

Sarney's Bar Changes Hands



Photo by Mark Knobil

Sarney's, at 3055 Brereton Street, is a longtime Polish Hill establishment. Businesses on this site have served Polish Hill residents for generations. In the 1940s, the property was the Frank Kaminski Pharmacy, with a soda fountain. Later it was Ori's Tavern, and then Sarney's. It is an old-school, basic Pittsburgh bar where the patrons and staff all know each other, the songs on the jukebox tend to be from the 60s and 70s, the light display at Christmas is a wonder to behold, and the drink prices are surely the lowest in town.

Sarney's is in the process of being sold, but the property will continue to be a place that serves Polish Hill. The new owners, Francis Pope and Mark Baranowski, came to Polish Hill on July 29 for a public meeting to discuss their plans for the property and to answer residents' questions.

Mark has been in the business for over twenty years. He bought the North Park Lounge in 1989 (there are now two, in McCandless and Cranberry). He also owns Bonnie and Clyde's in Wexford, and is in the process of opening up three more places in South Side, North Shore, and Murrysville. The Polish Hill establishment is the first of his businesses to open in the city of Pittsburgh. Mark and Francis will be co-owners, although Francis will be here on a day-to-day basis. Jennifer Youst, who will be the bartender/

assistant manager, also attended the public meeting.

How will the new bar be different? Francis and Mark said they would change the name, probably to Pope's Bar, but they didn't plan to make drastic changes, preferring to keep the business running as a comfortable, neighborhood bar. They said that nicer and bigger televisions will be added to make it more sports oriented. There will be a larger food menu and maybe even Sunday brunches,

if it seems that customers want that. Some of the Sarney's staff will stay on, too.



Photo by Leslie Clague

Sarney's will close by the end of August, then the new owners will be doing some renovations, including a new floor, painting, and some facade work. They said they hoped to re-open sometime in September. The residents at the meeting asked a lot of questions and came away feeling that the new business would be a good fit for the neighborhood.

Fire Site Update

*Finding a good fit
for the neighborhood*



Photo by Leslie Clague

The PHCA is still meeting with a Steering Committee and making progress on the development of the Fire Site – the three parcels of land near the Brereton Dobson intersection. The property is owned by Pittsburgh Housing Development Corporation and is being developed in partnership with the Polish Hill Civic Association.

The PHCA and the Fire Site Steering Committee have worked with a real estate consultant to complete a market analysis. They continue to work with the various project partners: PHDC, the URA and the Design Center. The market analysis has been completed and the Fire Site Steering Committee reviewed the results. The PHCA is getting ready to send out a request for proposal (RFP) to a list of architect/developer teams. Selecting a team is the next step in coming up with innovative ideas about what's feasible for the site.

On the neighborhood end of things, a new duo stepped forward, offering to help introduce the spirit of our community and its diverse residents to the architect/developer teams. Marc Rettig and Hannah du Plessis are Polish Hill residents and the principals at Fit Associates, which has its office on Bethoven Street. In their words, "Fit uses ethnographic research and facilitation to help companies connect design and strategy to the

Continued on page 2

Lightning strikes the church dome



Photo by Leslie Clague

During a fierce electrical storm on July 16, lightning struck on and near Polish Hill multiple times. A resident behind the church who witnessed the strike told us that lightning first hit in the backyard of a house on Paulowna Street, then a few seconds later, at about 4:30 p.m., it hit the very top of the main dome of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church. The lightning hit the structure that sits atop the largest dome, so high up that it is not easily visible from the ground.

The wooden domes are covered with copper sheathing, so most of the damage was on the inside of the dome. There was no indication of fire until almost an hour later. 911 received multiple calls within a few minutes, and fire trucks from different stations around the area responded quickly.

Residents lined the street, watching anxiously. The fire was extinguished fairly quickly, and fortunately the damage was limited. Repairs and restoration began immediately.

Fire Site, continued from front page

realities of their customers' lives." Mark and Hannah offered their professional skills to help identify what matters to residents, and to introduce our diverse neighborhood to potential

architect/developer teams. By sharing insights about what our community values the most, it's more likely we'll find a team that matches the spirit of Polish Hill.

With help from the Fire Site Steering Committee, Fit Associates selected 12 Polish Hill residents to interview across different segments found in our neighborhood: older people who have lived here all their lives, established families that have lived here ten years or more, young professionals, and artists and makers. They asked each person a few simple questions: What do you love about Polish Hill? What could make Polish Hill better? What do you want to nourish?

The responses highlight what makes Polish Hill a special place:

"There is a good sense of community with well attended community events. People say hi to each other, people know each other."

"I've never seen a community like this ... It is like family. Once you're here, you're here forever. You don't want to move."

"If Polish Hill was a person, he would be very colorful and unique. You can't categorize it. There are so many types of people up here."

"As a community this is relatively safe and I think people sort of watch out for each other."

What these residents value about Polish Hill has nothing to do with property values, or how much newcomers might be willing to pay to buy property here. For people who already live in Polish Hill, the value of the neighborhood is in the intangibles -- things you can't put a price on, like a sense of community. This seems to be true whether a person is connected to the mostly Polish neighborhood of the past, or is part of the newer wave of residents, who tend to be younger, often creative types.

Respondents also noted the tight housing market and increasing rents are combining to make the neighborhood less accessible to those with lower incomes, who are squeezed out when demand meets scarcity.

"We have loads of friends that would love to live here, but can't find a place. Friends who would like to buy, friends who have the skills (to build or repair) and want to use them... The chatter is that no property is available."

"There is a real need for more quality apartments and good rental property. This would be desirable because it brings young people into the neighborhood ... I rent things out in a couple of days."

"Polish Hill might be vulnerable to gentrification very soon. The people who have been making music and art are the sort of people who gave this neighborhood its identity. It is a bummer that there is not a good foundation for them if they want to buy property."

"It is scary. I feel the same fear (of displacement) all the time ... Or when is the rent going to go up \$200? And when is stuff that I don't relate with at all gonna show up? And when am I going to be bounced off the scene?"

In many neighborhoods where new development occurs, the result is often the same. Our dream for this project is to consider something that hasn't been done before. Something that is as quirky and caring and colorful as our existing community; something that we can embrace and continue to feel proud to call home.

Update on proposed social club

After months of work, the PHCA and the Social Association of Pittsburgh Professionals (SAPP) signed a general use agreement in May about how they will operate their social club. The agreement was requested in order to address the community's concerns about safety, traffic, parking, noise, alcohol and late hours of operation. This document was also referenced in the Zoning Board of Adjustments' ruling about the use of their space. SAPP did not receive a zoning variance, as requested, but they will be able to use the space as a social club for general use. Since then, SAPP applied to transfer a club catering liquor license

City paints bike lanes and shared-lane markings on two Polish Hill streets

The City of Pittsburgh is in the process of installing bike lanes and shared-lane markings in selected neighborhoods throughout the City, including Polish Hill. The marked bike route the neighborhood starts on Liberty Avenue, continues across the 28th Street Bridge, travels up Brereton Street, down Dobson Street and exits the neighborhood through Herron Avenue. The bike route through Polish Hill is considered a "preferred" bike route, as identified by Bike Pittsburgh and officially recognized by the City.



Above: This two-block stretch of Brereton is the only place in Polish Hill where bike lanes will be painted. (Photo by Leslie Clague)

Bike lanes have already been put into place in many of the surrounding neighborhoods. Creating bike lanes and encouraging more residents to use bikes is part of the long-term plan for the City of Pittsburgh and bike infrastructure is also part of the Polish Hill Community Plan, as a result of input from Polish Hill residents. Eric Boerer, from Bike Pittsburgh, spoke at the June community meeting to inform residents about the bike lanes, answer questions and to speak about their benefits.

At the time this newsletter went to press, bike lanes had been installed on a two-block stretch of Brereton Street, between the 28th Street Bridge and 30th Street. While there are still two lanes for cars, those two blocks are now designated a No Parking zone. This change should have very little impact on Polish Hill residents, as it's a wooded area with no buildings where vehicles rarely park. The City has informed us that when there are

special events in Polish Hill, exceptions may be made to allow temporary parking.

The PHCA will work with West Penn Recreation Center, Pittsburgh Sports League and other teams to help direct people to park in the designated lots in West Penn Park when there are games on West Penn field.

The rest of the route through Polish Hill, including Brereton Street above 30th Street, Dobson Street and Herron Avenue, is marked by painted shared bicycle/car road markings, known as sharrows. These markings show an image of a bicycle and two chevrons. The sharrow markings also tell cyclists the safest place to ride, out of the "door zone" of parked cars.

Right: Shared lane markings on a road in Shadyside. These markings do not interfere with parking. (Photo courtesy of BikePgh)



Where the road is wide enough, such on Brereton Street between 28th and 30th streets, bike lanes will help to increase safety for both cyclists and drivers. Bike lanes help to reduce speeding because the bike lanes narrow the road, thus slowing drivers down.

Even a short stretch of bike lane helps to reduce speed and create awareness of cyclists. The sharrows indicate to drivers that they are driving on a designated bicycle route and should be aware of cyclists.

The most up-to-date news and information for Polish Hill is online at: blogski.phcapgh.org

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

www.ura.org

Social club, continued

in July. The PHCA will continue to work with SAPP and the PA Liquor Control Board to put conditions on the liquor license that will ensure the safety and responsible use of that license.

Here's a summary of the main points in the legally binding general use agreement:

SAPP will jointly submit with the PHCA a Conditional Licensing Agreement to the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board, which will bind and limit the liquor license on the points listed in the general use agreement.

There will be no sale of spirits or malt beverages for "take out."

To address parking and traffic concerns, SAPP will submit plans for the development of the parking lots prepared by a licensed traffic engineer, and a complete traffic analysis for ingress and egress to Liberty Avenue from 32nd or 33rd street.

There will be no outside speakers or entertainment at the property.

SAPP shall provide valet parking to its members and guests for any events where the anticipated number of attendees exceeds the number of allowable parking spaces.

SAPP shall provide security in proportion to the number of attendees, time and type of event.

SAPP events shall only be open to members, guests and guests of those attending contractually catered events of a member.

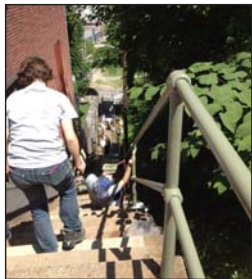
SAPP may operate from 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 a.m. Sunday through Thursday; and Friday and Saturday 8:00 am - 3:00 am. Additional hours may be permitted for special events such as Super Bowl Sunday and for certain holidays.

These conditions spell out certain limitations that will still allow SAPP to do business and to have the sorts of events they envisioned. With this agreement in place, residents in Polish Hill, Lawrenceville and other neighboring communities can have more confidence that the club will operate in a responsible manner.

Neighborhood volunteers fix up City steps with help from the Love Your Block program



In March, the PHCA was awarded a Love Your Block grant to help improve two sets of our City steps. Love Your Block is a partnership of Mayor Luke Ravenstahl and The Home Depot Foundation to revitalize Pittsburgh, block by block. The PHCA Green Team applied for the grant to improve stairs that are crumbling and to repaint rusty multicolored railings.



On June 15, the PHCA Green Team worked on the City steps that connect Dobson Street to the Herron Avenue S-curve. These are probably the most-used City steps in

Polish Hill. They had been looking shabby, with flaking and peeling railings, broken treads, and trash strewn on the hillside.

Over 20 neighborhood volunteers came out. They picked up trash, sanded, cleaned and painted the railings, cut back the knotweed, and installed flowerboxes at the top of the steps. A request was put in to the City to fix the broken treads. Now the steps look much better! Many thanks to all the people who gave up their Saturday morning to help improve this spot in Polish Hill.



Photos by Valerie Testa

Edible Garden project at West Penn Park

In late July, the PHCA Green Team and a crew from the Department of Public Works installed raised beds at West Penn Park. The beds are a part of the City of Pittsburgh's new Edible Gardens Program, an expansion of the Green Up Pittsburgh program. In partnership with the ServePGH initiative and the City's Department of Public Works, Edible Gardens across Pittsburgh will harvest and distribute nearly one ton of produce to at least 200 families in its first year. Partially funded by a \$100,000 Cities of Service volunteering grant by Bloomberg Philanthropies to the Mayor's ServePGH initiative, \$44,000 is being dedicated to planting 10-15 high-yielding vegetable and fruit gardens.



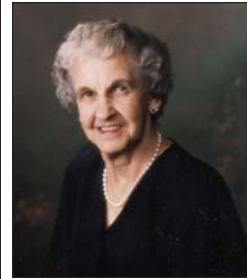
City crews building the planting beds.

Once a location is selected, volunteers work side by side with the City's Green Team to create, design and plant produce. Community garden stewards will be responsible for maintenance, weeding, harvesting and distribution throughout the season. The Polish Hill Edible Garden was installed later in the season so it won't be producing much until next year. We look forward to seeing how this new program will work in our neighborhood.



Polish Hill Green Team members survey the newly planted beds. (Top photo by Myra Falisz, bottom photo by Valerie Testa)

Donations made to the PHCA in memory of Irene Karausky



Irene Karausky grew up in Polish Hill and went to IHM grade school. She married Wallace Karausky and the couple raised four children:

Janet, Bob, Paul and Mary Anne in their home at 3437 Melwood Avenue. The family moved to Shaler Township in 1957, but Irene often returned to Polish Hill to visit and care for her parents and siblings.

A few years ago, Irene and her son Bob walked by their former home, and the current resident, Tom Ogden, happened to meet them. Tom took them on a tour of all four floors, which had been carefully renovated after years of neglect. Irene was thrilled at seeing her former home after so many years. Irene also made a regular habit of giving to the annual Immaculate Heart of Mary Church festival and made several visits to the PHCA office to see what was going on in her old neighborhood. She always had a warm spot in her heart for Polish Hill and its residents.

Irene passed away on May 21, 2013. Her children requested that donations be made in her memory to the Polish Hill Civic Association. The PHCA received almost a dozen donations, which we accepted with gratitude. We thank Irene's family and their kindness in choosing to honor their mother's memory in this way.



United Way of Allegheny County

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 Immaculate Heart of Mary Church parish festival



A festival game booth. (KDKA photo)

The Immaculate Heart of Mary Church parish festival took place on July 20. After the events of the previous week, when the dome was struck by lightning, the church was determined to have the festival go on as planned. On the day of the festival, the weather was beautiful, and crowds of parishioners came out to enjoy the hot Polish food, the bake sale, the polka band, and the games. News crews were also on hand to report on the festival as a symbol of resilience and continuity. It was wonderful to see this tradition continue, as it has for so many years.

The Polish Hill Arts Festival: Art, crafts, food, music and dancing in the street

The sixth Polish Hill Arts Festival, on July 21, got off to a great start with a jig by Celtic trio Steel Clover, and things got busy very quickly. Artists, craftspeople and food vendors reported brisk sales. The live music continued, with the Harlan Twins, Married to the Wolf, and Timbeleza, and between performances, Pete from Pandemic kept the energy going with music from around the world.



Sarah Cunniff and her husband Frank had a table selling items from their small comic book company.

Around 3 p.m. the clouds rolled in, and by 6 p.m. the sprinkles had turned into a torrential rain. Most vendors, having already had good sales, packed up. But many festival goers didn't leave, instead choosing to crowd into the performance tent, or just to get wet. The performers kept playing: King Fez, and then The Pressure carried on through the rain, keeping the festival going with great music.



A vendors shows her wares to two young visitors. There were a record number of vendors at the festival this year.

The rain stopped by 8 p.m., the sky cleared and revealed a beautiful sunset, and Polish Hill favorites brass band Lungs Face Feet, did an extra-long set for a soggy, joyful, dancing crowd. We would like to send our thanks and gratitude to all the artists and craft vendors, performers, activities, food vendors, volunteers, neighborhood supporters, and the hundreds of people who came to the Polish Hill Arts festival. The coming together of all these people is what makes this such a great event. Even with the rain, it was a wonderful day. Thank you all so much!

Right: During the final couple of hours, the rain stopped, and Lungs Face Feet, a Polish Hill based band, finished out the day with a rousing set for an appreciative, dancing crowd.

(All arts festival photos by Leslie Clague.)



Making buttons at one of the art activity tables.



A lot of festival visitors brought their dogs.



Brazilian drum group Timbeleza, a returning festival favorite, had a group of colorfully dressed samba dancers.



Growing Up on Polish Hill in the 1930s - early 1940s

by Frank Harnett

Maybe it was the cold block of ice the iceman gave you to slake your summer thirst. Or, perhaps, the cool spring water behind home plate at the West Penn ball field. Could it have been the Polish dill the Jaworski butcher gave you from the pickle barrel as a freebie? Youth had its privileges. On second thought, it might be the sound of Chester, the huckster, calling out, "Apples, potatoes ..." or that star cookie you received from the Dudt's baker man whose truck came each week to the neighborhood. What about the taste of the homemade root beer when you were elected to start the siphon by drawing on the hose to start the flow?

We now arrive at the smell of the acrid hops as the Iron City Brewery tapped its kilns, just as we were on the way to school in the morning! Did the steam, smoke and cinders from the passing train under the wooden planked Thirty-fourth Street Bridge wake you up? If that doesn't ring a bell, the smell of freshly ground Eight O'Clock coffee in the Butler Grocery store at Herron and Harding should excite.



Do you remember the sight of the steam rollers on Bigelow Boulevard and Bethoven Street as repaving the roadways became a reminder of spring and summer?

Look, up in the sky ... it's

a ... kite! Kite flying was required of all, and penny kites were very affordable back then. Beyond the kites you might see a biplane writing in the sky, "Pepsi Cola hits the spot."

Listen to the count, "One, two, three ..." It was hide and go seek time



Above: Eddie Klavon, Frank Harnett (Pirate uniform), Joe Wysocki.

Below left: Frank Harnett on Bigelow Boulevard, first day of school, 1936.

and "You're it" was the theme of the day. Sounds of steel meeting the road from the skates clamped on our shoes as we slalomed down Bethoven towards Jewel Street. Listen; I hear the sound of the bell from Dinky School calling the students back to class. Such a simple sound sends my memory into high gear.

Can you still feel the scratchy sensation of the ragweed as you tunneled through the dense green foliage? The hillsides abounded in weeds back then. That was our playground, our battlefield, our domain. We built frail wooden shacks and hung an old oil-cloth to cover the doorway. We made a cave once from dirt dumped over the hill on Bigelow but it "caved-in." What irony! Above Jewel Street there was a level spot where two large rock outcroppings provided neat little fire pits where we roasted potatoes on sticks.

Once winter winds and snow arrived our sled riding began on Bigelow Boulevard, down the slope, onto Jewel Street and Fleetwood. If conditions were right, you might go all the way down to the foot of Herron. The hard part was pulling the sled back up to the starting point.

Christmas came, and the decorations in the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church were unparalleled! On Christmas Eve, watching from my home, a bell-ringing Santa came strolling down Bethoven. One Christmas Eve, at St. John the Baptist Church on Liberty at 34th, an altar boy's red crepe-paper bow tie caught fire! Fortunately, he was unhurt and no damage was sustained.

The Penn Theater on Butler Street was our Saturday haunt. After watching the feature, we always acted out some of the scenes when we got home. One particular feature was "Deadwood Dick" where the bad guy wore a skull mask. I cut a mask from an old sheet and would affix it to my face with a rubber band. Sometimes I would wait, mask and all, behind the tree in front of my house for the Beverly Farm man. When he arrived with his basket of their goodies to sell, I jumped out behind the tree and yelled "Stick 'em up!" He would feign surprise, put down his basket, raise his hands, and say "Don't shoot. I give up."

My pals, Joe Wysocki, Tony Piotrowski (his dad was a patrolman), Eddie Klavon and I would play war games on the hillsides. For grenades, we used small egg stones, and rained them down on the "enemy" below. One time, my buddy's arm was a bit too close to my head and when he launched his missile, it hit my head. My beautiful yellow silk Gene Autry neckscarf turned a bright red. I never did get a Purple Heart for that one.

One evening, romance was in the air and we decided to serenade Mary, the local "Sonja Henie" (the Olympic figure skating champion and film star). We headed to my kitchen where we quick-washed our faces and put on some of the Doctor Ellis hair gel. Looking back now, I'm sure we were a sight! Mary would tell us stories of airplane rides, where she reached out of the window, grabbed a piece of cloud, felt its softness, and returned it. Did we believe that story? Why disbelieve?

Each week, a man with his horse and wagon would come to the neighbor-

Growing up, continued from page 6

hood. "Rags, old iron ..." he would call out, and if we had any scrap metal, he would pay us a few pennies. One day the horse lost its footing and he sat down with the wagon behind him, right in the middle of the sloping Jewel Street. The man, outraged, began whipping the horse to get him to stand. Witnessing this indignity to the animal, we pelted the man with pebbles and berated him for his bad behavior. That incident is still fresh in my memory after all these years.

Bigelow Boulevard was a great place for adventure. A large oriental carpet company building had an advertising billboard affixed to its side. At the bottom of the billboard was a walkway for workers who put up the ads. The outer end of the walkway was about ten to twelve feet above ground. From there we would "parachute" using an old bedsheet with ropes tied to its corners. Miracle of miracles! We were never hurt!

Toward Herron Avenue, by the boulevard, was a deserted gas station. We believed it was haunted, since someone had said there was a dead man hanging in the basement! We had no desire to investigate this one further.

The candy store on Fleetwood near Finland Street was run by a Mr. and Mrs. Radin. With a tad of larceny in our veins, we wrapped a couple of flat pebbles the



Frank Harnett as "Hoot Gibson," about 1937.

size of a nickel in a gum wrapper, and told the clerk our mothers wrapped the money so we would not lose it. We bought a small bag of candy and headed for home. It wasn't long before the clerk came racing after us, snatched the candy away, and we took off like a rocket back home!

My Dad was a very proud Army man from World War I and loved to tell stories of his service. The nuns were fascinated and would invite him into their classrooms to talk to the students about the veterans. He also loved to gather elderberries from the hillsides, especially ones close to the water basin near Blessing Street. Four or five shopping bags full of berries would make a fine batch of homemade jelly. Purple fingers were the order of the day as we all helped hull the berries from their stems.

Zeuger Milk Company had a plant near the Bloomfield Bridge. Beyond that was the Doughnut Shop. We would watch through the window the machine turning out the doughnuts. The bakers there rolled the doughnuts on a large stick in the icing. The bakers would occasionally give us a sample of their wares. Yummy!

On this sweet note my story ends, but there is so much more to tell. The representation of this wonderful era is as close as I can remember. Parents and children alike shared the fun and the little tragedies that occurred. Would I like to return to those times? You bet I would!

Frank Harnett is a "cardician" and lives in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Polish Hill t-shirts



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

Item	Qty	Cost	Total
Red t-shirt Circle size(s) S M L XL XXL		Short sleeve 15.00	
		Long sleeve 20.00	
Black t-shirt Circle size(s) S M L XL XXL		Short sleeve 15.00	
		Long sleeve 20.00	
Packing and shipping: 2.50 per shirt			
Payable to the Polish Hill Civic Association .		TOTAL	

Ship to:	
Name	
Address	
Phone or email	

Event Calendar

August 19 –30 | PHCA office closed for summer vacation |
PHCA office, 3060 Brereton Street

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

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

October 9 | Council to Go with District 7 staff | 7:00 p.m. | PHCA office, 3060 Brereton Street

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

