the air horn chain, as you fail to yield the right-of-way at an intersection or in traffic. When you need us, however, your first comment upon our arrival will be, “It took you forever to get here!”

I wish you could know my thoughts as I help extricate a girl of teenage years from the remains of her automobile. “What if this way my daughter, sister, my girlfriend or a friend? What were her parents reaction going to be when they opened the door to find a police officer with hat in hand?”

I wish you could know how it feels to walk in the back door and greet my parents and family, not having the heart to tell them that I nearly did not come back from the last call.

I wish you could know how it feels dispatching officers, firefighters and EMTs out and when we call for them and our heart drops because no one answers back or to hear a bone chilling 9-1-1 call of a child or wife needing assistance.

I wish you could feel the hurt as people verbally, and sometimes physically, abuse us or belittle what I do, or as they express their attitudes of, “It will never happen to me.”

I wish you could realize the physical, emotional and mental drain or missed meals, lost sleep and forgone social activities, in addition to all the tragedy my eyes have seen.

I wish you could know the brotherhood and self-satisfaction of helping to save a life or preserving someone’s property, or being able to be there in time of crisis, or creating order from total chaos.

I wish you could understand what it feels like to have a little boy tugging at your arm and asking, “Is Mommy okay?” Not even being able to look in his eyes without tears from your own and not knowing what to say. Or to have to hold back a long time...
Communicating during Emer-
(Continued from page 8)

following issues of the Polish Hill Voice, will elaborate on 9-1-1 call processing.

9-1-1 Calls

9-1-1 is the official national emergency number in the United States and Canada. Dialing it quickly connects you to a Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP) dispatcher who is trained to route your call to local emergency medical, fire, and law enforcement agencies.

Caller ID: Most 9-1-1 systems across the country now automatically report to the PSAP dispatcher the telephone number and location of calls, a capability called “Enhanced 911” or “E911,” which is a useful feature in case the call gets disconnected. However, wireless phones, which are not associated with one fixed location or address, create a unique challenge for public safety personnel.

While some wireless carriers have begun to deploy technologies to adopt E911 rules, it is important for consumers to follow a few basic steps when calling 9-1-1 from their mobile phone:

Tell the dispatcher the location of the emergency right away.

Give your wireless phone number so that if the call gets disconnected, the operator can call you back, especially if your wireless phone is not "initialized" (i.e., you do not have a contract for service with a wireless service provider).

Use the designated number in your state for highway accidents or other non-life-threatening incidents. (For example, if you are traveling on the PA Turnpike, dial *11.) Other numbers to call for non-life-threatening incidents in your state can be found in the front of your phone book.

TTYs: The FCC encourages text telephone device (TTY) users to call 9-1-1 di-
Congratulations to Polish Hill’s very own COMMUNITY CHAMPION

In December 2003, Sharon was honored as the United Way of Allegheny County’s Community Champion for her dedicated service to the community. She joins the ranks of previous honorees from the neighborhood, including Michael Friday who received the honor in 1998.

Following is the nominating essay, which won her the award:

Sharon Wolkiewicz has served her community in every capacity possible. As president of the Polish Hill Civic Association, Sharon brought order and organization to the group and began many projects to benefit the neighborhood. From building new homes in run-down areas, to helping make the area one of the safest in the City, to working with Dinwiddie Community Alliance on housing issues, Sharon’s work has made her community safe and beautiful. But her work doesn’t stop there. She also began events such as Community Day, has helped elderly residents in finding assistance programs as a member of the board for John Paul Plaza and was instrumental in the building of the skate park and walking trail at West Penn Park. Sharon’s door is open on a daily basis and her continuing work with housing

To nominate a volunteer, call 1-866-258-8260.

Please return completed form with dues to:

Tootsie Fischer, Membership Chair, PHCA, 3060 Brereton Street, Pittsburgh,

Polish Hill Civic Association of Pittsburgh

2004 Membership Application

Dues: $3.00

NAME:

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

(Street Address)                (City)                        (State)  (ZIP)

______ REGULAR MEMBER? Or  _____ SUBSCRIPTION MEMBER?
(Polish Hill residents only)     (Non-residents; entitled to newsletter only)

For office use only:
PHCA Membership Meetings are held on the first

March 2...

Welcome special guest speaker, MAYOR TOM MURPHY, who will discuss the City’s budget.

April 6