



The Source

Hawthorne Empowerment Coalition

Your Source for News and Views in *YOUR* Community

Volume 3, Number 4

April, 2003

A Demolition Nightmare

by JILL PORTER

[Following is an excerpt of an article that appeared in the Daily News on December 20, 2002. Because the article is rather lengthy, it is not reprinted here in its entirety. If you would like to read the complete article, please visit the HEC website at www.hecphilly.org. Because this tragedy happened to one of our own (the Jacksons resided in the 1300 block of Webster Street, not at 16th & Webster as stated in the article) we thought it timely to call your attention to how demolition can cause irreparable harm. Considering that much demolition that has taken place (and is on going) in our community, be sure to review the process for filing a complaint on page 5 if you have any problems related to demolition.]

Horace Jackson was terminally ill with cancer when he and his wife were abruptly forced to leave their home last year. The city's demolition of two adjacent properties had so weakened their three-story rowhouse that it was in danger of collapsing.

A year later, Horace is dead. And his wife, Grace, is *still* living in a \$2,200-a-month penthouse apartment—at taxpayer's expense—waiting to be compensated for her home.

The city admits Grace Jackson got lost in the system, at a cost of \$14,792 so far—not including more than \$13,000 in unpaid rent for the past six months.

It gets worse.

The city now is scrambling to relocate the widow. But they want her to move into another temporary locaton: an apartment that's normally used for residents of homeless shelters.

"It's awful," Jackson said: dirty and dingy and far from her cashier's job in Center City.

"It's unreal to treat people like this."

The nightmare for Jackson and her husband is bad enough.

But what does their ordeal portend for a city that's about to demolish up to 14,000 homes--mostly rowhouses—over the next five years under the Neighborhood Transformation Initiative?

After Horace Jackson had surgery for esophageal cancer in June, he had to give up his maintenance job at Girard Medical Center. He'd worked there for 22 years. He was ill and weak, and Grace was forced to quit one of her two jobs to care for him. Still, he was looking forward to spending Christmas at home with his six children and eight grandchildren.

But a week before Christmas, the Jacksons' lives were upended.

"He was downstairs watching television and I was upstairs and I heard a big bang," Grace said.

"I hollered down, 'Did you hear that?'" And he said, 'Hear it? I felt it' "

Ashaw Construction and Training was demolishing the rowhouses on either side of their home on Webster Street, under contract with the city. Shortly after the Jacksons heard the loud noise, demolition was suspended. A supervisor told the couple they had to leave immediately.

"Subject premises has been designated IMMINENTLY DANGEROUS," a letter

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Adams Family Fundraiser

On February 15, 2003 one of our neighborhood families lost their home due to a fire. This unforeseen tragedy has forced Ida Mae Adams and her family out of a home that she has owned for more than four decades.

On behalf of this family, the Hawthorne Cultural Center Advisory Council would like to ask for your support in raising money for Ida Mae Adams and her family. The Hawthorne Cultural Center is sponsoring a fundraiser and is in need of both money and food donations. You are encouraged to in this effort to help a fellow neighbor and friend..

The Hawthorne Cultural Center is a recognized 501(c)3 and would be happy to furnish letters of support so donations can tax deductible.

For further information or to make pick up arrangements for donations, contact Alia Sutton-Bey @ 215-685-1848 on Mondays – Fridays between 2 p.m and 10 p.m.

Continued on page 4

Spring Into Action

Join Philadelphia Green Free Garden Tender Classes. Learn basic garden techniques. Have fun. Make new friends. Enjoy free pizza. Gardeners will be invited to attend additional workshops throughout the year. The next training course is scheduled for: **Saturday, May 17 (Session 1) and Wednesday, May 21 (Session 2)** For information, call us at (215) 988-8800 or email

UpcomingHEC Meeting

Tuesday, May 13, 2003 at
the Arts Bank, Broad and South Streets,
7:30 P.M.

From the President

Last month Jamer Hunt, Director of the University of the Arts Industrial Design Department, was a guest at HEC's General Meeting. He shared how excited the faculty and graduate students from the University of the Arts are about the opportunity to work with this community to develop plans for the community park. His introductory presentation was very engaging as he laid out a timeline for the process from input from the community to the development of conceptual models designed by the students. He also stressed the importance of participation from community members.

Also joining our collaborative discussion at last month's meeting was Carla Puppin, Executor Director of Queen Village Neighbors Association. Carla was not wearing her QVNA hat, however. She joined us instead as a dedicated expert on gardening and tree planting, which will, of course, be an important part of the design for the park. She provided some excellent suggestions about the types of trees that we may chose to plant in our park that could be very different from trees that we are accustomed to seeing along our streets. In addition, planting unique trees could become part of an educational experience for young people and a way to introduce them to tree tending and gardening.

Many people came to the meeting with completed questionnaires in hand, which will be very helpful in getting an idea of what the community wants to see in their park. This month, we have again included the questionnaire. If you have not yet completed a questionnaire about the park, please do so. We invite you to complete it and bring it to the next HEC General Meeting on May 13 when we will continue this discussion. Jamer will be back to help the process along. Other guests are also expected to attend. This is an ongoing plan and a process for you to GET INVOLVED in what is going on in your community! After all HEC IS ALL ABOUT YOU!!

Raydell Fisher

Nominating Committee Formed

In accordance with HEC by-laws, a Nominating Committee was formed at the April 8 General Meeting. In preparation for the June annual meeting when election of new officers for HEC will take place, we are pleased to announce the formation of the Nominating Committee. Please be sure to contact Nominating Committee members at (215) 468-6270 no later than May 1 with names of potential candidates for HEC office. Also plan to attend the May 13th General Meeting to hear from each candidate as they articulate their qualifications and vision for the HEC organization should they be elected.

Nominating Committee Members

Leroy O'Kedas
Raydell Fisher
Patricia Bullard
Albert Hicks
Judy Anderson

CAPA Awards

The following students were winners in the Seventh Annual High School for the Creative and Performing Arts Billboard Contest presented in March.

First-place winner was Doreen Garner who received a \$200 cash prize, a \$75 gift certificate and a plaque.

Second-place winner was Chall Su who received \$100 cash, a \$50 gift certificate and a plaque.

Third-place winner was Trinh Phan who received \$50 cash, a \$25 gift certificate and a plaque. The three winners are sophomores at CAPA.

Honorable mentions were presented to Justin Way, Emmanuel Morales and Collie Mills who all received a plaque and certificate of merit.

The winners posters will be displayed at local fire stations.

HEC Co-Sponsors Street Movies!

HEC is a co-sponsor/community partner of Scribe Video Center's **Street Movies!** screening on June 21, 2003 at Whole Foods Supermarket (South Street).

As a co-sponsor/community partner HEC was invited to consider issues of concern to the Hawthorne community and to help support the event by spreading the word and encouraging people from Hawthorne to attend the screening. Scribe will look to locate videos and films that reflect your issues, themes or interest.

Inaugurated in the summer of 1997, **Street Movies!** provides an opportunity to explore independent film and video in a community setting. This cultural event turns a public screening into an occasion for dialogue and interchange. The free-outdoor screening series has a spe-

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Hawthorne Empowerment Coalition

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NIGHTMARE

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from the city’s Licenses and Inspections later confirmed.

The demolition revealed a pre-existing problem in the Jackson home—the front wall wasn’t attached to the common wall—that was aggravated by the removal of the attached property, according to L&I.

“The front wall was fractured and bulged,” said Robert Solvibile, first deputy commissioner. “Demolition may have made it worse.”

The Jacksons were stunned when they were ordered out of their house. “We looked at each other and then told them we didn’t have any place to go,” Grace said.

“Our children have room just enough for themselves. They didn’t have anywhere to put us.”

Horace was heartsick that he had to spend Christmas in a hotel rather than the South Philadelphia house that had been in his family for more than 45 years.

After spending 10 days in a hotel, the couple was moved to a furnished one-bedroom apartment at Buttonwood Square, a Korman property at 20th and Hamilton Streets, on Dec. 27.

The city has a contract with Korman to provide temporary emergency housing, according to Christine Ottow, the city deputy director of communications. About 10 families a year are put up when their homes are damaged by city demolition. The typical stay is 30 days.

But months went by and the Jacksons remained. Their case was complicated by the fact that the house was still in Horace’s parents’ names, not his, and there are other heirs to the property.

And the city didn’t want to uproot a dying man. Or so Ottow said. But the city decided to stop paying rent in June—Jackson died in August—and the case was transferred from one department to another.

That’s when Grace Jackson got lost in the system.

**PUBLIC GREEN SPACE IN HAWTHORNE!
HEC NEEDS TO HEAR FROM YOU!**

In a joint effort with Uni-Penn, HEC will be designing a community park on the corner of 12th and Catherine. HEC is asking all Hawthorne residents to give their input as to the best use of this wonderful opportunity. Please complete the following questionnaire, and drop it off at the next HEC general meeting. **HELP MAKE HAWTHORNE MORE BEAUTIFUL!!!**

1.) Name of park / green space:

2.) Would you prefer more trees / bushes or more art / non-living features?

3.) Should it include a water feature?

(circle one) Yes / No

4.) Should there be seating?

(circle one) Yes / No

5.) Should it be open 24 hours, or gated / restricted operating hours?

(circle one) 24 hour use Restricted

6.) Could it be used / reserved for organized group activities (this could mean live music, and public speaking)? Note any use of public space must be within city guidelines,

(circle one) Yes / No

7.) Anything else we haven’t thought of?

8.) Your Name & Address:

**COME TO HEC’S GENERAL MEETINGS FOR MORE INFORMATION.
GET INVOLVED!!!!**

HEC Introduces Façade Improvement Program

HEC is working directly with the City of Philadelphia's Department of Commerce and Philadelphia Commercial Development Corporation (PCDC) to introduce the Façade Improvement Program to small business owners in the Hawthorne community.

The Small Business Commercial Improvement Program (SBCIP) provides a rebate to businesses undertaking specific improvements, including façade and security enhancements. SBCIP matches these private investments in an amount up to \$5,000 for a single commercial property, or up to \$10,000 for a corner or multiple address business property. SBCIP was designed to give business owners incentive to make investments in their exterior appearance and physical security to ultimately enhance their overall success and the quality of life in the neighborhoods where they are located.

For a limited time businesses located on South Street are eligible for a 75% match for façade improvements. To receive this 75% benefit, applications must be submitted by June 30, 2003. After this deadline this program exists with a lower City match. We encourage your business to participate.

PCDC is providing intensive outreach to this group of businesses to encourage them to take advantage of this exciting opportunity. HEC is supporting this effort a neighborhood association with a mission to improve the quality of life for all residents and businesses in Hawthorne. Certainly a program designed to help improve the outward appearance of the businesses and make them appear more attractive to customers who may walk or drive by, while helping to improve the streetscape in Hawthorne is compatible with the mission.

HEC is happy to now be able to introduce the SBCIP program to all small businesses currently operating within our boundaries as part of a newly combined initiative of the Commerce Department that incorporates the former façade and security rebate programs.

If you are a small business owner in the Hawthorne community and interested in applying for either of these programs, please contact the HEC office at 215-468-6270 for more information and an application.

See also a related article "Hawthorne has Support of Commerce Department" on Page 5.

Welcome MLK Residents

Hawthorne Cultural Center Recreation Advisory Council welcomes the New Residents of Martin Luther King Housing Development to Hawthorne Square. You are invited to our next general meeting.

Tuesday, May 6, 2003

6:30pm

Hawthorne Cultural Center

1200 Carpenter St.

All residents of Hawthorne Square are welcome.

DON'T BE AN APRIL FOOL

With the approach of warmer weather, police are urging senior citizens to beware of scam artists who might show up at their front door, posing as roofers and other contractors.

These scam artists prey on the elderly by gaining entry into their homes under the pretext of doing inexpensive work for the residents. Do not allow strangers into your home unless a family member, neighbor or friend is present. Remember also that any utility company employee (Gas, Electric, Water) will be wearing a clearly identifiable ID and uniform. Do not hesitate to report any suspicious characters to the police.

FUNDRAISER

Continued from page 1

Here is more information about the upcoming fundraiser:

HAWTHORNE CULTURAL CENTER IS HAVIN' A FISH FRY!

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STREET MOVIES

Continued from page 2

cial emphasis on presenting work that explores issues of concern to the local community. A typical program might include a short animated film, an oral history; a short video by an emerging artist (under 10 minutes) and a longer dramatic independently produced video/film (under 60 minutes).

An important part of the program is the discussion facilitated by a host/comedian/actor, who introduces the work. Scribe provides the programming, the technical crew, and the portable projection equipment and media promotion all free-of-charge.

Look for more information about **Street Movies!** at Whole Foods in upcoming issues of THE SOURCE. In the meantime, please call the HEC office at 215-468-6270 with ideas and issues you would like to explore on video or film, so that selections shown on June 21 will come directly from input provided by members of the Hawthorne community.

Hawthorne Has Support of Commerce Department

HEC President, Raydell Fisher, met with Councilman DiCicco, James Cuorato, City Representative and Director of Commerce and Gerald Marshall, Commercial Area Specialist at Philadelphia Commercial Development Corporation (PCDC) last month to discuss inclusion of the Hawthorne community in the city budget for streetscape improvements. Specifically, Fisher was concerned about the installation of new sidewalks and trees to complete an upgrade along South Street from 2nd Street to 27th Street.

Two years ago, beautiful new lighting was installed along South Street. It was rumored the new lighting was part of Phase I of streetscape improvements and the installation of new sidewalks and trees would take place during Phase II. Fisher reluctantly watched as new sidewalks and trees were installed along South Street, west of Broad, but to date, there were no new sidewalks or trees installed along South Street, east of Broad to 11th Street (the gateway into the Hawthorne community). There were

also no more rumors of plans that were underway to complete Phase II in the Hawthorne community.

During the meeting, arranged by Councilman DiCicco, Fisher expressed her concerns. Mr. Cuorato assured Raydell that she should report back to the community that Hawthorne has the support of both the City and the Commerce Department. Cuorato assured Fisher that every effort will be made to find the dollars to install new sidewalks along the South Street corridor from 11th Street to Broad. In addition, Cuorato provided funding information available to assist HEC with funding the community park at 12th & Catharine Streets once costs and specific plans for the park have been determined.

Fisher is happy to report the meeting was very successful and HEC will follow-up to make sure the Hawthorne community is included in ongoing plans to improve South Street.

See also a related article "HEC Introduces Façade Improvement Program" on Page 4.

Complaint Process

RE: Construction at Former Martin Luther King (MLK) Plaza Site and Surrounding Properties in the Hawthorne Community

[Following is an approved process for submitting complaints with regard to damage to property as a result of ongoing construction and/or demolition in accordance with the Settlement Agreement with Uni-Penn. Also included is a form to use to document and submit your complaint. See Page 6]

Purpose

To provide property owners and others with interest in real property in the Hawthorne community who are affected by construction activities in the MLK Plaza Revitalization to register complaints about these construction activities; to provide complainants with access to information regarding the processing of their complaints and the ultimate disposition of the complaints:

Complaint Intake

It is recognized that because of the nature of ongoing construction activity and the difficulty in effectively communicating formal policy regarding the handling of complaints that complaints have been voiced/registered in a variety of forms and ways. It is important to establish a process to capture and deal with all such complaints. Therefore, it is requested all such complaints should be registered at the following location:

**The Hawthorne Empowerment Coalition (HEC)
at 1200 Carpenter Street**

The intake process consists of providing in writing on the attached form a full description and details of all such complaints to HEC. HEC will forward copies of completed complaint forms within 10 days of receipt to:

Uni-Penn, LLC

Attention: MLK Project Manager, Robert C. Totaro

Pennrose Properties, Inc.

One Liberty Place – Suite 3810

Philadelphia, PA 19107

and

**Councilman Frank DiCicco
Philadelphia City Council
Room 332, City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19103**

The MLK Project Manager will be the party primarily responsible for the management of the complaint process and the resolution of all complaints received from HEC.

Upon initiation of any new construction activity in the Revitalization, Uni-Penn, LLC will formally notify HEC of the nature, timing and extent of that activity and will cooperate with HEC in the dissemination of information regarding that activity. The party primarily responsible for new construction activity will be given written orders regarding the handling of complaints received.

Acknowledgment of Complaint

Upon receipt of complaint by Uni-Penn, LLC, a written acknowledgment of the receipt of complaint will be forwarded by Uni-Penn, LLC to the complainant and to HEC within 10 days of receipt. This communication will also stipulate the action(s) taken or to be taken by Uni-Penn, LLC in seeking to resolve the matter of the matter of the complaint in a satisfactory manner.

Ongoing Reports

On a basis not less than once quarterly, while a complaint remains unresolved, Uni-Penn, LLC will report in writing to the complainant and HEC the status of the process by which Uni-Penn is seeking its resolution.

Complaint Disposition

Each complainant will be advised in writing from Uni-Penn, LLC regarding the ultimate disposition of its complaint.

HEC will be provided a copy of this final report, which will enable it to contact the complainant directly if it seeks to provide advice and support in the case of a disposition, which is not fully satisfactory to the complainant.

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Complaint Form

Complainant's Name _____

Complainant's Address _____

Complainant's Telephone No. _____ Fax _____

E-Mail _____

Please provide a full description and details of your complaint in the space provided below:

Signature of Complainant: _____ Date Delivered to HEC: _____

NOTE: Deliver completed form by mail, walk-in, or fax to:
Hawthorne Empowerment Coalition
1200 Carpenter Street
Philadelphia, PA 19147
(215) 468-6270 (215) 468-5576-fax

This Section to be Completed by HEC Board Member(s) Only:

Received by: _____ Date Received: _____

Date Forwarded: _____
cc: Robert C. Totaro, Pennrose Properties, Inc.
Councilman Frank DiCicco

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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

This newsletter was financed in part by a grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Community and Economic Development.

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