

ON THE WEST SIDE

THE UNIVERSITY
CITY HISTORICAL
SOCIETY



September, 2009

<http://www.uchs.net>

Mike Hardy, Editor

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Helma Weeks, UCHS President

It was with a bit of trepidation that I accepted the nomination and election by the UCHS board to be president of the **University City Historic Society** for a year beginning this fall. I don't live in the traditional part of UC, south of Market, my home is in **Powelton**, north of Market. You could say, at the fringe of UC. I will do my best!

Helping me will be the entire UCHS board and the newly elected officers and board members: **Roy Harker**, vice president; **Joanne Kellerman**, treasurer; and **Mark Wagenfeld**, secretary. Roy and Joanne were recently reelected as board members for additional three-year terms as part of the Class of 2012, together with **Sylvia Barkan**, **Mike Hardy**, **Judy Lamirand**, **Ed Robertson** and **Elizabeth Stegner**.

I am interested in architecture, old and current, and a proponent of preservation of buildings and neighborhoods. I lived in Powelton in the late 60s and early 70s in a **Second Empire** "moneypit." I returned to Powelton 12 years ago and live in a converted stable on a small street. I am a volunteer guide for **Architectural Walking Tours**, now under the auspices of the **Preservation Alliance of Greater Philadelphia**.

University City has a marvelous, diverse selection of neighborhoods, streetscapes, houses, churches, and institutional buildings. Preservation is an uphill battle, particularly now in tight times. At the recent board meeting we talked about what can be done to protect the buildings in the area. One suggestion was to encourage individual homeowners to list their houses on the city's register of historic buildings. In a

future newsletter we will outline the process involved in getting a property listed. We will also explore the feasibility of a conservation district and will keep you informed of the advantages and process.

Please visit the newly redesigned UCHS website, www.uchs.net. There is lots of new information including a newly created list of properties on the local Philadelphia historic register.

I do hope to hear from UCHS members with suggestions and concerns. My email is: hnweeks@verizon.net



LAST CHANCE

To visit the **Arthur Ross Gallery, 220 S. 34th Street**, in the old **Furness Library** on the campus of the **University of Pennsylvania** to view the free exhibit, "**West Philadelphia: Building a Community**" which runs only through Sunday, October 11, 2009. The exhibit is open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 am to 5 pm, and Saturdays and Sunday, 12 to 5 pm.

This unique show highlights rarely or never exhibited images of early **West Philadelphia** by self-taught Scottish immigrant **David J. Kennedy**, part of the 2000 watercolors recently inventoried by the **Historical Society of Pennsylvania**. These are combined with other historic images from a wide variety of media. The best overall description is by the new Director of the Gallery, **Lynn Marsden-**

Atlas:

“*West Philadelphia: Building a Community* documents the neighborhood’s 19th-century architectural and urban development while featuring highlights of today’s dynamic, multicultural community. The earliest works in the exhibition include David J. Kennedy’s watercolors that depict West Philadelphia houses, institutions, and streets between 1836-1898. City land maps, early photographs, and postcards also document the neighborhood’s rapid expansion.

Through the use of technology—the web and video—visitors can discover West Philadelphia today. The **West Philadelphia Community History Center** website and other links can be explored at computer kiosks. Four videos produced by **Scribe Video Center** offer oral history and neighborhood documentaries. This exhibition is a collaboration between the Arthur Ross Gallery, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, and the University Archives and Records Center. It is also included in *Penn’s Arts & the City Year.*”

The exhibit is accompanied by a series of special lectures and events with these still to come and sure to be of interest to UCHS members:

Wednesday, September 30, 5:30 pm – West Philadelphia Community History Center, by Dr. Walter Licht, History Department, University of Pennsylvania and Mark Frazier Lloyd, Director, University Archives and Records Center. This web-based archive and its future is both on display in the gallery and the subject of their talk and discussion with the audience that night.

Wednesday, October 7, 5:30 pm – Building Bridges: Penn and West Philadelphia, a panel discussion, moderated by **Dr. Ira Harkavy, Associate Vice President and Director, Netter Center for Community Partnerships, University of Pennsylvania.** Scheduled to appear on the panel will be representatives from Penn, its outreach programs, neighborhood representatives and **Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell.**

The exhibit and these two presentations offer members a special opportunity to examine some colorful and unique resources for understanding, through images, something about the rich historical heritage of West Philadelphia and learn first-hand about

ongoing efforts to expand out knowledge about that heritage and the present and future relationship of town and gown in our neighborhood.

Don’t miss out.

WALKING TOURS

For the more active members of UCHS, Powelton neighbor and architect, **Bob Thomas,** welcomes you to these **Philadelphia Parks Alliance** tours whose sponsors include UCHS, with special membership discounts extended to UCHS members and their guests.

Saturday, October 3, 2009, 8.00 am until dinner (all day tour)

Fall and Pretzels in Lancaster County

Information and reservations: Philadelphia Parks Alliance, 215-879-8159. Meeting place: please confirm when registering.—Terrain and Difficulty: Easy back paved roads. Moderate difficulty Wear good walking shoes, dress warmly if need be, and bring a lunch to eat along the trail. Pre-registration required (limit of 12 participants). \$25 for members/\$30 for non-members.

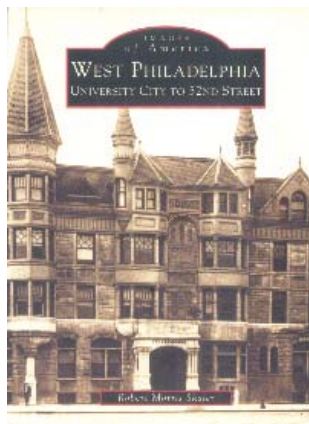
Join us for a fall walk on quiet back roads of the **Amish** farm country to observe the fall harvest, and to visit a local pretzel bakery or two, where we’ll see the traditional hand-skills of pretzel making. We’ll have a picnic lunch out in the countryside, and conclude the day’s adventure over dinner with a discussion of land and park planning in **Lancaster County.** Trip fee includes full hiker’s breakfast but not lunch nor dinner; transportation will be via car pools—participants are asked to share expenses.

Saturday, November 7, 2009, 8.00am until dinner (all day tour)

The Atglen and Susquehanna Railroad (The Low Grade Line)

Information and reservations: Philadelphia Parks Alliance, 215-879-8159. Meeting place: please confirm when registering.—Terrain and Difficulty: Moderate walk on trails and railbeds. Wear good walking shoes, dress warmly if need be, and bring a lunch to eat along the trail. Pre-registration required (limit of 12 participants). \$25 for members/\$30 for non-members

Recently this abandoned former **Pennsylvania RR** line, which stretches across all of southern **Lancaster County** was sold to the local townships with the possibility of trail development. We'll view the extraordinary bridges, culverts and trestles built at the dawn of the 20th century by the PRR, and enjoy great views of the **Susquehanna River**, picnicking out in the countryside. We'll conclude the day's adventure over dinner with a discussion of land, trail and park planning in Lancaster County. Trip fee includes full hiker's breakfast but not lunch nor dinner; transportation will be via car pools—participants are asked to share expenses.



SKALER RETURNS

Robert Skaler, long-time friend of UCHS and author of **West Philadelphia: University City to 52nd Street** presents “**Growing up in Belmont: West Philadelphia in the mid-20th century**,” a free lecture and book signing at the **Penn Bookstore, 3601 Walnut Street** at 6:00 pm, Tuesday, September 29.

West Philadelphia: University City to 52nd Street (available also from UCHS) is the first photographic history of the area in the last one hundred years. Skaler presents rare images of the typical, modest West Philadelphia row houses that tell the story of how Philadelphia became known as the “**City of Homes**.”

Skaler is a forensic architect and historian, collecting historical images of West Philadelphia for more than thirty-five years. He graduated from the **School of Architecture** at the **University of Pennsylvania** and is a former president of the **Philadelphia Chapter of the Victorian Society in America**. Additional publications in his Images of America Series collection include **Society Hill and Old City** and

Philadelphia's Broad Street: South and North.

This event is in conjunction with the Arthur Ross Gallery.

AT BARTRAM'S GARDEN



October River Cruises - Sundays at 1 PM - October 4 and October 18

The last few chances of the season to enjoy a rarely seen side of the **Schuylkill River**, and take a boat cruise to **Bartram's Garden**. The boat leaves **Center City** and travels down to Bartram's Garden for a tour of the house and botanic garden. Stroll the lawns and meadow and browse the Museum Shop.

Tickets are \$25 for adults, \$20 children 12 and under. To register, call the **Schuylkill River Development Corporation** at 1-888-RIV-PHIL (1-888-748-7445).

Saturday, October 24, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. – Fall Family Fun Day and Native Plant Sale

Children's activities, cider-making, and native plants make this an exciting day out for the family. The Plant Sale features fall fruit and color, and native plants. The day also features a lecture on **Planting Spring Bulbs - 11 a.m. to noon**

Environmental educator **Liz Dailey** talks about why fall is the prime time for planting hardy spring flowering bulbs in this **Pennsylvania Horticultural Society City Gardening Series** lecture. Free, call **Bartram's Garden, 54th St. and Lindbergh Blvd**, (215) 729-5281

Make University City a bit greener.

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info@uchs.net

and future issues and special notices will come your way electronically.

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HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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