A second successful year for the Pivotal Streets Residential Façade Grant Program

Seven projects were selected to receive funding for the 2014 Polish Hill Pivotal Streets Residential Façade Grant Program. The program was designed to improve the face of the neighborhood, focusing on the main (pivotal) streets. This year’s program was funded by grants from UPMC Health Plan and the PNC Foundation to provide $25,000 in matching grants plus operational support.

The decision on which projects would be awarded grants was made by an independent review committee, which included an architect, a contractor/developer, a developer and a structural engineer. In order to ensure impartiality, the PHCA staff and board members did not make the decisions, and none of the review committee members are residents of Polish Hill.

The review committee used the published Pivotal Streets program guidelines to help make their decision. The guidelines stated that priority would be given to owner-occupied properties and to properties within the core of the neighborhood -- Brereton, Dobson and Herron.

The committee also considered the scale, impact and public safety considerations that the project would have on the property and the neighborhood. With so many deserving projects of the 20 applications, the independent review committee faced some tough decisions. We thank them for their time and thoughtfulness in this process.

The PHCA is proud to announce the seven projects selected for this year’s Polish Hill Pivotal Streets Residential Façade Grant Program:

**3040 Brereton Street**
Installation of three new (larger) double-hung windows on the first floor, including brick work, and a new awning above the front door.

Volunteer opportunities this growing season

Happy growing season, everyone! If you are interested in contributing to our neighborhood’s green spaces, please consider volunteering with the PHCA.

Upcoming events include the annual flower planting at West Penn, which will be on May 27, from 5:30 until 7 p.m. This intersection at the corner of Brereton and 30th streets will get a brilliant display of annual flowers for residents to enjoy. The rows of colorful flowers on the hillside also help with traffic calming. The area is transformed from a four-way stop into a vibrant urban garden, inevitably catching motorists’ eyes.

Other volunteer opportunities include maintenance at the “knotweed knockout” site. This area, at the end of Melwood Avenue, received 25 trees two years ago in an effort to create ecological diversity and a shade canopy that is inhospitable to the growth of knotweed. We will be meeting at the site on the second Friday of each month to cut back invasives and monitor the newly planted trees, starting Friday, June 13, from 5 to 7 p.m.

Other neighborhood parklets could use weed pulling, watering and plantings — all things you can do on your own schedule. These areas were created for all of us to enjoy, and your help and ideas will enable them to flourish. Please reach out to valerie@phcapgh.org if you would like to contribute.

Neighborhood cleanups will be held on Saturday, June 7 and Saturday, August 9. Meet at the PHCA at 10 a.m. to help tackle roadside debris, unruly vines and other clutter.

Please keep an eye on our eblasts, Facebook page and website to learn about other activities that will be happening during the growing season.

Fire Site Development moves forward

The Brereton/Dobson Fire Site Development has reached an important step in the project. In April, based on months of community feedback and development considerations that have shaped the current conceptual plan for the site, the Fire Site Steering Committee recommended that the developer and architect team Green Development, Inc. (Ernie Sota) and Pfaffmann + Associates (Rob Pfafmann) are still the best development partner moving forward. On April 28, the Polish Hill Civic Association board voted in agreement. The Pittsburgh Housing Development Corporation board (the owners of the land to be developed) will have the ultimate say on this development.

This conceptual plan was collaboratively developed and based on community feedback and interests to the greatest extent possible — given financial constraints, the steep hillside slope, conflicting desires and other challenges and considerations.

The community’s desires were to see a project that offers diverse, sustainable, economical and flexible options with the ability to increase stability and occupancy and evolve with our neighborhood over time. Feedback was incorporated from a number of sources over the past three years: the Polish Hill Community Plan, a Fire Site market study, 12 “Meet Polish Hill” interviews, an intensive Polish Hill Identity Workshop, three open community meetings, steering committee meetings, written correspondence and social media.

The original project goals that the PHCA leadership established when applying in 2012 to the Design Center for this predevelopment community engagement grant and the goals used to select the team of Green Development and Pfaffmann + Associates from among the three teams who initially expressed interest in the project included:
PHCA News

Traffic Calming committee update

Here's a report from Traffic Calming committee chair and PHCA board director Kalie Pierce:

The committee has been discussing plans for creative additions to high-traffic streets in order to slow automobile speeds and promote observation of stop signs, particularly during rush hour. A response was sent to WESA regarding the online coverage that promoted Polish Hill as a short cut. They responded with an apology for neglecting to note in the article that this is a residential area with many pedestrians, children, bicyclists and pets. Since then an addendum has been added to the online article with these details.

Additionally, the committee has contacted the PARK(ing) Day group that has been involved in this event in the past here in Pittsburgh. PARK(ing) Day, which takes place at the end of September, is an annual open-source global event where citizens, artists and activists collaborate to temporarily transform metered parking spaces into “PARK(ing)” temporary public places.

The Traffic Calming committee welcomes input and would love to have some more members to help with this important effort. To find out more, email Kalie at kaliedpierce@gmail.com, or call the PHCA at 412.681.1950.

Public safety walkthrough to identify areas of concern

At the March community meeting a resident recounted that an ambulance was unable to reach her home due to cars parked on both sides of Downing Street. As a result of this incident, and concerns from other residents, the PHCA arranged with the Fire Bureau, Zone 2 Police and other city departments to conduct a walkthrough to identify public safety concerns. The representatives will be noting problems such as streets that might be too narrow for fire trucks or ambulances, traffic issues, potholes and other situations.

Pivotal Streets update, from front page

3049 Brereton Street
Painting on the front of home, new front door, new cedar siding, and a new awning over door. Remove existing fence and install a new cedar fence with planter box and gate.

3232 Dobson Street
Rebuilding deteriorating facade to restore to original appearance and integrity.

1046 Herron Avenue
Replacing damaged sidewalk and steps, and repointing brick façade.

471 30th Street
Replace sidewalk on the Paulowna Street side with exposed aggregate concrete, new fence made from new and reused lumber, paint garage door. Permanent landscaping work includes two 6’ street trees to be planted on sidewalk, perennial herbs and flowers outside of fence on Paulowna Street, and two dwarf apple trees in front yard.

3208 Downing Street
Replacement of a badly deteriorated and unsafe sidewalk.

3200 Downing Street
Removal and replacement of existing side steps with new concrete and parging on the foundation wall.

We look forward to seeing these seven properties all fixed up! For other homeowners who are considering façade renovations and have not started their project yet, the Urban Redevelopment Authority also offers a Residential Façade Improvement Grant Program (RFIP). The program is only available to residents in six Pittsburgh neighborhoods, including Polish Hill. This program has a limited pool of grant funds that will be shared with the five other neighborhoods, so applications will be reviewed and awards will be determined on a first come, first served basis until the funds run out. For more information, call Quianna Wasler at 412.255.6550 or email qwasler@ura.org. The PHCA office also has an informational flyer for the URA program.

The strong response to the second year of the Polish Hill Pivotal Streets Façade Renovation Grant Program demonstrates the need for assistance with upgrading properties in Polish Hill. The PHCA will be working hard to secure funding to offer the Pivotal Streets Residential Façade Grant Program again in 2015.

Fire Site update, continued from front page

- Creating innovative, sustainable housing that helps current renters become homeowners.
- Focusing on economical construction, possibly modular, pre-fabricated or shell construction, with a small environmental footprint.
- Targeting a moderate price point (median income) and setting a new design standard for developers at this level, which would add value to projects in adjacent neighborhoods and the city-wide planning and design process.

The current conceptual plan includes: Two for-sale, single-family, live/work units facing Dobson Street. The PHCA will work with the URA and other funding sources to try to offer deferred second mortgages for these units to make them more affordable to the buyer.

- Eight Brereton Street apartment (rental) units around 800 square feet each that the developer committed to converting to for-sale (owner-occupied) no later than five years after rental tenants move in.
- Flexible building design that would allow for future consolidation of the Brereton Street apartment units into larger units if the owners desired (by having the structural capability to combine two units vertically or horizontally).
- Construction with environmentally certified, modular, pre-fabricated materials. This lowers costs, increases consistency and quality of construction, improves energy efficiency and environmental sustainability, and decreases utility bills.
- Adequate off-street, side-by-side (not tandem) parking for each unit.

This development allows for flexibility that can evolve over time with the neighborhood. A generation ago, most homes in Polish Hill could be bought for less than $30,000. That’s not the case today, unless the building needs to be gutted and completely renovated.

Across Pittsburgh and nationally, it is difficult for people with moderate
Fire Site update, continued from page 2

incomes to have the credit or savings to afford to buy a new home. Over time, however, a person renting in a Brereton apartment may be able to build credit and save money in order to buy their apartment.

The smaller units on Brereton Street might also be desirable for an individual or couple that doesn’t want the responsibility and high utility bills of a larger space. Live/work space on Dobson can be ideal for a person who wants space for a home office or art studio. Within a small space, these 10 new units will offer a lot of options to diverse people looking to call Polish Hill home.

The PHCA has recommended that PHDC (the owners of the land to be developed) move forward with Green Development and Pfaffmann + Associates on the next phase of this project. We are excited to see the fruits of so much creative energy begin to give life. Many thanks to all the residents who participated over the past two years in the extensive, pre-development community engagement process, as well as all who worked towards this vision since the 2007 fire that destroyed the previous buildings.

The next step will be to work with Pittsburgh Housing Development Corporation and the development team to get formal site control.

The PHCA will provide regular updates and opportunities for comment as we work with the development team on more detailed design development/plan refinement (materials, colors, etc.), zoning variances, financing approvals and other development details.

Forest restoration at West Penn Park to begin with an unusual approach

Representatives from Tree Pittsburgh were at the May community meeting to tell residents about the upcoming Brereton Slope Forest Restoration project. The hillside of West Penn Park alongside Brereton Street is one of many in Pittsburgh that are being taken over by vines. Overgrowth of vines will eventually choke and kill trees.

Tree Pittsburgh’s mission is to care for urban trees and to increase the amount of tree canopy. The organization has been looking for a place where they could initiate a pilot project to restore trees. The PHCA’s green team worked with Tree Pittsburgh and suggested that the overgrown West Penn Park hillside was an ideal location for the project. For Phase 1, Tree Pittsburgh will bring in a herd of goats on July 7 to clear a 500 foot section of the hillside nearest 30th Street. Using goats might sound unusual, but projects in other parts of the country have shown that they can do this sort of clearing much more efficiently and at lower cost than human workers.

The area will be fenced in and the goats will graze for one day. After the test area has been cleared, volunteers will maintain the area over the summer. In the fall, 75 - 80 new trees will be planted. After that, the plantings will be maintained and plans will be made to address the next section of the hillside.

Working to combat illegal dumping

In mid-April, a Polish Hill resident walking on Melwood Avenue witnessed two men removing piles of waste from a pickup truck and dumping the items down the hillside near the Bloomfield Bridge. When he stopped and told them that they couldn’t dump there, the culprits claimed they thought it was okay because there weren’t any signs prohibiting dumping. He took their license plate number and they were reported the City’s 311 line.

There is no place where it is legal to dump waste -- even if there aren’t any signs. Illegal dumping is a problem all over the region, and warm weather is dumping season, as people begin work on buildings or do landscaping.

Unpopulated green spaces near the borders of Polish Hill, such as West Penn Park, the hillside near Melwood Avenue and Gold Way, Downing Street above the busway, and areas up above Bigelow Boulevard, have long been popular with people looking to get rid of tires, trash, building scraps or garden waste. We don’t recommend confronting people who are dumping; most of the culprits are aware that if caught, they’ll get a stiff fine -- current city dumping fines are $500-$5,000 plus court costs for initial offense.

A couple of nonprofit and volunteer organizations are also helping in the fight. Allegheny CleanWays works with local residents, organizations, businesses, and governments to remove debris dumped within Allegheny County. The organization monitors illegal dumpsites, and conducts regular cleanups on land and in waterways throughout the Pittsburgh area. Allegheny CleanWays coordinates a dumpsite clearing volunteer work event in Polish Hill each year to clear the site at the end of lower Melwood Avenue near Gold Way, just on the eastern border of the neighborhood, and they’re keeping an eye on a few other locations in the community. The organization recently got a few surveillance cameras, which they will use at different sites to catch people dumping.

Allegheny CleanWays Dumpbusters program works seven days a week, 12 months a year to clear illegal dumps of all sizes and remove an average of 900-1,200 lbs. of debris daily. The Dump-Busters crew also provides expertise to communities wanting to clean up difficult sites.

The PHCA is working with District 7 and Melissa Rosenfeld, the City’s Anti-Dumping Coordinator, to address illegal dumping in Polish Hill. More No Dumping signs have been posted, and Melissa has requested to have a few more placed.

What can residents do to help prevent illegal dumping and keep our neighborhood clean? Call 911 if you see dumping occur. Get a license plate and description, and photos if you can. If you know of an illegal dumpsite, you can report it to Allegheny CleanWays by calling (412) 381-1301 or online at http://www.alleghenycleanways.org/contact.
Vacant lots and soda pop

Another tale of growing up on Polish Hill in the 1930s-early 1940s

By Edward Klavon

I went to Dinky Klavon, the public school on the corner of Hancock and Herron, for kindergarten. I recall we were given milk to drink during recess. It was served in a small half-pint bottle with a cardboard paper cap. Wire cases were stacked in the basement and we were allowed one bottle each. It was tasty but always, always, warm being delivered early in the morning and we drank it hours later.

When I began at Immaculate Heart of Mary parochial school our teachers were Catholic nuns and classes were larger. I remember the kindness of my first-grade teacher, Sister Edmunda. She was loving and gentle and hugged those frightened, crying, “lost” first-day attendees. She enveloped us in her coarse, black habit and assured us that we were safe in her care. Our teacher in second grade was Sister Bernadette, another sweet and kind woman who plunged us into spelling and arithmetic.

But in third grade we were rudely awakened to the military type discipline of Sister Bozena. Achtung! I recall the day one of the girls in our class “lost” her lunch money. Perhaps it was stolen from her desk. The entire class was required to stand at our desks with arms stretched out in front at shoulder height and holding that position until the guilty thief admitted to the crime. A medieval type of torture we thought. The money was later found and we lowered our aching arms—exonerated. At ease! We took our seats with no wisecracks from the boys either.

In fourth grade we were taught history and grammar in two languages, English and Polish, by Sister Canise, another gem like our moms at home. In the spring she announced that we were going to have a party ... A PARTY? ... in school. We never had a party. Wow! She inquired of us if we knew where we could obtain refreshments. My dad worked at Tom Tucker Beverage Co. in East Liberty and I told him about our BIG party. He delivered four cases of 32 oz. bottles of pop beside her desk. The flavors were: orange, cherry, root beer and an original, Tom Tucker’s Southern style mint flavored ginger ale. Sister proceeded to take out and snap open her little leather coin purse to pay him.

He, of course, refused payment knowing the meager pay nuns received. We had our party and Sister joined us in a class of pop. It was kind of appropriate that we had our party as my family moved to Shaler Township in the suburbs in the next term. However, I fondly remember my years at Immaculate Heart.

When report cards were issued to the class it was a big deal. A parish priest sat stoically at the desk and called out our names. We went forward and he handed the report card to each of us with comments. To some of the girls he said, “AAA, BBB, very good.” To some of us boys, he said, “CCC, You should be in the CCC camps.” (He was referring to the Civilian Conservation Corps of the Depression era.)

An amusing drama developed when report cards were sent home. Sister changed the spelling of my name from “Klaron” to “Klawon” as there was no “V” in the Polish alphabet. Dad would scratch out the W and write in a V.

Lunch time at IHM elementary was plain and simple to say the least. I disliked the huge soup spoons we used. This silverware was a conglomeration of mismatched donations, some regular size and some shovels and pitchforks. One thing, soup was slurped down quickly with these giants.

We lived for summer vacation. On warm evenings the gang, which included girls, sat out on the step of our porch on Bethoven Street. The neighborhood gang included: Frank (Fran) Harnett, Joe (Joey) Wysocki, Tony (Untz) Piotrowski, Mary Piotrowski and the rest of her sisters, Ed (Eddie) Klavon and Meinka the girl who lived next door. More about her later. We all lived next door and across the street from each other. We would tell ghost stories and movie guessing games. Someone would give the first letters of a movie or a movie star, others would have to guess the name.

Much of the time outdoors was spent on the “Hill” between Bethoven Street and Bigelow Boulevard. We would dig for “gold” and other precious gems. Not that we found any. However, interesting pebbles were collected, spit upon for cleaning and stuffed into our pockets.

On Fridays we had movies at the Lyceum on Brereton Street for ten cents a show. We got off school early (a double treat!) and walked down the alleyway as a group. We usually had a Western film: Tom Mix, Ken Maynard or Hoot Gibson. One time, because my grandmother who took care of me did not have a dime or thought the film was not educational I could not attend. So, I sat in a classroom back at the school with a couple other paupers.

This article was inspired by Frank Harnett’s delightful and memorable article from the Summer-Fall 2013 issue — which led to Ed and Frank reconnecting more than sixty years after their days as childhood pals. Ed says, “Since I am mentioned as a boyhood chum and included in the ‘our gang’ photo [in Frank Harnett’s article], I feel compelled to further account for my and our behavior during these by-gone days.”

The photos accompanying this article are from the PHCA Polish Hill Archive.

Ed Klavon is a retired high school biology teacher and wrestling coach from North Penn High School (38 years) in Lansdale, Pa. He was married to Barbara Miller Klavon of Glenshaw, Pa. for 58 wonderful years. He has two sons and six grandchildren. His home is on 15 wooded acres called Thicket Ridge. He is still a Steelers and Pirates fan.

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Thank goodness for vacant lots and broom handles. Vacant lots were our territories to explore and where we built forts and castles. Long ragweed stems became spears and javelins to throw at imaginary enemies or wild animals. Simple things made good sports equipment or toys. Broom handles were indispensable. One game was to sharpen one end of a short six-inch piece of broom handle, place it on the ground and strike the pointed end with the long broom handle, causing it flip into the air. Then the object was to strike it with the stick baseball style and run to a base (a brick in the center of the street.) I forget the name of the game. Another broom stick game that annoyed the elder neighbors was to run along a picket fence rattling the stick against the palings — rat-a-tat-a-tat! We did not have bikes or scooters to amuse us at this stage.

One hike that was a real adventure was to venture behind the business along Bigelow Boulevard to the “Richies.” Never heard of the Richies? I’ll tell you. They were business offices whose refuse bins contained treasures galore. They threw away: paper clips, erasers, pencils, thumb tacks, leaky fountain pens, blank usable writing paper, even type-writer ribbon spools. How they could discard this “good stuff”? We carted it back to our lairs on the Hill. Never took it to our homes as it may have been thought to be plunder.

In the late 1930s when Germany invaded Poland in Europe we posted a Look Magazine picture of Adolph Hitler on a garage door in the alley and grandma, who was born in Poland, supplied us with a basket of overripe peaches which we gleefully pitched right in the Der Fuehrer’s face! Little did we know that WWII was on the horizon.

My dad promised to take me fishing at North Park Lake. I had never been fishing before. He assigned me to dig up a can of worms. Expert diggers that we were, my buddies and I dug and dug to get a small pocket knife! Wow! What a treat. Especially if it included the pocket knife. Neat.

Old man winter could not keep our gang indoors. We loved making street slides achieved by continually sliding down the slope while standing. After many runs and falls on our derrieres, the packed snow turned into glassy ice. It paid to wear “clod hoppers” or work boots. The ultimate shoe was called “High Tops.” Leather up to the calf (and this part is important) with a snap pocket for a small pocket knife! Wow! What a treat. Especially if it included the pocket knife. Neat.

The last thing in which an eight or nine year old boy had interest was girls. But I recall “exploring” in our back yard abandoned pigeon coop with Meinka, my neighbor. Somehow, I experienced my first kiss. WOW! Gosh! Oh, Golly! Girls weren’t so bad after all. Suddenly bliss turned to chaos when grandma appeared at the door. She scolded Meinka and whacked me. (Again.)

But, you know what? It was worth it. (Thanks Meinka.)

I was fortunate to visit Pittsburgh in the summer of 2013. I reunited with family that I had not seen in many decades. Cousins Esther Avon Klavon and her sister Dolly Klavon Scanlon were great to meet again. We went to (my uncle James’) Klavon’s Original Old Fashioned Ice Cream Parlor on 28th Street and Penn Avenue. (Now sold but retaining the Klavon name.) On an earlier trip, I reunited with cousins Jane Rahuba, Gloria Wolak, Audrey, and Geraldine. A mini reunion had been arranged and I was blessed to meet with family after 50 years.

These were my treasured memories of a simpler time that I so fondly recall: Dinky School, Bethoven St., Bigelow Blvd., Southern style ginger ale, shovel spoons, the Richies, High Top boots, broomsticks, vacant lots, forts, Immaculate Heart Sisters Edmund, Bernadette, Bozenna, and Canise, grandma’s loving whacks that kept me in line, Joey Wysocki, Untz Piotrowski, Fran Harnett who inspired me to write this. And oh yes, sweet, sweet Meinka, wherever you are.

Edward J. Klavon
4345 Upper Ridge Rd.
Pennsbug, Pa. 18073

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Event Calendar

**June 3** | **Community Meeting** | 6:30 p.m. | West Penn Recreation Center (lower level)

**July 19** | **Immaculate Heart of Mary Church festival** | 12:00 p.m.—10:00 p.m. | Intersection of Brereton and Dobson streets

**July 20** | **Polish Hill Arts Festival** | 1:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m. | Intersection of Brereton and Dobson streets

As we go to press, there are no community meetings planned for July or August. If this changes, we will provide updates in the e-blast, the blog, and at the June community meeting.

Residents may also call the PHCA office (412.681.1950) to confirm meeting dates.
Neighborhood Portrait: Axler, Melwood Avenue
“I Like My Life a Lot”

In days past the sidewalks and streets of Polish Hill were full of children. In recent years this has not been so, but that is changing. In this series of interviews, we welcome the new generation of kids growing up in Polish Hill.

By Tom Ogden, photos by Marc Rettig

We interviewed Axler on an early spring day in front of his home in Polish Hill, where he lives with his parents, Aubrey and Ben. His grandparents, Cindy and Mike, live next door, and his pals Luscia and Conner live on the same block.

Axler told us that he has prior experience with interviews, but this is his first since his seventh birthday. We found him to be quite enthusiastic and obviously prepared for this event as he shared with Marc and me his precise ideas regarding the photographs. He had given thought as to how we might best photograph and capture his prowess with his bow and arrow and bicycle.

Axler proudly reports that he was born in Seattle “WA” on December fourth, “at 11:45 p.m. in the morning.” Since turning seven, Axler has learned how to ride his bike and ranks this as “my number one favorite thing to do.” His list of joys and interests includes: kids camp, fishing, making molds, volcanic rocks, art, writing, fabricating wooden weapons and watching movies. His latest non-fiction book, which he is not yet finished writing, is titled, “Moms are Weird.”

His wooden creations include spears, wooden toys and walking sticks. And as we were privileged to see demonstrated, Axler can make very functional bows and arrows. His bow was made with “beaver sticks” harvested from the shoreline of the Allegheny River, and each arrow had a specialized point for different prey: “mice, apes and big rodents.” In addition to these interests, activities and accomplishments, Axler is looking forward to making a “jet pack” and is currently pursuing mastery of multiplication and division.

Marc and I were honored and delighted to have spent time with this remarkable young person and want to thank Axler and his parents and grandparents for this interview and photo shoot.

311 is the City’s non-emergency services response line, handling comments, concerns or service requests for all City departments. 311 is the place to report things like potholes, overgrown weeds on public property, traffic concerns, graffiti, building-code violations or abandoned vehicles. The 311 center forwards your report to the appropriate City department and tracks the request.

When contacting 311, be sure to include as much detail as possible. Note the exact address, intersection or building name. If the item is in a park or open space, mention nearby landmarks or use cardinal directions.

Note what time of day a repeated incident occurs.

To reach the 311 Response Center, call 311 and talk to a live operator from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Leave a voice or text message for the 311 response center by dialing or texting 412-573-9736.

Requests can be made anonymously if you don’t require a response.

Comments or complaints can also be submitted via the online 311 submission form (pittsburghpa.gov/311/form/). The online form is particularly useful because it includes a map where you can indicate exactly where the issue is, or upload a photo. All service requests sent with a valid email address will receive an email response providing a ticket number for tracking purposes. Should a service request be generated by your submission, a 311 representative will provide a Service Request ID Number.

311 is also a place where you can get information. Contact them to:
-- Get a smoke detector
-- Find out about City events and parks
-- Ask questions about City services (such as getting a permit)
-- Submit a comment on a piece of legislation introduced by the Mayor
-- Submit a complaint about City services performed poorly

The 311 center is there for all Pittsburgh residents to use. The PHCA often files 311 requests, but it always helps if the City hears about issues directly from residents as well. The more voices there are sharing a concern, the more likely it will be addressed quickly.
The saddest day of my childhood was the day when Western Union delivered a telegram stating that my brother Chester was missing in action. Mom was at her friend’s house and the messenger insisted that the telegram be placed in her hands, since it was in her name. I accompanied the man to her friend’s home to save time.

I will never forget the look on my mother’s face as she read the telegram. Mom stayed up all that night doing all types of housework. Looking back I now realize that this was her way of keeping her wits about her in this terrible time of sorrow. I can remember mom saying, ”I came with my parents to America to have a better life, and my son had to go back and fight a war in the old country.”

There were other families in our neighborhood that received similar telegrams. Each time that the Western Union truck was seen everyone became very apprehensive, for during the war years mainly bad news followed.

Soon afterwards mom received the telegram that Chester was killed in action. There were quite a few homes on our Polish Hill that soon displayed a gold star in their windows. Several times certain luncheons were held at the West Penn Recreation Center for the mothers of boys killed in action during the war. This was a very kind act for those responsible for those affairs.

When I was going over my brother John’s papers after his death, I came upon several documents that I will keep in remembrance of our little family. If you visit Immaculate Heart of Mary Church on Brereton Avenue, you will notice on the honor roll the name of my brother Chester Bartoszewicz. He gave his life for his country at the age of twenty-four after completing fifty-one missions in the Army Air Force.

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**Telegram**

By Jane Bartoszewicz Pelczarski

**Polish Hill t-shirts**

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</table>

| Black t-shirt   | Qty |       |        |
| Circle size(s)  | Qty |       |        |
| S               | Qty |       |        |
| M               | Qty |       |        |
| L               | Qty |       |        |
| XL              | Qty |       |        |
| XXL             | Qty |       |        |
| Short sleeve    | Qty |       |        |
| $15.00          | Qty |       |        |
| Long sleeve     | Qty |       |        |
| $20.00          | Qty |       |        |

Packing and shipping: 2.50 per shirt

Payable to the Polish Hill Civic Association.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Ship to:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phone or email</td>
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</table>

**TOTAL**

Give a nod to neighborhood history with the Imperial Polish crowned eagle on a high-quality red or black shirt. Adult sizes S—XXL.

Short sleeve $15.00
Long sleeve $20.00

**URA home improvement loan products help homeowners rehabilitate or renovate their property.**

**The United Way of Allegheny County has a payroll deduction campaign for donations to your favorite local organizations. Please consider supporting the Polish Hill Civic Association. Our organization number is 258.**
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.

Polish Hill Civic Association Membership Application
Have you renewed your membership for 2014? It’s still just $5! All memberships expire at the end of each year.

NAME: ________________________________________________________________

(Street Address) __________________________________________________________________________________

(City) __________________ (State) __________________ (ZIP) __________________

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

EMAIL: ________________________________________________________________

VOTING MEMBER ~ Or ~ SUBSCRIPTION MEMBER
☐(Polish Hill residents) ☐(Non-residents)
☐ New Member ~ Or ~ ☐ Renewal

For office use only:

REC’D BY: _______ DATE: _______ GOT CARD _______ LOGGED _______

Make checks payable to the Polish Hill Civic Association and mail with this application to:
Polish Hill Civic Association, Membership Chair, 3060 Brereton Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Benefits of membership

Free courtesy admission to the Heinz History Center for yourself and up to three others (Show your PHCA membership card at the front desk)

Members who are also Polish Hill residents
Can vote to elect PHCA board members

Knowing that you’re supporting an organization that is working to make Polish Hill a better place to live!