



NEWSLETTER

Friends of Clark Park
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December 2003 Edition

Frank L. Chance, Editor
Anthony West, Publisher

Clark Park Calendar Of Events Winter 2004:

Annual Carol Sing	12.21.2003
FOCP Fall Newsletter	12.29.2003
Clark Park Farmers Market	1.10.2004
FOCP Membership Meeting 7:30 PM	1.13.2004
Dickens Birthday Celebration	2.1.2004
Clark Park Farmers Market	2.14.2004
FOCP Board Meeting, 8 PM	2.18.2004
Clark Park Farmers Market	3.13.2004
FOCP Board Meeting 8 PM	4.7.2004
Clark Park Farmers Market	4.10.2004
FOCP Membership Meeting 7:30 PM	4.13.2004

Winter Membership Meeting

The next meeting of the Friends of Clark Park members will be on Tuesday, January 13, from 7:30 PM at Rosenberger Hall of the University of the Sciences in Philadelphia, 43rd and Kingsessing Streets. Likely agenda items include a rise in membership fees, an historical marker for the Dickens and Little Nell statue, and a T-shirt design contest.

Charles Dickens Birthday Party

Our annual celebration of the birthday of Charles Dickens, in honor of our impressive bronze sculpture of Mr. Dickens with his character creation, Little Nell, is scheduled for the first day of February 2004, from 2:00 PM in Griffith Hall of the University of the Sciences in Philadelphia. Please join us for dramatic readings, music of the Victorian Era, and general merriment!

Our Living, Dying Trees The Best Things in the Park Aren't Free

By Tony West

A fierce October windstorm toppled a large, mature plane tree near the tot lot. It also wreaked terrible damage on two other trees. A pear tree in the North Park alongside Chester Avenue was split right down the middle. Across the street, an already battered Norway maple lost a large portion of its remaining limbs. That makes three trees gone or soon to go. Our "urban forest" comprises about 300 trees. So we lost one percent of that total in one night.

That's why we plant.

Park trees are not in the wild. They cannot replace themselves. People must do that. Park trees, like pet animals, also need regular care to lead as long and healthy a life as possible. The City of Philadelphia does not do that. While the Recreation Dept. is glad to have the trees of Clark Park, it has no mission and no budget to maintain or replace them.

As a Friend of Clark Park, *you* "speak for the trees." You can take action to regrow our beloved canopy, even as it collapses.

The coming years pose a major challenge to the tree cover in the park. The vast stand of London plane trees that dates to the 1920s is reaching the end of its natural life cycle. They'll all come tumbling down. If we want trees to be there when the planes are gone, we must plant them now.

Trees cost, very roughly, \$200 apiece. With pruning and other tree care costs, it is estimated we need to spend about \$5000 per year on this task, indefinitely. The mass death of the plane trees in the next decade may drive that bill up.

Everybody in this neighborhood loves the trees of Clark Park! It's a feeling, a passion, that we all share and that brings us together. Protecting, preserving, and replacing them is everybody's business

TREE WORK

By Ann Dixon

You may notice that more light is getting into the park these days. Hazardous trees have been removed and many plants have been thinned.



The Pruning Crew: Andy Cole, Chris Leswing, John Felton of UCD, and Mark Jason.

Former president Andy Cole and long-time volunteer Chris Leswing donated eight consecutive Saturday mornings this fall to leading the effort to prune trees and shrubs! Board members Lew Mellman and Brian Siano as well as FOCP members Joe Shapiro and Mark Jenson joined the effort. Mark also donated use of his power tools for the job. Work was done systematically, moving from one part of the park to another. Pruning was done for both the health of trees and of humans. Along the way, trees which need the help of professional arborists have been identified. If you wish to get in on the action, contact Chris at scooter@magpage.com.



Former President Andy Cole removes hazardous tree material on Chester Avenue (left); Chris Leswing Steps up to the Pruning Task



The Mulching Crew: President Tony West, Allen Diggs, Debra Walley, Vice President Ron Hudson, Arthur Young, and an unidentified volunteer.

Our new Vice President, Ron Hudson, organized a work day for November 22nd. Allen Diggs, Priscilla Ware, Deborah Wiley, John Magill, Lance Vaughan, Art Young, Nate Wilson, board member Ann Dixon, and Mr. Hudson himself spread wood chips around trees near 46th and Regent Streets. Proper mulching helps to keep trunks safe from mowers, to suppress weeds and hold moisture in the soil. Thanks to John Fenton and Jerome from the UCD for bringing supplies.



Clark Park Music Festival Coordinator Glenn Moyer (left) rakes on a work day; volunteer Joe Shapiro prunes on Chester Avenue.

Halloween Parade

An estimated 250 masked and costumed participants walked in the eighth annual East of West Halloween Parade for the Very Young. The event was held on Friday, October 31 (of course!), and former FOCP president Andy Cole and East of West Town Watch President Frank L. Chance led the group into the twilight. Many houses along the route participated with treats for the youngsters, while Libby Rosof and Murray Dubin hosted the festivities at the end of the parade.

Volunteers Honor Gandhi in the Park

By Tony West

On Oct. 4, 50 members of the South Asian Society and the Muslim Students Association streamed into Clark Park to do University City a good deed. They donated four hours of labor to commemorate the International Gandhi Day of Service. The two groups are networks for young South Asians and Muslims who are affiliated with the neighborhood's schools and hospitals.



Friends of Clark Park had targeted the western side of the South Park, along 45th St. between Chester and Kingsessing, for the improvement area. We rounded up five trees for the volunteers to plant: a yellowwood, a tulip poplar, a pin oak and two tree lilacs. At the park entrance on the SE corner of 45th & Chester, a fan of 500 daffodils and 350 day lilies were planted. We accomplished a great deal of pruning and cleanup as well. Thanks, all you volunteers -- you can come back any time! Thanks also to Chris Leswing and Lew Mellman, who organized and supervised the project.



It was a lovely day in the park. As the volunteers worked above, 50 children were playing in the FoCP Youth Soccer Program below in the Bowl. Across Chester in the North Park, the World Peace Festival, an acoustic-music event, held forth on one side while the Farmer's Market bustled along 43rd St. All this activity was unfazed by an intermittent drizzle! Clark Park was a lively place to be that afternoon.

'HACK' DONATES TO THE PARK

By Tony West

Big Ticket Productions, which is producing the TV show "Hack" in our neighborhood, donated \$500 to Friends of Clark Park in October. "Hack" has used Clark Park, along with other neighborhood locations, for shooting.

That money can support a substantial maintenance or improvement project in the park. FoCP is most grateful to Big Ticket Productions and also to our former FoCP Board member Anne Kringel, who arranged for the contribution.

This large donation excited quite a bit of controversy, because "Hack" itself is controversial in University City. Members responded variously:

"I consider it far too little to compensate for the inconvenience caused to local residents. I would think it must also have a negative effect on the demand for housing in the area. I would expect community organizations to represent the interests of residents and use their resources to discourage this sort of activity – in which case I would be happy to increase my support." – *Brian Spooner*

"That's great! The park can certainly use the money." – *Wadia Gardiner*

Help the Maintenance *Fund*

By Andrew W. Cole,
Maintenance Committee Chair

My wife Janet and I love Clark Park. We must - since we spend most of our weekends - and a good portion of our weekdays there. If you also love the park and enjoy the beautiful trees, open spaces, new playground, fresh air, and clean spaces and walkways, then we encourage you to contribute to the Clark Park Maintenance *Fund*. There is also a Clark Park Maintenance *Endowment* for long term funding and it is described in another article in this newsletter. The basic difference is that the fund is used for current expenses and the endowment for long term care of the park.

Many of you have come to the Party-in-the-Park, which is the significant fund raising event for the Maintenance Fund, but park maintenance is a year round task and if you want to keep the park clean, safe, and beautiful but can't come out on workdays, a contribution to the Maintenance Fund is a great way to help maintain Clark Park.

In support of Clark Park, each year the Maintenance Fund pays to mow 26 times (once a week during the growing season), to clean litter from the park every week, to have spring, summer, and fall cleanups, for weeding mulching beds and trees once per year, for edging the walkways twice per month, for overseeding 10,000 sq. ft. of turf annually and for fertilizing the turf.

The Clark Park Maintenance Fund is a joint project between The Friends of Clark Park (FOCP) and the University City District (UCD). Although the FOCP is vitally interested in park maintenance, we are a small group of volunteers and would not be able to administer or manage such a large project. Therefore, we asked UCD for assistance and they have been unstinting in their help and support. The clean and safe Clark Park that we all know would not have come to pass without their involvement.

However, as we all know, "rust never sleeps", and we need your help to continue to keep Clark Park clean and safe. Although the park is much cleaner than it was, not a day goes by that I, or other park patrons, don't pick up some trash in the park. If you want to help by contributing, please send your check directly to the Maintenance Fund at:

Clark Park Maintenance Fund
c/o University City District
3940 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104

All contributions are tax deductible. For all of us who love Clark Park, thanks for any help you can give.

Clark Park Maintenance *Endowment*

By Andrew W. Cole,
Maintenance Committee Chair

If you take a longer-term view of Clark Park, you may also want to contribute to the long-term endowment for Clark Park that is managed by The Philadelphia Foundation. The maintenance fund (described in another article in this newsletter) provides direct operational dollars to be used immediately in Clark Park. The endowment, on the other hand, allows people to know that Clark Park will have resources to support maintenance for the long term. Currently, the endowment has grown from \$50,000 to \$56,400 in just one year!

Checks should be made payable to "The Philadelphia Foundation" with the memo line reading "Clark Park Maintenance Endowment" and mailed to:

The Philadelphia Foundation
1234 Market St., Ste. 1800
Philadelphia PA 19107-3794

Thanks to all who choose to help out either the Maintenance Endowment or the Maintenance Fund. A beautiful, clean, safe park is a great part of the community and essential to the health of the neighborhood.

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Fall Soccer Season Wrap-up

By Paul Brooks

FOCP's Clark Park Youth Soccer League completed its 15th season on Nov. 22 with our traditional end-of-season picnic. 125 girls and boys ages 5 through 11 participated this season, divided among 9 teams – two more than in previous seasons - - and player attendance was over 85%. An especially large corps of volunteer coaches made this fall's expansion possible: Bill Foronda (who coached two teams, an exhausting endeavor!), Adam Goldman, Amy Johnson, Andrew Wheeler, Carlton Epps, Chris and Alina MacNeal, Dick Salmon, Eugene Lew, Greg and Mary Berinsky, Joe Lorenc, Marianne Gellert-Goldman, Mike Jones, Mike Zhuraw and Victoria Bowman, Reggie James, Steve DeLuca, Susan Meeker, and Vivianne Nachmias. Eddie Madhi and Kaz Uyehara joined the coaching staff mid-season. Bill Moriarty provided many hours of bookkeeping, and Jim Cummings handled purchasing. Many parents gave extra time to help the program run well.

Financial support for CPYSL this season came from neighborhood sponsors including: O'Donnell Real Estate (222-2600); Calvary Center for Culture and Community (386-6494); Spruce Hill Community Association (349-7825); Reading Terminal Market, 12th and Arch Sts.; Vincent Goffredo Plumbing & Heating (724-3425); Rx Restaurant (222-9590); Marigold Dining Room (222-3699); Jefferson Family

Medicine; and Michelle Robinson, Architect (243-2270); and from "national" sponsors Monroe Roth Assoc. of Chicago; Margaret Brooks, Wheaton IL; and the U.S. Navy, by its friend Charles Larson, Annapolis MD. CPYSL's sponsors provide every player with a free team T-shirt and enable us to provide shin guards to players at a deep discount, so that every player can afford them. CPYSL also relies upon and appreciates a grant from the Philadelphia Activities Fund, through the sponsorship of Councilwoman Jannie L. Blackwell.

Looking Ahead to Spring Soccer

By Paul Brooks

Registration forms for the spring soccer season will be mailed in February to all players who played in spring or fall 2003; to insure a place, returning players must register by March 1. Open registration, for new players, will begin March 1; call us on March 1 (please don't call sooner) at 215-552-8186. Children must be at least 5 years old by March 31, but not yet be 12 years old.

Every season CPYSL has to turn away children for lack of enough volunteer coaches. Coaching youth soccer is fun and satisfying. If you're interested in giving it a try, please call us between January 2 and March 10 (the earlier the better) at 215-552-8186. Neither coaching experience nor soccer skills are required, because training is available - - you just need to enjoy teaching children and to be willing to commit to helping on at least six of nine Saturdays.

Sponsoring a soccer team is a great way for a business, professional, or organization to benefit local children and strengthen our neighborhood, while gaining recognition as a "good citizen". In addition to mention in FOCP's newsletter, sponsors receive a framed photo of their team or a team T-shirt including your name and/or logo. You can sponsor a team for two seasons for \$150: send a check, payable "Friends of Clark Park", with "Soccer Sponsor" written on the memo line, to CPYSL, Friends of Clark Park, P.O. Box 31908, Philadelphia, PA 19104, and a note with your name, address, phone and logo (if any); or call us any time after New Year's Day at (215-552-8186) for more information.

Clark Park Farmers Market

By Brian Lang

For those of you who simply cannot live without tasty, farm-fresh products, the Clark Park Farmers' Market will be open once a month this winter. The first market of the winter season was held on Saturday, December 6th, from 10am until noon. The market will continue to operate on the second Saturday of every month through April. By May, the market will likely resume its regular seasonal hours.

Farmers who currently plan to attend market include Ruth Linton from Highland Orchards and Paul Hails from His Kids Farm, who both specialize in organic produce, Brent Fox from B & L Grassland Farm, who raises grass-fed lamb, beef and chicken, and Phylann Russell from Endless Mountains Cabin, who produces maple syrup, maple candy, and baked goods. Also attending market will be Andy King from King's Herb Nook, who specializes in herbs and baked goods, Joel King from King's Bakery, who makes Amish baked goods like whoopie pies and apple dumplings, Paul Shumaker, a flower grower, and Noelle and Carole Margerum of Margerum's Herbs, who bring organic produce, herbs, and baked goods to market. Not all farmers will be attending every market, so come out to market this Saturday and say hello to all the farmers.

The market will be held on the following dates,

December 13th
January 10th
February 14th
March 13th
April 10th

The Food Trust is a nonprofit organization founded in 1992 that works to increase the economic viability of family farms and increase access to nutritious, affordable foods in inner city neighborhoods. The Trust also works to educate public policy makers about the major issues and challenges facing family farmers and farmland preservation.

For more information about The Food Trust and its programs visit www.TheFoodTrust.org.

**“Building Strong Communities
Through Healthy Food”**

What's Next?

By Tony West

People are always asking what the next step in the Renewal Plan will be. This is an important question. Vital decisions will be made on it this year and your input as a FRIENDS OF CLARK PARK member and as a citizen and neighbor will be most welcome.

First let us wrap up previous steps. The new children's play set will be installed at the location of the current playground sometime this spring. That's the latest word from the Dept. of Recreation, which has the money allocated. It has bumped back the commencement of work several times but we are confident the job will be completed in the spring.

Next on the decision block is the upgrading of the basketball court. This step is important to the Dept. of Recreation and money is probably available. But the community should develop a sense of a preferred site for the new courts. They don't have to be on the same spot that they are now. The Renewal Plan explored several sites; still others are under debate. The FoCP Planning Committee will be actively discussing this issue over the winter.

In the North Park, now that the old tot lot has been removed we are free to consider a new design for the central plaza around the flagpole. The Renewal Plan calls for game tables but is otherwise vague about details. My feeling is that this plaza should look good – that it must provide a pleasing visual center to the park. I'd like to see a design search begin as soon as possible.

The South Park, below Kingsessing, has long been treated as the orphan child of the park. Here again, the Renewal Plan calls for a “plaza.” Personally I would like to see some monumental art allocated to this part of the neighborhood. But it is more important that we find a design that encourages people to enter, linger, and relax here.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Friends of Clark Park would like to acknowledge those members whose advanced levels of support have contributed substantially to the renewal of the park.

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