

MPNA News

The Melrose Park Neighbors Association

Volume 2 – Number 125

From MPNA President – Andy Rudin

Monday, July 25, 2011

Melrose Park Neighbors Association helps remove ugly dead trees

During June, neighbors living near Mill Road in Melrose Park expressed dismay with SEPTA's failure to remove dead trees along the rail tracks. Besides being foul-looking, they were in danger of falling into traffic-heavy Mill Road.

Neighbors spoke to an MPNA Board Member about this problem. We were able to help, in part, because of having a database of SEPTA contacts. These had proven useful in our campaign to have the current \$2.5 million station constructed.

After several phone calls and follow-up emails, the trees were removed. Chalk up another minor but important victory for your association!

To see these unsightly tree limbs in their full ugliness, just go to the MPNA website and look for this newsletter. It's www.melroseparkneighbors.org

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Ugly dead trees along the land by the SEPTA tracks at Mill Road and MoselyAve



Ugly dead trees along the land by the SEPTA tracks at Mill Road and Stratford Avenue.



Tom Steigerwald – A Remembrance by Albert Fried-Cassorla

Our neighbor, the artist Tom Steigerwald, passed away in June, 2011 after a brief illness. I knew Tom as a friend, fellow member of our Melrose Park Philosophy Club, fellow stroller, explainer of all beautiful things floral, and as a supporter of our Melrose Park Neighbors Association.

To our Philosophy Club, he brought great affection and enthusiasm. He greeted us so warmly and made us feel so appreciated at home, whether the meetings were held at his house or even at others! He particularly delighted in the mysteries of Quantum Mechanics, especially in particles that – according to physicists – appear to be in two places at once. Quantum Mechanics appeared to defy the regularity and otherwise apparently ironclad classical laws of the universe, and this was a source of pleasure to him. It was as if some particles were rising up and saying to Isaac Newton, “I ain't-a gonna be a part of your program! Just deal with me!”

At our meetings we sometimes discussed aesthetic theory; that is, answers to such questions as: What is Art? What is beautiful? Can the ugly be beautiful or art? Tom enjoyed telling us what he found sublime – or beautiful beyond description.

One of those examples he loved is the Flowers Duet from '*Lakme*' by Delibes. Maybe you'd like to listen to it on Youtube or elsewhere and enjoy something Tom thought so wonderful. Here is a web address: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mpT7pK9A61A>

Another of Tom's favorites is the Chinese Peacock dance, which you can watch at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LvhBwwuEGS4>

In both of these he found great pleasure and cause for reflection. But it's not as if he led an insular life. He cared about people close to him and afar.

As a member of our Melrose Park Neighbors Association, he and Patrice supported improvements we struggled to make in stream water quality, train rail-bed safety and gardening projects.

Tom had the ability enliven the world by his paintings, love of beauty, laughter, warmth, friendship talent and passion for all he met.

Is there more one can ask of a person on this earth? He already is sorely missed. And selfishly, I was really looking forward to a summer of mid-week walks and chats in the garden. But I will

cherish and miss the most the memory of his smile, his warm greeting and his unforgettable laughter.

This is the address of an obituary in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*:

http://articles.philly.com/2011-06-13/news/29652979_1_art-students-trompe-l-oeil-art-teacher

And his official web site is: <http://www.tomsteigerwald.com/>

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MPNA Meeting in October

Our commissioner for many years, Mike Swavola, is not running for re-election this year. Dan Norris is the Democrat candidate, and Mark Sirinides is the Republican. Both have agreed to discuss neighborhood and Township issues some Monday evening in October at the Elkins Park Free Library. I'll let you know when. We are going to make a large mailing to all registered voters in Melrose Park. So, If you want to help with that, contact Albert Fried-Cassorla at

albert@fried-cas.com

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Creekside Coop Gets Funding

“Our community's dream of owning its own grocery store has taken several giant leaps forward! CreekSide Co-op received word this week that the board of Fort Washington-based Vantage Point Bank has committed to providing \$3 Million in long-term, USDA guaranteed funding for the purchase, renovation and operation of our co-op market.

The bank has submitted the necessary paperwork to the USDA and we expect to receive the USDA's formal commitment letter within the next few weeks.

In addition, we are happy to report to you that we have signed an agreement of sale to purchase the former Ashbourne Market building. The agreement is on very favorable terms, but does allow the owners of the property to continue to market the building until such time as we post a non-refundable deposit. This is why the "For Sale" signs remain on the building for the time being. If someone else is interested in purchasing the building, we can "lock in" our deal by delivering the deposit.

In preparation for our next steps, we also now have a signed contract with Allied Construction of Fort Washington. Allied is a nationally recognized construction company with major projects throughout the region. They have been working with us for many months to help design and price the construction for the project. Allied will perform the renovation work necessary to convert the former grocery store into what will become our 9,000 square foot co-op market.

So, what remains to be done to get the co-op open? We are in the process of finalizing an acquisition and construction bridge loan commitment from The Reinvestment Fund, a community investment group based in Center City. We have been working closely with TRF for almost a year and, now that the permanent financing is in place, expect to finalize a deal with them very soon. The financing from TRF will be used for the initial acquisition of the property and the construction of the renovations to the building.

The final piece of the financing puzzle is our member loan program, through which we need to raise at least \$250,000. This is a requirement of our bank/TRF financing and the project can not move forward without it! As you will recall, the initial notice of the program was sent some weeks ago and was met with great enthusiasm by the members. As expected, not every member is able to participate at this time, so we will begin soliciting individual loans for \$1,000 or more

(which can be shared among multiple members if desired) in the coming weeks. Once all the financing is secured we will purchase the building and begin construction, most likely around the beginning of 2012, with an expected completion by next summer.

It's taken three and a half years to get to this point. What gave the board the strength and determination to realize this achievement was the overwhelming passion this community has had for this project from the beginning. While challenges and hard work remain, we believe that reaching these milestones means that our most significant unknowns have been resolved and the most daunting doubts about this project are in the past. We look forward to joining with all of you, our friends, families and neighbors, to bring our co-op market to fruition.

Your Co-op Board of Directors”

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Melrose Park Philosophy Club invites new participants to its August 26th meeting

From Albert Fried-Cassorla: “The Melrose Park Philosophy Club is a group of people who are not embarrassed to enjoy discussing life's important questions. These include: What is truth? What is Beauty? How do we know what we believe we know? What is consciousness? How can we be happy? Is there a god? Does free will exist? and What are the meanings of life?

We also enjoy each others' company! Our next meeting will be on Friday, August 26th at 7 pm, during which we will discuss Philosophy of Science. So if you would like to know more, send an e-mail to me, Albert Fried-Cassorla, at albert@fried-cas.com

I will let you know about the current readings the meeting location. By the way, this month we are offering short readings or a selection of online videos as an alternative to reading our chosen book. Hope to hear from you!”

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This Newsletter

If you have any suggestions for items for this newsletter, feel free to email them to me at andrewrudin@earthlink.net

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MPNA memberships

Membership in MPNA helps pay for plantings, signage, and many other things. Annual dues are \$10 per individual, \$20 per household. Send your contribution to MPNA Board member Jim Muldoon, 106 Parkview Road, Cheltenham, PA 19012. The membership cycle is the calendar year.

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MPNA Board

Members of the MPNA Board are Andrew Rudin, Phil Kates, Michael Shectman, Jim Muldoon, Debbie Posmontier and Albert Fried-Cassorla. If you are interested in helping out with MPNA, please email me atandrewrudin@earthlink.net. This newsletter is available or will be soon on our website –www.melroseparkneighbors.org

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