



SPRING HILL * CITYVIEW TIMES

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER



Vol. 8 No. 57

March-April 2008

UPCOMING EVENTS IN 2008

General Meeting
Darlene Harris Guest Speaker
Monday, March 3rd, 7:00 p.m.
Spring Hill Elementary School
auditorium

"Earth Against Litter" Community
Cleanup
Saturday, April 19th, 9:00 a.m.
Homer Street Firehouse

General Meeting
Public Works & Redd Up Program
Guest Speakers
Monday, May 5th, 7:00 p.m.
Spring Hill Elementary School
auditorium

Community Garden Clean-up and
Planting
Saturday, May 10th, 9:00 a.m.
Homer Street Firehouse

Community Clean-Up
Saturday, May 10th, 9:00 a.m.
Homer Street Firehouse

General Meetings are scheduled
at the Spring Hill Elementary
School auditorium at 7:00 p.m. on
the following dates:
Monday, March 3rd
Monday, May 5th
Monday, September 8th
Monday, October 6th
Monday, November 3rd

EARTH AGAINST LITTER April 19th, 9:00 a.m.

On April 19th, we will be participating in the "Earth Against Litter" campaign being organized citywide by the group Citizens Against Litter (www.citizensagainstlitter.org). Please help to make Spring Hill a desirable and litter-free community by participating. We will be meeting at the Homer Street Firehouse at 9:00 a.m. Gloves and bags will be provided. Water will be available and we'll have pizza afterwards for all participants.

If there's one consistent complaint that we hear, it's about the garbage that accumulates along our main roads, especially Itin Street. The only way to combat this blight is through the consistent cleanup efforts by our neighborhood because the city sure isn't going to do it. So please join us!

For any questions contact Ben Soltesz, 412-231-0303.

NORTHSIDE PUBLIC SAFETY MEETINGS

Northside Public Safety Council meetings are held at 4 Allegheny Center suite 601, every first Thursday of the month at 5:30 p.m. All are welcome to attend.

FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT

Someone told me spring is near. Well, not close enough for me but the good news is that the Spring Hill Civic League (SHCL) has a new board member and secretary! Jackie Hoffman became a board member in January with board approval. Subsequently Jackie has accepted the secretary position.

Jackie Hoffman has lived in Spring Hill since 1994. She works for Allegheny County at the local District Magisterial Court. She has a B.S. in Computer Information Technology from Duquesne University and is currently going to school for her Masters Degree in Criminal Justice. Jackie and her boyfriend, Ryan, can often be seen

(Continued on page 2)

SPRING HILL CIVIC LEAGUE CONTACT INFORMATION

President Donna Allison
412-337-0388
shclpres@comcast.net

Vice President Dianne Burns
412-231-7718
dianne.burns@verizon.net

Newsletter Editor Joan Russell
412-322-9945
joanrussell@aol.com



FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT

(Continued from page 1)

walking their two dogs around Spring Hill.

“Welcome” to our newest board member! Jackie met some of the volunteers at the Volunteer Party on Sunday February 10th at Brady’s. I would like to thank all of our volunteers for making so many community events possible.

And a big “Thank You” and “Welcome” to Wanda Miller! Wanda has just offered to be our Volunteer Coordinator.

Wanda Miller moved to Spring Hill from McKees Rocks after her June 2007 marriage to Mark Miller, a Spring Hill native. She works as a Consumer Analyst for the Pet Food Division of Del Monte on the North Side. She has a B.S. in Accounting from Robert Morris University. Wanda and Mark have four daughters, one son, and six grandchildren.

Looking forward to the months ahead, the SHCL Board is planning speakers for community meetings, continuing to recruit volunteers for events, and advocating for city services. We hope that you will join us in all our efforts because every voice counts and makes a difference.

I look forward to seeing you around the neighborhood!
Donna Allison
President

SHCL WEB SITE:
www.shcl.org

GUEST SPEAKERS FOR UPCOMING GENERAL MEETINGS

There will be guest speakers for upcoming General Meetings that may be of interest to you!

For the March 3rd meeting Councilwoman Darlene Harris will talk about the Spring Hill Elementary School's new playground, issues with the city salting our streets, and other items of interest to our community.

For the May 5th meeting representatives from the Redd Up program and Public Works are coming. They will discuss vacant houses, sewer problems, and pothole issues.

For the September 8th meeting Forrest Hodges, Pittsburgh Police Zone 1 Crime Prevention/Community Relations Officer, will talk to the community about drug activity, crime, and speeding issues.

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

Please submit articles for the May/June edition by April 15th to:
Joan Russell
2115 Rockledge Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15212-3533
412-322-9945
joanrussell@aol.com

MAIL DELIVERY

For a yearly subscription, send \$8.00 to:
Spring Hill/Cityview Times at
c/o 1149 Admiral Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15212

Spring Hill Civic League Mission Statement

With the continuing goal of community strength and enrichment, and encouraging the participation of all community residents and business leaders, the Spring Hill Civic League accepts as its defining mission the responsibility to serve its neighborhood by assisting in the achievement of its many common goals.

Board of Directors

President: Donna Allison
Vice President: Dianne Burns
Secretary: Jackie Hoffman
Treasurer: Ben Soltesz
Directors: Stephen Brady
Joan Russell
Eileen Back

SPRING HILL IS A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE!

Do you have friends or co-workers who would like to move into our neighborhood? There are some nice apartments for rent in Spring Hill as well as some great houses for sale. If you know of someone looking for a great place to live, please call me. I have rentals in Spring Hill and know some of the other landlords here as well. If you have units available let me know. I would like to start a network of landlords to keep good tenants in the neighborhood. And don't forget, Jim Dunn Real Estate is our neighbor. If you're looking to buy, he can find what you're looking for.

Contact: Dianne Burns
412-231-7718.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY



Happy Birthday to Jack Schanbacher who is turning fifty... to Kelly Waibel of Yetta Avenue on March 8th... to Terry Gerst of Homer Street on March 31st... and to Bill Gerst of Homer Street on April 27th.

SPRING HILL EMAIL LIST



If you would like to be informed of meetings and other community information via e-mail, please contact Ben Soltesz at bensoltesz@gmail.com to have your name added to the community email list. We look forward to hearing from you!

LOOK WHO'S



**Happy Birthday
JACK SCHANBACHER**

HELP US SPREAD YOUR NEWS!

To the neighbors of the community...

We are interested in announcing the names of new neighbors who have moved into the community in the past year, as well as weddings, anniversaries, birthdays, special achievements, recipes, garden hints, household hints, church announcements, birth announcement, obituaries, etc. See page 2 for how to submit your newsletter information.



OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHY

To the family and friends of Edward "Bud" R. Mangold, Sr. of Spring Hill, husband of the late Cyrilla (Helfrich) Mangold. He passed away on January 19th.

To the family and friends of Ruth E. (Bucciarelli) Vance of Spring Hill, beloved wife of Robert A. Vance. She passed away on February 22nd.

Our thoughts and prayers are with you during this time of mourning.

CONGRATULATIONS



Congratulations to Wilma Reis and her husband who are the proud great grandparents of a little girl, Hannah Rebecca, born in January.

**VOLUNTEER
APPRECIATION PARTY**



On February 10th we had a grand gathering of our block workers and volunteers. Our devoted board solicited wonderful treats and great door prizes for everyone. A great time was had by all! The board decided this would be a great way to show our volunteers how much we, as a community, appreciate all the help year round.

Our "Appreciation" party was well attended. Steve Brady once again hosted our event and welcomed us into his beautiful Memorial Home. A small buffet was provided by Sassy Marie's, Bistro to Go, Priory Fine Pastries, and a few goodies from board members Joan Russell and Dianne Burns. Door prizes were donated from lots of area businesses. Eileen Back donated an Olive Garden Gift Certificate and her card club donated 3 gift certificates. Thank you Ladies! Everyone on the board worked hard to make this a fun event.

A big "Thank You" goes out to the following business that helped us help our community. Please show your gratitude by shopping at these businesses.

Sassy Marie's
Bar and Restaurant
422 Foreland Street
412-246-0355
www.sassymaries.com

Priory Fine Pastries
Pastries, Wedding Cakes
528 East Ohio Street
412-321-7270
www.prioryfinepastries.com

Bistro to Go
Meals, Catering, Classes
415 East Ohio Street
412-231-0218
www.Bistro-togo.com

Kasunick's Beer Dist.
807 East Street
412-321-0257

Keystone Plumbing
Has Everything!
1215 Brighton Road
412-462-8600

Grant Bar
Fine Dining
114 Grant Ave
Millvale PA 15209

Peanutz
Bar and Restaurant
410 East Ohio Street
412-321-5930

Marshall's Gas
Gas Convenience Store
1520 Spring Garden Ave
412-321-1614

Spikes Beer Dist.
1439 Spring Garden Ave.

Max's Allegheny Tavern
German Cuisine
537 Suismon Street

Beleza Coffee House
Coffee & Pastries
1501 Buena Vista
412-321-4210

Sweet Time Café/General Store
Unique Gifts & Post Office
435 East Ohio Street
412-231-7170

Shaklee
Creating Healthier Lives Since 1956
412-231-7718
www.shaklee.net/dburns

The Pittsburgh Steelers

SHCL NEEDS YOU!

Do you have a few hours next year to help your community? SHCL is looking for volunteers. If you have a talent you think the community needs please contact any board member. Phone numbers and emails are listed on the front page.

Web Master: Someone to update and maintain our website www.shcl.org.

Men with Tools: Chain Saws, Clippers, etc, for occasional clean-ups, help with property maintenance.

Block Worker: Deliver the newsletter to your neighbors.

Garden Steward: Organize delivery of plants and garden parties.

Planters/Weeders: Plant the community garden and keep it looking good!

Party Coordinator: Help organize community events.

Halloween and Christmas Volunteers: Help your kids have fun!



COMMUNITY GARDEN



**Cleanup and Planting
May 10th, 9:00 a.m.**

Happy Spring!!! It's time to get the community garden ready for the season. On Saturday, May 10th at 9:00 a.m., we will get together to clean up the garden and prepare for our new plants. We need many hands to pull the weeds and set up the basis for our beautiful garden. Please bring your gloves and small gardening tools if you have them. Bring a friend or neighbor and don't forget the kids. We will supply water and a light lunch for all volunteers.

Flowers Needed

With the help of the Western PA Conservancy, we are changing our community garden to a perennial garden. While the Conservancy will donate some plants, we need a few more to help fill the entire garden. Please think of our community garden while you are dividing your perennials this spring. If you have bought a few extra annuals, we could use those as well. It would be great if you could drop them off, but we will make arrangements to pick them up if necessary.

Weeding Volunteers

We also need weeding volunteers. If you can get a group of neighbors together once a month or even just one day this summer, please let me know. When you are walking by please feel free to pull a few weeds. Every little bit helps!

If you just have a few hours to donate, stop on the first Saturday of each month. This is our official "community weeding day." We will start at 9:00 a.m. each first Saturday. This should keep our garden looking great all summer!

If you aren't able to pull weeds and don't have a green thumb, your cash donation will help us purchase the materials we need to get this garden off to a great start. Donations can be sent to: Spring Hill Civic League, 1129 Haslage Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15212. Please make your check out to the Spring Hill Civic League and mark your donation for the community garden.

For any questions contact Dianne Burns, 412-231-7718.

**COMMUNITY CLEAN-UP
DAY**

May 10th, 9:00 a.m.



Please join us on Saturday, May 10th, in our fight against litter to "Redd Up" Spring Hill. This effort will be in addition to "Earth Against Litter" in April. We will meet at the Firehouse at 9:00 a.m. Bring gloves if you have them. We will supply the trash bags. Our goal is to clean up the main roads coming into our community.

Water and a light lunch will be provided for all volunteers. Bring a friend or a neighbor. This is your community. Help us keep it clean!

For any questions contact Ben Soltesz, 412-231-0303.

**PITTSBURGH BUREAU OF
POLICE CITIZEN ALERT**

Narcotics/Vice

So far, for the month of January 2008, detectives from the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police Narcotics and Vice Unit have made numerous arrests and seized narcotics with an estimated street value of \$21,300. The narcotics seized during this time period include heroin, crack cocaine, powder cocaine, marijuana, methadone, and various pills. These are common drugs we seize all the time, but new to our list is the seizure of hashish that was recovered in the Carrick section of the City. Narcotics detectives need the eyes and ears of the community to assist us in curtailing this illegal drug activity. Please call the Narcotics/Vice office at 412-323-7761 with any tips, and as always, you may remain anonymous.

Unfortunately, we continue to see our youth engaged in the drug trade. The Pittsburgh Bureau of Police would like to encourage parents to take advantage of those "teachable moments" that come up during the course of a day. Talk to your children about the negative effects of drug usage when you see an anti-drug message or a drug-related incident on T.V. Not only talk, but really listen to what they have to say about the drug activity they may see and the peer pressure they may encounter. Always encourage your children to make positive choices and be aware of the consequences for bad choices. Be consistent and clear about what you as parents consider acceptable behavior.

THE HISTORY OF ST. PATRICK'S DAY



St. Patrick's Day is celebrated on March 17, his religious feast day and the anniversary of his death in the fifth century.

The Irish have observed this day as a religious holiday for thousands of years.

On St. Patrick's Day, which falls during the Christian season of Lent, Irish families would traditionally attend church in the morning and celebrate in the afternoon. Lenten prohibitions against the consumption of meat were waived and people would dance, drink, and feast—on the traditional meal of Irish bacon and cabbage.

The first St. Patrick's Day parade took place not in Ireland, but in the United States. Irish soldiers serving in the English military marched through New York City on March 17, 1762. Along with their music, the parade helped the soldiers to reconnect with their Irish roots, as well as fellow Irishmen serving in the English army.

Over the next thirty-five years, Irish patriotism among American immigrants flourished, prompting the rise of so-called "Irish Aid" societies, like the Friendly Sons of Saint Patrick and the Hibernian Society. Each group would hold annual parades featuring bagpipes (which actually first became popular in the Scottish and British armies) and drums.

Up until the mid-nineteenth century, most Irish immigrants in America were members of the Protestant middle class. When the Great Potato Famine hit Ireland in 1845, close to a million Catholic Irish began to pour into America to escape starvation.

The Irish soon began to realize that their great numbers endowed them with a political power that had yet to be exploited. They started to organize, and their voting block, known as the "green machine," became an important swing vote for political hopefuls.

Suddenly, annual St. Patrick's Day parades became a show of strength for Irish Americans, as well as a must-attend event for a slew of political candidates.

Today, St. Patrick's Day is celebrated by people of all backgrounds.

SPRING POOLS

By Robert Frost

These pools that, though in forests, still reflect
The total sky almost without defect,
And like the flowers beside them, chill and shiver,
Will like the flowers beside them soon be gone,
And yet not out by any brook or river,
But up by roots to bring dark foliage on.

The trees that have in their pent-up buds
To darken nature and be summer woods –
Let them think twice before they use their powers
To blot out and drink up and sweep away
Those flowery waters and these watery flowers
From snow that melted only yesterday.



EASTER EGGS

Of all the symbols associated with Easter the egg, the symbol of fertility and new life, is the most identifiable. The customs and traditions of using eggs have been associated with Easter for centuries.

Originally Easter eggs were painted with bright colors to represent the sunlight of spring and were used in Easter-egg rolling contests or given as gifts. After they were colored and etched with various designs the eggs were exchanged by lovers and romantic admirers, much the same as valentines. In medieval time eggs were traditionally given at Easter to the servants.

Different cultures have developed their own ways of decorating Easter eggs. Crimson eggs, to honor the blood of Christ, are exchanged in Greece. In parts of Germany and Austria green eggs are used on Holy Thursday. Slavic peoples decorate their eggs in special patterns of gold and silver.

**ARTISTS IMAGE
RESOURCE PRESENTS**

Clay and Print
March 5th – April 5th
Monday – Saturday

As part of the National NCECA 2008 Ceramics Conference, Artists Image Resource presents *Clay and Print* with artists Heather Coffey, David Israel, Jeff Irwin, Kathy King, Les Lawrence, Naitoh Megumi, Nolan Jennifer, Scott Rench, Paul Scott, Ian F. Thomas, Shalene Valenzuela, and Paul Andrew Wandless.

Clay and Printmaking have been combined in various ways for decades, but haven't really been recognized as their own combined unique genre. It's been viewed more as an interesting way to place an image or design onto clay. Combining clay processes and printmaking techniques to make art is a natural and logical evolution of the two versatile mediums. This hybrid art of clay and print has its own exciting rules, lexicon, attitude, views, aesthetics, traditions, cannons and purpose.

Organized by Paul Andrew Wandless

Artists Image Resource
518 Foreland Street, Northside
412-321-8664
www.artistsimageresource.org



**AMANI INTERNATIONAL
COFFEEHOUSE & CAFE**

Stop by Amani at 507 Foreland Street between Middle Street and Cedar Avenue in the East Allegheny neighborhood. Enjoy a great cup of coffee, tea, or your favorite beverage, also wraps, salads, and soups, while celebrating a great neighborhood business. For more information see www.amaniinternational.com

**DOWNUNDER
COFFEEHOUSE**

Upcoming DownUnder Concerts:

- April 19th - Jack Erdie and the Insubordinates
- May 17th - Eve Goodman & Heather Kropf

The DownUnder Coffeehouse is open the third Saturday each month in Allegheny Unitarian Universalist Church, 416 West North Avenue, North Side. Call 412-322-4261 or see www.alleghenyuu.org for more details.

SPRING IS HERE!

Want to look great in your Bathing Suit this year? Learn how to manage your weight the Fun Easy Way. www.cinchplan.com/dburns

Moms – want healthy kids? Want to be a Stay-at-Home Mom? www.projectmahma.com/dburns

Check it Out!

**HOLY WISDOM FOOD
BANK**

This vital ministry serves many in our community who are having hard times. The food bank is **not government-funded** and depends upon donations and volunteers within Holy Wisdom parish and our community.

Please help your neighbors in need. Monetary gifts will be collected at all SHCL meetings. Checks or gift cards can also be sent to: Holy Wisdom Food Pantry, 1025 Haslage Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15212.

The food bank at Holy Wisdom (St. Ambrose School) is held every third Tuesday of the month, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. To register for the food bank or to volunteer call 412-231-1116.

LOCAL PRODUCE

For information on farmers markets, Community Supported Agricultural Programs, and other sources of local produce and meats visit www.buylocalpa.org.

UNITED WAY GIVING

The Spring Hill Civic League has been a United Way's Contributor's Choice for the past several years. Your generosity has helped to fund community activities and defrays routine overhead expenses. **A grateful Thank You** to all who support the community through the United Way. The civic league's Contributor's Choice code number is 207.



FRANK LAMPING, A SPRING HILL NATIVE'S STORY

Frank Lamping, a first generation American, was the youngest of seven children. He grew up on Spring Hill and was married for over 40 years to the late Betty Lee Kirk, a Pittsburgh native. Frank has two sons, Kirk and Clark.

Mr. Lamping began his education career in Pittsburgh, first as a student at St. Ambrose Catholic Elementary School and then at North Catholic High School. After serving in the military for three years during the Korean Conflict, he attended Slippery Rock State Teachers College where he received his under graduate degree and then master's degree from the University of Pittsburgh. He taught in the Pittsburgh County School District for several years before moving to Las Vegas in 1963. He served as an administrator with the Clark County School District for 30 years prior to his retirement, and was instrumental in establishing the middle school concept in the Clark County School District

Mr. Lamping was honored with the privilege of opening two new secondary schools. Kenny C. Guinn Junior High School was the first school in the state of Nevada to receive the President's Excellence in Education award. Mr. Lamping also opened Thurman White Middle School.

Mr. Lamping has been recognized as an outstanding educator with numerous awards such as the University of Notre Dame Exemplar Award for Education, the Milkin Family Foundation Honoree as an outstanding educator, and the Profiles in Excellence Award from the American School Board Association. "I have come to realize that all I ever wanted in my career was to make a difference in the lives of the next generation" stated Mr. Lamping in a dedication to benefit the William McCool Science Center on the campus of Frank Lamping Elementary School.

Mr. Lamping resides in Nevada and subscribes to our newsletter. You can find out more information about Mr. Lamping at www.lampingelementary.com. The Editor.

CHILDREN'S MUSEUM EVENTS INFORMATION

March/April 2008

Secrets of Circles

February 2nd – May 18th

Circles are pretty amazing shapes. Look around, you'll find them everywhere - wheels, clocks, flowers, doorknobs, Frisbees, coins, even the bagel or pita bread in your lunch. The circle shape is seen in nature, machines, and art, in cultures all over the world.

In this new exhibit, explore the math, science, and beauty behind the familiar shape of the circle.

- Build your own gear contraptions to turn a music box dancer, a clock, and a drill.
- Play with unusual cars with various shaped wheels and see the different rides they offer.
- Make a cool kaleidoscope.
- Carve wood on a lathe.
- Pretend and play in a global market full of circles.

Created by the Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose in collaboration with researchers from University of California Santa Cruz's Developmental Psychology Department. Supported in part by the National Science Foundation.

Inside Peanuts: The Life and Art of Charles M. Schulz

March 8th – April 27th

Celebrate the extraordinary life of Charles Schulz and learn more about the creation of one of the most popular and influential cartoon strips of all time, Peanuts. Reproduction comic strips and preliminary

(Continued on page 9)

**CHILDREN'S MUSEUM EVENTS INFORMATION****(Continued from page 8)**

sketches of the strip let you follow the development of its iconic characters – Snoopy, Charlie Brown, Lucy, and more. Quotes by Charles Schulz and comic strips by prominent cartoonists who influenced him as a young artist flesh out the story of his creative process and artistic focus. Entertaining Peanuts collectibles from six decades add to the fun.

Sponsored by Clearview Federal Credit Union.

Snoopy Dance Party

Dance your heart out as we transform the Theater into a Peanuts dance club for the whole family! Make your own Snoopy ears to complete your outfit.

Saturday, March 8th, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

The Music of Peanuts

Enjoy live performances of your favorite Peanuts tunes by jazz saxophonist Lee Robinson.

Sunday, March 9th, 2:00 - 3:30 p.m. and Saturday, March 29th, 2:00 - 3:30 p.m.

Free Funnies Sunday

Find Snoopy in his home strip with free Sunday comics from the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, while supplies last.

Dates to be determined.

"Drawing on the Walls"

See how everyday family moments can be transformed into sparks of creativity through the live cartoon illustrations of Joe Wos, resident cartoonist of the Charles M. Schulz Museum.

Friday, March 21st, 2:00 & 3:00 p.m. and Saturday, April 26th, 3:00 p.m.

Peanuts Trivia Contest

How well do you know your Peanuts characters? Parent and child pairs can be contestants on our trivia game show to win prizes and fame!

Sunday, March 30th at 1:00, 2:00, and 3:00 p.m.

Mister Roger's Day**Thursday, March 20th**

In honor of the life of one of Pittsburgh's greatest neighbors, Fred Rogers, the Children's Museum is pleased to offer free admission all day on his milestone 80th birthday. Mr. McFeely will make a special "speedy delivery" visit to the Museum to celebrate this day.

Explore Your Family Tree**Sunday, March 9th, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.**

Bring your whole family - mom, dad, kids, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins - to this fun event celebrating our family histories. Explore your family tree, learn local history, tell and hear family stories, and make a unique craft version of your family tree. Experts from the Heinz History Center, Carnegie Libraries, Fort Pitt Museum, WQED, Photo Antiquities, and more will provide information on local history and teach you how to research your family's genealogy.

The largest family in attendance wins a 1-Year Deluxe Family Membership to the Children's Museum. Refreshments will be available for purchase at our Museum Cafe.

*Tickets are \$12 for members, \$15 for non-members; a **Family of Four** ticket package is \$40 for members, \$52 for non-members. To reserve your tickets or for more information, please call 412- 586-6032.*



STATE REPRESENTATIVE DON WALKO REPORTS FROM HARRISBURG

Walko Backs Way to Save Taxpayers on School Costs

The House Education Committee recently approved legislation I am co-sponsoring that could save Pennsylvania hundreds of millions of dollars, hold down property taxes, and reduce the likelihood of teacher strikes.

The bill (H.B. 1841) could eventually place most public school teachers and other school employees in Pennsylvania under a statewide health benefits plan. One of the biggest advantages to a statewide plan is the leverage that 500 combined school districts would have when purchasing coverage. One legislative study has already suggested that a statewide plan could lower health-care costs for school districts by half a billion dollars.

Skyrocketing employee health-care costs are one of the biggest – if not the biggest – drivers of school budget increases and rising property taxes. Employee health benefits are also routinely the biggest point of contention during contract negotiations, and the cause of many contract impasses and teacher strikes. Addressing school employee health-care coverage is a big part of addressing school cost containment. Any effort to reduce property taxes will be compromised if we don't do something to control the costs that drive property tax increases.

The bill would create a Public School Employees' Benefit Board comprised of representatives from state government, local school boards, and school employees. The board's first responsibility would be to study the way health benefits are delivered in school districts. Depending on the study results, the board would have the option of designing and implementing a statewide health benefits plan for school employees, or implementing an alternative plan to lower health benefits costs. Alternative plans might include encouraging best practices or helping school districts consolidate certain aspects of their plans.

If the board chose a statewide plan, it would still have the flexibility to design a plan that ensures uniform, quality coverage for teachers and other school employees while recognizing regional differences in cost and other factors. School districts would enter the statewide plan as their current contracts expire.

Between 2003 and 2005, the cost of providing health coverage to employees rose by 24 percent in Pennsylvania school districts. School districts pay about \$1.5 billion a year on employee health care, about \$1 out of every \$6 collected in school property taxes.

The legislation has been sent to the full House for consideration.

If you have any questions on state-related concerns please visit my Web site – www.pahouse.com/walko – or call my office at 412-321-5523.

CITY OF PITTSBURGH MAYOR LUKE RAVENSTAHL

The Mayor's March Newsletter

Last month I asked Pittsburghers to share what they love about our great City as part of a Valentine's Day Contest. The impressive number of heartfelt and sincere responses was inspiring, but not surprising. As I have said time and again, Pittsburgh is a City of neighborhoods and residents who have made Pittsburgh all that it is. We must continue to stay positive, talking about all of the things that make us Pittsburgh proud. Whether it's our sports teams, our cultural district, or simply our friendly people, this is a place to go to school, go to work, raise your children, and retire. Pittsburgh has it all.

As we continue to preserve our rich history and traditions, we are making changes to ensure that we continue to grow, attract, and maintain residents and businesses, and also create the cleanest and safest city possible. I want to keep Pittsburgh a place that you are proud to call home, and we are taking proactive measures to ensure that you can.

Working with the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police, we have answered the call to re-establish proactive police presence in our neighborhoods. I pledged to reinvest in the Beat Cop program last year. The Beat Cop program is now up and running. Police Chief Nathan

(Continued on page 11)

**CITY OF PITTSBURGH
MAYOR
LUKE RAVENSTAHL**

(Continued from page 10)

Harper has assigned four "beat cops" to each of the City's six police zones. Zone Commanders will assign the officers to business districts based on community need and crime data analysis.

Public safety is not just about eliminating crime in a neighborhood. We must eliminate the blight and abandonment that encourages and accepts criminal activity. I doubled the demolition budget for 2008, and set a goal of bringing down many more structures this year. We are taking a new look at an old problem, changing the way we prioritize demolition to change the face of our neighborhoods. My administration held meetings with the City's economic development and public safety departments, charging them with the arduous task of overhauling the City's demolition process.

The former process was too reactive. In order to confront the problem and to make any real changes, we needed to be proactive. We have worked together to find new ways to tackle hazardous, crime-ridden structures as quickly and efficiently as possible. The City's most dangerous structures will continue to be torn down as a first priority, sometimes resulting in scattered demolition bids. However, through the revived approach, the City's public safety and economic development bureaus

are now working together to create another layer: geographical second-tier demozones. City taxpayers will get more for their money when we designate demolitions in close proximity, and with the new process we will not simply be razing houses. The remaining vacant lots must become assets to their communities. We will be aggressively implementing greening strategies to create further economic development opportunities in our neighborhoods.

As spring approaches we will continue to clean up and green up the City. I ask that you too help in our efforts to proactively address the problems facing our neighborhoods so that we can continue to take pride in Pittsburgh.

**CITY OF PITTSBURGH,
COUNCILWOMAN
DARLENE M. HARRIS**

The Envelope of Life

I want to let you know about a wonderful free program that could save your life or the life of someone you love. The "Envelope of Life" tells emergency responders your specific medical needs when you cannot communicate this information yourself. It benefits everyone from one to 100.

The "Envelope of Life" contains a questionnaire that provides life saving information to emergency personnel. By taking just a few minutes now to fill out an Envelope of Life form, you will be giving yourself and your family every advantage in an emergency situation. You

can request it by calling Emergency Medical Services Headquarters (EMS), 412-622-6930, or downloading it from the city website www.city.pittsburgh.pa.us. Only EMS can send you the magnetized pocket so you may initially want to contact them.

The questionnaire is quite detailed but is easy to fill out. It asks the most important questions that healthcare workers need to know about you and saves precious moments in a life-threatening event. Information includes medications, medical conditions, allergies, physicians, and emergency contact. EMS recommends that the completed form be placed in its magnetized pocket and placed on a surface in the kitchen with the logo visible so that it can be easily located. The pocket is also a great storage place for your important medical documents such as Defibrillator, Implant, and Port information, Living Will, and DNR orders. Paramedics also suggest that you make copies of it and carry it in your purse, wallet, or vehicle.

I hope you will fill out your "Envelope of Life" today and encourage your family and friends to do the same.

If you would like additional information on the Envelope of Life, please call my office at 412- 255-2135.

