

# ON THE WEST SIDE

THE UNIVERSITY  
CITY HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY



March, 2004

<http://www.uchs.net>

Mike Hardy, Editor

## AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

for 2003 were distributed at UCHS's annual **Valentine Awards Tea**, held this year at **Ross Commons, Drexel University's** newly restored student center at **34<sup>th</sup> and Powelton Avenue**, one of the recipients of a UCHS's **Outstanding Preservation Award**. The award recognized that "Drexel's efforts have restored and renewed one of the most prominent buildings in **Powelton Village**. This circa 1890 mansion, with a large wrap-around porch, corner turret, and red slate roof has been beautifully returned to its former grandeur, with the restoration of both interior and exterior details. Moldings and cornices, copper bays, and original leaded glass windows all make this historic building a showpiece for Drexel's students. Special thanks go to **Lyn and George Ross** for their generous donation to the restoration of this wonderful building."

A second **Outstanding Preservation Award**

went to **Will Giesey & Sherry Gauldin** for the restoration of their new home at **4535 Osage Avenue**, "for an extraordinary job in restoring a much-abused house. Exterior restoration included the roof, metal side bay, porch and other archi-



tectural details. The exterior brickwork has been repointed and steam cleaned, and a multicolored paint scheme applied to the exterior wood and metal details. The original porch balusters have been reproduced and are primed, awaiting installation in better weather." Fortunately, a break in the weather made that last touch possible before the award presentation.

A "**Preservation Honor**" award was presented

to **Nien-he Hsieh & Sara Toomey** of **4212 Spruce**



**Street**, part of a row by the **Hewitt Brothers** dating from c. 1887 which collectively received an **Outstanding Preservation Award** last year. This year the owners of 4212, their contractor **Jeff Strong** and designer **Nick Furean** were honored for "going the extra mile" "for the

meticulously restored details of the central multi-storied gable, replacing the missing feature of its massive half moon Queen Anne central lunette, obscured under asphalt roofing, with a complementary hammered and painted metal Queen Anne inspired botanically based design."

This year's **Preservation Initiative Award** went to all of those responsible for saving and returning **500 Woodland Terrace** to owner occupancy.

These included the **Woodland Terrace Homeowners Association**; the **Epsilon Chapter of Phi Delta Chi Alumni Association**;



the new owner, **Kevin Takakuwa**; his project architect, **Gregory Oliveri** and especially the **University of the Sciences in Philadelphia**, (whose **President Phil Grabino** is shown above with members of the alumni association) for "vision in finding a new owner for an abandoned former fraternity house adjacent to their campus. The house in question is a prominent corner property on **Woodland Terrace**, designed by **Samuel Sloane** in 1861, then and now one of the best addresses in University City."

Guests at the awards tea also heard from **Larry Moore**, block captain of the historically certified **4600 block of Hazel Avenue** about their continued struggle to correct the destructive abuses and consequences to its neighbors that have radiated from **4643 Hazel Avenue**, now partially collapsed and ordered to be restored by the **Philadelphia Historical Commission**. Larry recounted the block's long time efforts to check abuses by the owners of the property which were rarely assisted by the governmental agencies which oversaw the property until the Historical Commission issued a "cease and desist" order to the exterior "muddlings" of the façade. Their struggle is far from over as neighbors continue to live with and fight against this classic example of "urban blight." Those present offered their support and encouragement and UCHS will continue to assist in any way we can.



And last, but certainly not least, all of those listed on the attachments responsible for their "**Gifts to the Streets**" in the form of historically sensitive façade improvements and gardening and greening additions in 2003 were applauded. Note that a number of the latter were sponsored by the **Spruce Hill Community Association Block Improvement Grant** program which won first prize in **Scotts' National Give Back to Grow Awards** as **Community Beautification Gardener of the Year**. The **Scotts Company**, headquartered in Ohio for over 131 years, is the world's leader in do-it-yourself lawn and garden consumer products.

Each and all these efforts are thanked for their contributions to maintaining and enhancing the historic streetscapes of University City. Nominations for awards and "Gift to the Streets" letters of commendation for work done in 2004 are welcomed by UCHS. Contact us by mail, phone or email to make your nominations during this year.

## SHOWING NOW

In all the **Ritz Theaters** in Philadelphia - **Ritz Bourse, Ritz East, and Ritz 5** - before the main features is a slide show of "**University City - Then and Now**" combining period images from **Robert**

**Skaler's West Philadelphia: University City to 52<sup>nd</sup> Street** and color photos taken by **UCHS Board Member, Sylvia Barkan** displaying the current state of the buildings and sites pictured in Skaler's book. Thanks to assistance from **Todd Powers, Marketing Manager** for the **University City District**, the program demonstrates how many of the buildings in Skaler's book still exist, cared for by responsible stewards for all our benefit. While the program will be available for additional uses in the future, check it out on the Big Screen - very impressive.

It also directs the viewer to UCD's website, [www.ucityphila.com](http://www.ucityphila.com), to locate what's going on now in the area and the UCHS's site, [www.uchs.net](http://www.uchs.net), to learn about efforts to preserve its past. Bob Skaler's book is also available through that site.

This is a limited engagement, so visit a Ritz soon.

## ROBESON

## HONORED

The latest in the **US Post Office's Black Heritage** series honors **Paul Robeson** and the stamp's "**first day of issue**"

dedication on January 20 took place in an expanded and packed reception at the **Paul Robeson House**, a **National Register** property at **4951 Walnut Street**. The



stamp and the house museum owe their existence to **Frances Aulston** and her **West Philadelphia Cultural Alliance**. Founded in 1984, the Alliance works to use the arts as a tool for positive social change as it celebrates the life and achievements of Paul Robeson, scholar, actor, singer, athlete, 20<sup>th</sup> century Renaissance man and social reformer, who died in the house in 1976.

The Alliance works to restore the house and its attached twin as a memorial to Robeson and center for African American arts education in Philadelphia. It is scheduled to be featured soon in a television series, "**Save America's Treasures**" sponsored by the **National Trust for Historic Preservation**.

It deserves a closer look. For information about the Robeson House, the Alliance and its programs and membership benefits, call (215) 747-4675 or [wpca@wpcalliance.org](mailto:wpca@wpcalliance.org).

# HELP SPREAD

## THE WORD

The **UCHS Communications Committee** is looking for new members. If you are interested in helping to spread the word about UCHS programs, educate neighbors about University City's rich history, or just want a way to get involved in UCHS, then the Communications Committee may be the place for you.

The committee is responsible for maintaining the society's web site, [www.uchs.net](http://www.uchs.net), producing our newsletter, "**On the West Side**," and other UCHS publications, and maintaining contacts with and developing materials for local media. If you have skills that may be useful in these tasks, or if you want to learn on the job, sign up for the committee. If you are interested, send an e-mail to committee chair **Tim Wood** at [info@uchs.net](mailto:info@uchs.net), or leave a message at 215 387-3019.

## BOARD CHANGES

Pleading scheduling overloads, long-time active **UCHS Board Members, Mark Brack, Jeremy Wells, Melani Lamond and D-L Wormley** have ask to be replaced and **Karen Allen**, of the **4700 block of Warrington Avenue; Mark Stuart** of the **4500 block of Pine Street; Elizabeth Dubin** of **4600 Hazel Avenue** and **Greg Oliveri**, of **Woodland Terrace** have agreed to fill out unexpired terms on the board. In addition, Board member, **Joanne Kellerman** has agreed to take over as **Treasurer**, replacing hard- working **John Hayden**, who has moved to smaller quarters in center city. We thank them all for their contributions, past, present and future, and look forward to enjoying future engagements with them in celebrating the past in University City.

Other **UCHS** members interested in serving on the board or on UCHS committees should get in touch. Plenty of opportunities exist to make a contribution.

## ANOTHER OBSTACLE

to the full development of the lower Schuylkill River with a mix of residential, recreational and commercial area as part of the Mayor's vision of

Philadelphia as the "**New River City**" is with us as that same administration is considering granting a waiver for a construction and demolition waste-recycling facility (to join the other trash disposal plants already in place) in the **Bartram Garden**



neighborhood. This would, for the first time in state history, override a state law that prohibits companies from operating trash facilities within 300 yards of public parks or playgrounds.

While the developer promises an extensively landscaped and clean operation, if you think that the neighborhood has had enough and that more creative planning and actions for linking that bank of the river to center city and the rest of **West Philadelphia** by the long discussed greenway developments should be our goal, for complete details, go to <http://www.hallwatch.org/faxbank/trashplant> and register your position.

## DON'T FORGET

All UCHS members are also eligible to join the **UCHS Grapevine**, a special members-only list serve for discussing historical and historic preservation issues, including recommendations for good local craftspeople, contractors and suppliers. To join, send a blank e-mail to [grapevine-subscribe@uchs.net](mailto:grapevine-subscribe@uchs.net).

## EVENTS & DATES TO REMEMBER

Thurs. April 1st – **Energy Basics Workshop**, organized by the **Neighborhood Initiatives Program** of the **University City District** and **Solutions for Progress** – Information on energy efficiency and techniques and resources to achieve affordable energy comfort: Learn how to read and understand a utility bill, do-it-yourself techniques that support energy conservation, grant and loan programs available to support energy conservation repairs and rehabilitation. 6 - 9 PM at **Calvary Center**, 48<sup>th</sup> & Baltimore Avenue - \$25 per person, pre registration is required, (215) 243-0555.

Thursday, May 6 – **Party for the Park**, sponsored by the **University City District** and the

**Friends of Clark Park** to raise funds to contract for the maintenance of University City's largest park. Your invitation will be in the mail.

Saturday, May 8 – **Bartram Native Plant Sale** – Browse for botanical treasures in the **Bartram Barnyard** (the Bartram barn is the oldest in Philadelphia, built by John Bartram, Jr. in 1775). The sale is from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., followed by the first of this season's **Schuylkill River Cruises** from the **Bartram Meadow** to the **Schuylkill Waterworks** and back, at 2 and 4 p.m. Limited seating at \$15 each. To register, call (215) 729-5281. Historic Bartram's Garden, 54<sup>th</sup> and Lindbergh Avenue, [www.bartramsgarden.org](http://www.bartramsgarden.org)

Saturday, May 8 – **Spruce Hill May Fair** – Join UCHS and other organizations along with food, flowers and fun at this community fair. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. **Clark Park**, 43<sup>rd</sup> and Baltimore Avenue

Saturday, June 6 – **Garden Court Progressive Dinner** – Visit three homes for appetizers, entrée and dessert at this annual community gathering. UCHS will be providing historical materials and “interpreters” to display Garden Court in three stages of its development as an added feature this year. 5:30-9:30. \$25 (for **Garden Court Community Association** members), \$30 for non-members, with a one-

year membership included. Call (215) 476-2874.

Sunday, June 13 - **Mystery Gardens Of Midtown (Harrisburg, PA that is)** - Join **UC Green** and **UCHS** for a day train trip to **Historic Harrisburg Association's Spring House & Garden Tour** featuring homes in Harrisburg's historic midtown. 1-5 p.m. Details to follow in our next newsletter.

**SPECIAL THANKS** Sustainers of UCHS: **Nicholas & Eleanor Cernansky; Genie & David Hochman; Ed & Susan Montgomery; Brenda & Arnold Palley** in memory of **Ruth Molloy**. And to those who did the same as **Friends of UCHS: Steven Wagner & Jason Bell; Greg & Mary Berzinsky; David & Linda Blythe; Margaret Campbell; Nancy Cox; Nina Hope & Steve Davis; Carol Dubie; Libby Rosof & Murray Dubin; Conrad & Lois Hamerman; Marja & Jan B. Hoek; William F. Hooper; Nadine Landis; Dan Liberatoscioli, The Restaurant School; Elizabeth P. McLean; John Puckett & Karin Schaller; Peter A. Shelton; Paul Steege & Associates; Rod Stewart; Bob Grant, Director, Youth Services, Inc.**

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***HISTORICAL SOCIETY***

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