



# The Source

Hawthorne Empowerment Coalition

Your Source for News and Views in *YOUR* Community

Volume 2, Number 7

September, 2002

## 3rd District Town Groups Hosted National Night Out Event

On the exceptionally pleasant evening of August 7th (the heat wave subsided), the 3rd Police District Coalition of Town Watch Groups hosted an outdoor community-based National Night Out Event. This event has been presented two years in a row and is destined to become an annual event as it increases in popularity each year.

The event, the brainchild of the 3rd Police District's Community Relations Officer, Juan "Ace" Delgado was primarily organized by Officer Delgado and Hawthorne Neighbors Town Watch. Participating 3rd Police District Town Watch Groups included: Avenue of the Arts Town Watch, Bella Vista Town Watch, Dickinson Town Watch, 400 Block Dickinson Town Watch, Hawthorne Neighbors Town Watch, Little Bambino Town Watch, Patrolling Against Crime Town Watch, Pennsport/Whitman Town Watch and People Against Crime Town Watch.

It was a fun-filled night that included an abundance of free refreshments for all provided by local business contributors. A special thank you goes out to all of the following contributors:

- |                         |                                  |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Home Depot              | Fresh Fields Whole Foods Markets |
| Dunkin Donuts           | Acme Market                      |
| Nifty-Fifty's           | Apple Nails                      |
| Herbalife International | Philadelphia Art Museum          |
| Philadelphia Phillies   | Doubletree Hotel                 |
| Goldenberg Candies      | John's Water Ice                 |
| Comcast                 | SuperFresh                       |
| Bella Vista Beer Dist.  | McDonalds Corporation            |
| Taqueria la Veracruzana | The Printer's Places             |

The DJ kept the energy pulsating with great music throughout the evening as over 2,000 people from surrounding communities stopped by. They visited the numerous information tables, enjoyed the refreshments, mingled with friends, and watched the children have a great time with face painting and playing with free toys provided just for them. Even the Mayor of Philadelphia



and several media outlets including Channel 6-WPVI-TV got into the act. The Mayor wisely made the Hawthorne community his first stop as he visited the various National Night Out events that



took place throughout the City. The media, of course, was not far behind which resulted in more exposure for our community.

H a w -  
t h o r n e

Neighbors Town Watch again held its 2nd Annual Fund-raising Raffle on site. Raffle tickets were \$1 each and there were over 25 wonderful prizes to win including, but not limited to, a Toaster Oven, an Ice Cream Maker, Gift Certificates to local restaurants and stores, Tickets to a Phillies' Game, Phone Cards, etc. The lucky Grand Prize Winner, Asia Byard, won a gift certificate for a weekend night's stay at the Doubletree Hotel! Not bad for a dollar!



More pictures from this event can be found on the HEC website, <<http://www.hecphilly.org>>.

**More photos on page 5** →

### Next HEC Meeting

Tuesday, October 8, 2002 at the Arts Bank, Broad and South Streets, 7:30 P.M.

## From the President

Last year our September General Meeting was scheduled, as usual, for the 2nd Tuesday of the month. I need not remind anyone of the tragic and unforgettable events that played out on that 2nd Tuesday of September last year which were far from usual. The events of that day, form a backdrop in my mind as we face the first year since its occurrence. I realize anew how much I have to be thankful for and what's really important in this life. The challenges we face as a community pale in comparison to the suffering many people face as they try to find strength to cope with their lives post 9-11.

In remembrance, I have taken time to reflect on the many things we, as a community, have to be thankful for:

- We have a structure in place for our neighborhood association to move forward.
- We have the funding we need to jump-start a few good community-based programs and services.
- We have a strong and dedicated group of civic-minded volunteers who work to preserve our neighborhood association, who are unpaid community servants, who want to see improvement in the quality of life for all who live and/or work in Hawthorne.
- We have the opportunity to learn more about working together, joining together to protect against common threats while maintaining our individuality.
- Our community is getting recognition and, more importantly, respect from funders, other community groups, politicians, media, developers, for our ability to articulate our wants, needs and expectations and to do something about them.
- We live in a diverse community of cultures, races, talents, with an appreciation for the many gifts such diversity brings to our community.

Although I have not given up my mantra urging everyone to "GET INVOLVED," I certainly appreciate all of you and whatever ways (and there are many) you have contributed to HEC. Your cooperation has made a difficult job easier. Together we continue to work hard to put Hawthorne on the map, to get the help we need as a nonprofit organization seeking to improve the quality of life in our community.

This month we resumed our regularly scheduled meetings on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at the Arts Banks, Broad and South Streets. There is much work to be done, yet good news to share with all who are interested in the development of HEC as it moves into its 4th year. As January 2003 approaches, HEC will realize its first full year as a nonprofit corporation. It's wonderful to be here at this time and its even better to know we still have each other and another chance to lift our hands and raise our voices together. I look forward to seeing you at the October meeting.

Raydell Fisher

## Renew library books online

In an effort to better serve users, the Free Library of Philadelphia has added a renewal feature to its Web site. Visitors can log on to <http://www.library.phila.gov> and click on the "My Account" icon. Once a PIN number is established, "My Account" allows users to see the items checked out on their library cards and renew items without library staff assistance. Those items are identified with a small square box to the left of the title.

Renewing a book can be done in four easy steps. Simply click in the box to the left of the item, click the "Renew Item" button at the bottom of the screen, type in the PIN number and click the "Submit PIN" button, and the new due date will appear to the right of the renewed item.

**[Recycle buckets and bins are available at the Hawthorne Cultural Center]**



**Hawthorne Empowerment Coalition**  
 P.O. BOX 18054  
 1200 Carpenter Street  
 Philadelphia, PA 19147  
 Tel: (215)468-6270  
 Fax: (215) 468-5576

### Board of Directors:

*President*

**Raydell Fisher**

*Vice President*

**Albert Hicks**

*Treasurer*

**Sunny Payne**

*Recording Secretary*

**Judy Anderson, MD**

*Corresponding Secretary*

**Patricia Bullard**

# Stressed & Assessed

HEC area residents are among many Philadelphians dismayed by large increases in their city tax assessment. In many cases, the real estate tax increases of 50 to 100 percent piggyback on last year's rise of 25 to 30 percent. Dismayed homeowners are flooding City Council with calls. Civic activists say they fear the tax shock will undermine the city's effort to keep its middle class.

In all, about 270,000 of the city's 485,000 households have been told by the Board of Revision of Taxes that their taxes will go up next year. The city is not increasing its tax rate, which is 2.664 percent, or \$2,664 per \$100,000 of house value. That would require a vote of City Council.

What the city has done instead is increase its estimates of the market value of about 56 percent of the city's residential properties. That means those households and landlords will get tax hikes; 30,000 homeowners will see their homes' estimated values drop, and get tax cuts.

City tax assessors have increased their total estimate of Philadelphia's taxable market value by around \$1.3 billion, to about \$33 billion.

That translates into a revenue increase of \$34 million for the city and public schools. Critics have long blasted the tax because it can sock people with big tax bills regardless of their income. In Philadelphia, the \$1.3 billion increase in market value is about the same as the increase that occurred last year. What's different is that the board pegged more of that increase on a smaller number of high-end houses in affluent areas where real estate values have soared. Those include Center City, Spring Garden, Chestnut Hill, West Mount Airy, East Falls, and parts of the Northeast, board tax maps show. The board has previously undervalued homes in those areas, not keeping pace with appreciating real estate values.

"We cannot allow unreasonable hikes to force residents to contemplate leaving Philadelphia," Vernon Anastasio, the founder of a citywide group, Reasons to Stay, wrote Mayor Street in a letter. The organization was newly formed to encourage policies that make the city more attractive to the middle class. Councilman Frank DiCicco, whose hard-hit district includes parts of Center City, said he would help constituents with appeals.

"Why should we penalize those who take care and improve their property?" DiCicco asked. "We should get down on our knees and thank God they didn't leave the city." Virtually every other district Council member said the complaints were heavy.

Council President Anna Verna, who has received roughly 100 calls in the last two weeks, scheduled five community meetings to address the increases in South Philadelphia.

## Help acquiring food stamps

Pennsylvanians applying for food stamps now are required to complete an eight-page application form, down from 16 pages.

Locally, Yessy Maldonado of the Greater Philadelphia Coalition Against Hunger is visiting food cupboards and soup kitchens to speak with individuals and families who might be eligible for food stamps.

Maldonado also is available to make presentations to community groups and direct-service professionals, and can be reached at 215-430-0555.

## HOW TO APPEAL YOUR TAX INCREASE

If you think assessors have assessed too high a value on your property, you can appeal to the Board of Revision of Taxes. The board says it strives to value homes for tax purposes at between 71 and 80 percent of what they are actually worth. If you can show that the board's "estimated market value" of your house is higher than 80 percent of its true value, you have a good chance of lowering your assessment -and your taxes.

To appeal, complete and file an assessment appeal form by Oct. 7, or within 10 days of receiving notification. Request a form by calling the Board of Revision of Taxes at 215-686-4334. The appeal should indicate your opinion of market value, your mailing address and phone number, the location of the property, and the account number from the Notice of Change in Value. A separate form must be filed for each property.

After the form is filed, the board will schedule a hearing. It should notify you about three weeks in advance. At the hearing, the burden of proof rests with you. You can introduce

evidence, such as recent sales of similar homes in the neighborhood; the property's physical condition, including defects that would affect value; and any location problem that would affect value.

For more information, contact the Board of Revision of Taxes at 215-686-9270 or go to <http://www.phila.gov/revtaxes/>. On that site, you can view the tax information for your home, your neighbors' homes, and any other address in the city.

## PUBLIC SCHOOL HOTLINE

A hotline has been established for parents and guardians of Philadelphia public school students seeking information about their schools and recent changes in the district.

The number for the Public Education Connection is 215-563-9057. The hotline is designed not only to answer questions of parents and community members, but also to put them in touch with other parents and organizations working on education issues.

The service is sponsored by 10 local organizations, including Philadelphia Citizens for Children and Youth, Alliance Organizing Project, ASPIRA, the Philadelphia Home and School Council, and Philadelphia Education Fund.

## SAVVY SAVITZ

*[We at HEC would like to thank Mrs. Savitz for her years of service to our community and wish her well in her new position.—ed.]*

Ellen Savitz, who has been principal of Philadelphia's performing-arts high school for more than a decade, has resigned. Savitz, 56, said she believed that she had taken the High School for Creative and Performing Arts as far as she could and that now it was time for a new set of hands. "It's the right thing for me to do at this time," Savitz said yesterday. "I wanted to leave on a high note."

CAPA is one of the district's magnet schools, and it draws rave reviews from the community for its performances and educational program. Savitz, who has been in the district since 1979, oversaw the school's move in 1997 to its spacious, ornate building on the Avenue of the Arts. It took years of intense lobbying to secure the costly transformation of the historic building at Broad and Christian Streets, and many credit Savitz with making sure the project happened. Last year, she received an award from a local theater company for her work at the school and its impact on the arts community. Four years ago, she was named one of the district's outstanding principals.

Savitz retirement did not last very long. The new School District of Philadelphia chief, Paul Vallas, has persuaded her to accept the newly created position of deputy chief academic officer in charge of creating new high schools. Vallas had previously announced that he intended to build nine new high schools in the city, one in each academic area. He also wants to convert some middle schools to high schools, with the goal of making all high schools smaller. Savitz will also streamline the charter-school application process in the district.

Vallas credited Savitz, who will be paid \$140,000, with taking a school from scratch and building an outstanding, exemplary school. "What better person to oversee our new high schools?" he said. "May all the new high schools become like CAPA." Too that, we at HEC add, here, here! [excerpted from Phila. Inq.]

## RESTATEMENT OF HEC COMMUNITY ZONING MEETING PROCEDURES

When the HEC Zoning & Code Enforcement Committee was formed over two years ago, an announcement was distributed throughout the Hawthorne Community. The announcement has been updated and is restated below for your information. If you are interested in volunteering to serve on this interesting and crucial committee, please call the HEC office at 215-468-6270.

### Announcement

#### To All Members of the Hawthorne Community

The Hawthorne Empowerment Coalition (HEC), a neighborhood association, is pleased to announce the formation of its Zoning & Code Enforcement Committee. Committee members are: Raydell Fisher (Chairperson), Albert Hicks, Yvonne Hicks and Sunny Payne.

The Hawthorne community (bound by 11<sup>th</sup> Street to Broad and by South Street to Washington Avenue) has not been formally represented with oversight and/or enforcement of zoning issues for quite some time. Because the community was underserved in the past, it was often a target for "dumping" of projects that were undesired in other areas of the City. Such properties were placed in our community without regard for compliance with zoning codes because it was known (and taken for granted) that there would be little or no community input or opposition expressed to the Zoning Board of Adjustment. As you may or may not know, the Zoning Board of Adjustment holds hearings for zoning requests and votes to either approve or reject them. Consideration is always given to community support or opposition.

There is not much that can be done to undo what has occurred in the past. However, we are organized to focus on the future during a time of rapid transformation and development. We are particularly pleased to be able to provide an important and much needed community service.

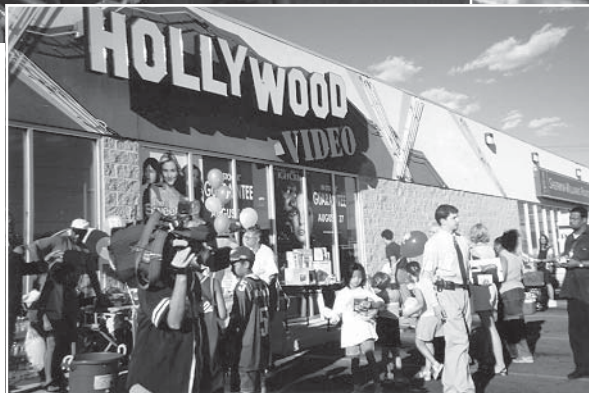
The Zoning & Code Enforcement Committee will hold Community Zoning Meetings on Wednesday evenings at 7:00 p.m. sharp, as needed, at the Hawthorne Cultural Center, 1200 Carpenter Street, Philadelphia, PA (215) 685-1848. All residents and business people of Hawthorne are welcome and urged to participate. Meetings will be held to provide a forum for the voice of the community to be heard as it relates to all upcoming zoning requests within our boundaries. The Owner/Applicant of the property(ies) to be discussed will always be invited to present his/her proposed plans as well as to address related community issues and concerns with regard to the impact on the surrounding neighborhood. Based upon the Owner/Applicant's presentation, discussion and community input, the HEC Zoning & Code Enforcement Committee will make a recommendation in writing to the Zoning Board of Adjustment to either approve or oppose the Applicant's request for a permit, variance, etc. One of the primary goals in this process is to try reach an agreement whenever possible.

Residents of Hawthorne living closest to the property(ies) to be discussed at a particular meeting will be notified in advance (by flyer). Therefore, everyone living within the boundaries will not receive advance notice of every meeting. Nonetheless, no one from the community is excluded for attending any of the meetings. Until everyone becomes familiar with the meeting process, it will be briefly explained in more detail at the beginning of each meeting. In the event a zoning request is of such magnitude as to impact the entire community, meeting notices will be distributed throughout the community.

The Committee looks forward to seeing you at an upcoming community zoning meeting. Remember to check your mailbox for meeting notices.

**There are petition forms at Hawthorne Cultural Center which is a distribution point for recycling buckets and bins. We've got loads of 'em!**

# Hawthorne attends a "Night Out"



## HEC Corporate Sponsors

No Corporate sponsor(s) yet

## HEC Business Members

- R & A Auto Repair
- Gennaro's Pizza
- Pennyfeathers
- Master of Cuts/Braider's Co-Op
- A & L Organization Services, Inc.
- Forman's Money Loan Office
- Alvin M. Levin & Son, Inc. Real Estate
- 4 C's Rentals
- Young's Pharmacy, Inc.
- Dr. Donald Turner
- Chef Gerard Catering

## HEC Community Partners

- Hawthorne Cultural Center
- University of the Arts
- Philadelphia High School for the Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA)
- Hawthorne Family Center of United Communities of Southeast Philadelphia
- Avenue of the Arts, Inc.
- Ready, Willing & Able- Philadelphia
- Hawthorne Neighbors Town Watch

*Please  
Patronize our  
Advertisers*

## Thank you all for your best wishes - they must have worked because we are truly blessed.

Ed Greenberg and his wife, Clancy, are pleased to announce the birth of their daughter, Alexis. As you may or may not know, the Greenbergs are the creators of HEC's website and thanks to them, HEC is on-line today. Following is the Greenberg Birth Announcement with pictures from the Greenberg family:

Here are two pictures from the first hours of Alexis' life in the cold cruel world, hopefully her generation will continue the trend towards a less cruel world...Love and Heartfelt Thanks,

Clancy, Ed, Libbe and Alexis



- Date: 09-05-2002
- Time of Birth: 10:52am
- Her Name: Alexis Rose
- Weight: 7 lbs, 13 oz
- Length: 20" (even)