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a Registered Community Organization

Bella Vista Neighbors Association (BVNA) serves residents of Bella Vista, which is bounded by 6th and 11th Streets, and South Street and Washington Avenue. BVNA encourages civic involvement, provides a neutral and public discussion forum, preserves and augments our institutions and character, supports the delivery of government services, and promotes dialog with elected officials. We are an independent and nonprofit registered community organization (RCO).

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9TH STREET FESTIVAL RETURNS WITH TRADITIONAL, FAN-FAVORITE EVENTS

By Robert DiGiacomo



Photo source: Kar Kuo

Grease pole contest in the 9th & Montrose Piazza

Another crowd-pleasing tradition is the grease pole contest at the 9th and Montrose Piazza. The contest (albero della cuccagna in Italian) is said to have been introduced to the U.S. in the 19th century by Sicilian immigrants and has been part of the festival since the early 1980s. Do you (and your crew) have what it takes to climb the 30-foot pole and claim your share of prizes and local glory?

A more recent tradition is the John Marzano Half Ball Tournament, which benefits youth baseball. The competition honors John Marzano, aka "Johnny Marz," a South Philly native and Major League Baseball catcher-turned-broadcaster who died in 2008.

Another South Philly native, Jerry Blavat ("The Geator with the Heater"), will be one of the headline entertainers, playing a DJ set on May 22 from 2-4 p.m. Other featured acts include Nothing But a Nightmare Band (May 21, noon-2 p.m.), DJ Eric Bartello (May 21, 2-4 p.m.), Still River Band (May 21, 4-6 p.m.),

S. 9TH ST. FESTIVAL, continued on page 2

The South 9th Street Festival returns on May 21-22 after a three-year absence due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Billed as Philadelphia's largest block party, the festival will feature traditional events like the Procession of the Saints from St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi Church, as well as crowd favorites like the grease pole contest, and newer offerings, like the half ball tournament. There will also be live music, arts and crafts vendors, a kid-friendly zone, and of course, an abundance of food vendors along 9th Street, from Fitzwater to Wharton.

According to organizers, one of the longest running traditions in Bella Vista is the Procession of the Saints, which dates back to the late 1920s and has been part of the festival since 2000. The procession is slated to begin after 10 a.m. Mass on May 22, at St. Mary's at 712 Montrose St. Leaving the church, it will head to 9th Street and Washington Avenue for the blessing of the market and continue along 9th to Christian to end at St. Paul's.



Photo source: Kar Kuo

S. 9th St. Festival Procession of the Saints
Our of Lady of Guadeloupe

S. 9TH ST. FESTIVAL, continued from page 1

The Chatterband (May 22, noon-2 p.m.), Brother Josephus Band (May 22, 4:30-6 p.m.), and DJ Tommy DeSimone (both days, noon-6 p.m.).

You may come to the festival for the competition, the entertainment, or the camaraderie, but you'll definitely want to stay for the mouth-watering food options. Expect to find everything from Italian favorites like cannoli, gelato, and roast pork sandwiches to a range of street food from Mexican, South American, and Asian vendors.

For the latest information on the festival, visit www.italianmarketfestival.com



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BARDASCINO PARK TILE MURAL

By Carla Puppini

A deep royal blue sea, distant mountains, an umbrella pine, followed by a splash of vivid red and deeper red tile roofs on stone houses—these are the scenes that unfold on the tile mural in Bardascino Park on South Tenth Street. Come closer and you see a sailboat, cacti, clusters of grape vines—the colors, sights, and scents of the Mediterranean are evoked on the mural that extends some thirty feet along the back wall of the park.

The mural was an integral part of the design when the park was built in 1978 and came about because of the City's Percent for Art Ordinance that requires new City construction to include site-specific public art (up to one percent of the total budget).

At the time, Susan Wilson, a young artist, submitted an application and portfolio to the Philadelphia Art Commission to be considered for any upcoming projects. Wilson was invited to submit ideas for a 'bocce court park to be built in South Philadelphia' and she did a small to-scale painting in gouache of different areas in Italy which she proposed to be executed as a tile mural. The Art Commission approved the idea. Wilson recounted, "At the time I lived in an old house in Germantown that had a huge open living room. The tiles were all laid out and I had mixed glazes ready to match my prototype. My son's elementary school class all came to the house for 'show and tell.' I then found someone who had a kiln that would accommodate all the numbered tiles." Wilson recalled the excitement of unwrapping the glazed pieces (360 in all) and then assembling the pieces on site in the still incomplete park.

After forty-four years, the mural has held up beautifully and it continues to provide the colorful and evocative backdrop for everything from quiet bench sitting to lively bocce games.

Wilson went on to a career in landscape architecture, a trajectory that she intimated might have had its early seeds in doing a site-specific tile landscape in our neighborhood.



Mural design and construction in Bardascino Park, 1978



Installing the mural, 1978



The completed mural

BARDASCINO PARK 2022 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

June 11: Kid Fest - a day of family fun for all ages

July & August: dates TBD - Summer Concerts in the Park

August 2: REV Theater Company presents a musical song and dance production. Rain date August 3

September 9, 16, 23, 30: Friday Night Movies in the Park

October 15: Parktoberfest - a family-friendly fall festival

November 25: World Cup match viewing: USA v. England

Follow @bardascinopark on Facebook and Instagram for updates and details on all events.

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LOCAL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

TACO HEART

By Jason Sandman and David Lukmire

A Philadelphia born-and-raised restaurateur, investor, and flour tortilla aficionado, Nano Wheedan believes in the power of a dedication to process. For Wheedan, this process involves food and community, and of course a love for Philadelphia-area professional sports.

"Oh, I definitely bleed green," Wheedan says as we discuss his experience growing up in Mount Airy. From there, Wheedan eventually embarked on a successful restaurant career in Austin, Texas—where he spent over 10 years building and expanding Austin favorite Home Slice Pizza. While in Austin, Wheedan fell in love with local breakfast tacos and their standout foundation: fresh, made-before-your-eyes flour tortillas. Now, he plans on creating his own in Bella Vista.

"I'm just a guy trying to do a thing and I want to know how it can be better," he emphatically proclaims while describing his vision for his new restaurant at 1001 East Passyunk Avenue (formerly El Bocado)—a unique triangle-shaped space at the intersection of Passyunk Avenue, Carpenter Street, and South 7th Street.

The idea for a restaurant at this lively intersection presented itself during the pandemic and was too good of an idea to pass up. "It is such an accessible location. You are so close to the library, the school (Nebinger), everything. It feels like this location could be super vibrant."

So, what can we expect to enjoy at Taco Heart?

Customizable, freshly prepared breakfast tacos will be at the heart of the menu. With plans to open this summer, Wheedan describes them as, simply, "f*cking delicious."

While acknowledging established purveyors of corn tortillas like Tortilleria San Roman and South Philly Barbacoa, Wheedan observed that "no one really has freshly prepared flour tortillas in Philly," as he described, these tacos come topped with chorizo and bacon, creamy jalapeno salsa, and—perhaps the star of the show—migas tacos, a Tex-Mex mashup including tortilla strips and eggs, tomato, onion, and cilantro.

Wheedan values people and community and hopes to create a supportive culture and work environment at the shop. "I bristle at the phrase of a 'real' job," Wheedan states. "This work is really a portal into so many (professional) possibilities." Wheedan should know. He was one of the first employees at Home Slice in Austin before becoming director of operations. As fate would have it, that is where he met Phil Korshak of South Philly institution Korshak Bagels, where Wheedan is a part owner. Breakfast in S. Philly is on the rise and we're excited to eat our hearts out.

Until the restaurant opens, you can follow Nano Wheedan on Instagram @nanostortillas.

CAROLYN VERDI BOUTIQUE

By Lauren Burrell

Carolyn Verdi has lived in Bella Vista for over 30 years. Her business in Bella Vista has transitioned throughout the years from wedding planning services to now off-the-rack wedding gowns along with fashion jewelry and accessories. COVID was quite challenging for Carolyn as she lost her larger location and months of business. Her boutique moved back to her 8th street location in November of 2021 and is now located at 757 S. 8th St.

Carolyn Verdi Boutique offers a variety of off the rack wedding gowns by some of the top designers in the industry, a constant line of fashions and apparel for the seasons, and trendy fashion and vintage jewelry. The store is open Tuesday-Saturday and Sunday by appointment. Visit www.carolynverdi.com or give her a call at 215-925-2997 for more information.



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WHAT'S UP WITH THOSE BLUE & YELLOW SIGNS?

By Dawn Whitfield

Have you ever wondered how those blue and yellow historical markers came to be and why they are placed in selected locations? You're in luck because I'm not only about to walk you through the history of the plaques but also how the plaques are nominated, reviewed, and approved.

The birth of the historical markers began over 100 years ago on July 25, 1913, when an Act of the General Assembly created the Pennsylvania Historical Commission (PHC). From there, the PHC partnered with established historical societies in the state to implement a plan to mark places of historical importance. The year following the PHC's founding, they installed 149 plaques. These plaques did not look like today's blue and yellow plaques; instead, they were bronze and shaped like a keystone cast with the Commonwealth's Coat of Arms. They were then often mounted on large stones found throughout the PA countryside. These plaques and their dedicating ceremonies could cost up to \$1000, often paid for by local historical or patriotic organizations or private citizens.

In 1945, PHC merged with the State Archives and the State Museum to become the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC). The new organization designed and created a new plaque similar to what we see today; PHMC deemed this new plaque the "history on a stick" style. This new style was easier to install and more convenient for motorists to see and read.

From the creation of the PHC until the 1990s, the nominations and selection of plaque placement were only made by the PHC (later PHMC) staff in partnership with various historical societies throughout the state. Starting in the 1990s, PHMC opened up the nomination process to allow any group or individual to submit nominations. They were quickly bombarded by nominations. However, a small percentage of those nominations were honored with plaques because of the strict nomination criteria and review process. The sponsoring organization or individual was then asked to cover the costs



Historic Marker commemorating the Giannini Family

of the manufacturing, dedication, and installation of the approved plaques. As of 2022, PHMC now covers the costs of the manufacturing, delivery, and upkeep of the plaque; the sponsor is only responsible for the installation and dedication costs.

As you stroll around the neighborhood, you will notice that Bella Vista is fortunate to have many of these historical markers. The majority of these were researched and nominated by Celeste Morello, a local Philadelphia author and historian. (Fun fact, Celeste has nominated the most Pennsylvania historical markers that have been approved by the PHMC.) Below is a list of some of the other plaques that were nominated by local organizations, approved, and installed in our neighborhood:

- Eddie Lang: Moyamensing Historical Society
- Frances E.W. Harper (1825-1911): Black Historic Preservation Society
- Frank Gasparro (1909-2001): Samuel Fleisher Art Memorial
- Giannini Family: Bella Vista Town Watch
- Institute for Colored Youth: Black Historic Preservation Society
- Mario Lanza (1921-1959): Mario Lanza Institute
- Octavius V. Catto (1839-1871): Black Historic Preservation Society
- Samuel S. Fleisher Art Memorial: Samuel Fleisher Art Memorial
- St. Mary Magdalen De Pazzi Parish: Moyamensing Historical Society

A fun twist on these historical plaques comes in the form of a sticker designed by Lily G (see image to the right for an example). Scattered throughout the city, these plaque memory stickers can be requested by the Philadelphia Community by visiting <http://plaque2thefuture.com/>.



If this article has motivated you to nominate a historic property, person, or an event of significance on a state or national level for the Pennsylvania Historical Marker Program, you still have plenty of time to get your nomination in. All nominations are due by June 1, 2022 and can be submitted at the following link, <https://share.phmc.pa.gov/pashare/landing>.



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WALKING DOWN MEMORY LANE ON ... CATHARINE STREET

By Marie-Line Germain, Ph.D.

In the not-so-distant past, ships loaded with immigrants from Europe docked at the foot of Washington Avenue, which was the port of entry of thousands into the U. S. To some extent, it was Philadelphia's Ellis Island (New York). That's a known fact. What is not well known is how some of Bella Vista streets acquired their names. Let's shed light on the history of our Bella Vista street names based on the records available.

To kick off our name history, we'll focus on Catharine Street.

Catharine Street seems to have been opened in 1787, extending from the Delaware River to Passayunk Road. In 1796, the "road jury" confirmed the street from Passayunk to the present-day 15th Street. Did you know that Catharine Street was first called Kansas street? When Kansas Street was renamed Catharine Street in 1895 (or 1897 according to the City of Philadelphia's records), the street achieved its present length, from the Delaware River to the Cobbs Creek Parkway. Why "Catharine" street? It appears that several streets in the area, Catharine, Christian, and Queen streets were named for Catharine, Queen of Sweden. Historian Bob Alotta (1990) believes that Catharine was the daughter of Swen Shute who settled the Swedish Southwark area from an early grant from Queen Christina.

A notable property on Catharine Street is the House of Industry, formally located at 714 Catharine Street. As

mentioned, as America's second-largest port city, Philadelphia was a mecca for foreign-born immigrants and native workers. Despite its rapidly expanding manufacturing economy, the



House of Industry

city was experiencing an alarming growth in the number of people living in poverty, homelessness, alcoholism, diseases, and crimes. Founded in 1846 by the Philadelphia Society for the Employment and Instruction of the Poor, the House of Industry sought to aid the impoverished citizens of the city unable or unprepared to make their own way -- natives and newcomers/immigrants— to move out of poverty and into the social mainstream with temporary shelter, food, job training, English-language courses, welfare programs, and other practical programs. At first, its clients included Irish and German immigrants, but by the turn of the twentieth century, the House was also serving the growing number of Southern and Eastern European immigrants, including Italians, Poles, Slovaks, Jews, and African Americans. As neighborhoods

CATHARINE STREET, continued on page 7



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changed, so too did the client base. The House of Industry predated many of the settlement houses which would arise in the U.S. in the coming decades. In the twentieth century, the House of Industry underwent several changes and mergers with other settlement houses and similar organizations. United Communities Southeast Philadelphia, a successor of these groups, continues this anti-poverty and community-building work today. 714 Catharine street, where the House of Industry was located, is now a parking lot adjacent to the Da Vinci Art Alliance.

If you have some historical facts about a Bella Vista street (and perhaps even some vintage photos!), we would love to feature it in our next newsletter. Please email Marie-Line Germain at mgermain99@hotmail.com with the subject line, "Bella Vista Street History".

References

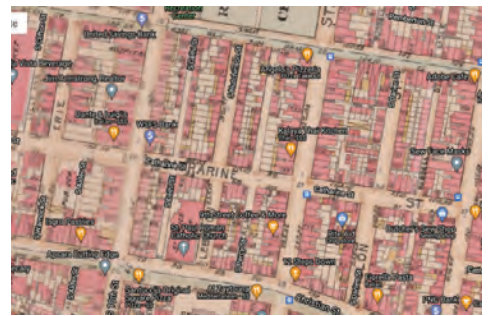
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Rare photo of Catharine St.



ca. 1750 Philadelphia
Source: N. Scull and G. Heap



1895 Philadelphia Atlas
Source: G. W. Bromley



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By Eugene Desyatnik. Inspired by and adapted from crime prevention tips published by the late Joseph Alkus



While our neighborhood has generally enjoyed low crime rates, a number of recent acts of vandalism have been costly and frustrating for neighbors. In situations like this, it's helpful to know we can all take small steps to work together and help protect our community by assisting in the investigations of such incidents.

If you see something: If you witness a crime, be prepared to provide as much information as possible, including the subject's appearance and distinguishing characteristics. We offer an identification tool on our website to assist in this process. You may then provide information in connection with a previous incident via the tip line — call or text 215.686.TIPS (8477), or email tips@phillypolice.com. Photo attachments are supported. As always, to report a crime in progress or request police service, please dial 9-1-1.

If you have a security camera: Your camera has the potential to be an

important crime prevention and investigation tool. Homeowners and businesses with a surveillance camera —including a doorbell camera—are encouraged to register their cameras with the SafeCam network. The program's objective is primarily to build a database of camera locations in our community. Your footage can be instrumental in allowing the PPD as well as the District Attorney's Office to piece together the events that led up to a crime, identify subjects, assist with missing person cases, or even help first responders with real-time information in emergency situations.

The registration form is available at <https://safecam.phillypolice.com/>, or you may contact BVNA to obtain a paper registration form. Registration is free and takes less than 10 minutes. If you have an IP camera, you will have the option during registration to specify whether you would like to provide real-time access. The cameras and the footage recorded will remain with your property, and you will only be contacted in case of a criminal incident near your camera. You also have the option to modify or delete your registration at any time.

Residents looking to install a camera: To select a camera that can be a resource both to you and the community, make sure that it records footage for a period of 15 days, is capable of capturing color images during sufficient lighting, operates with a minimum of 480 Total Vertical Lines or higher, and is positioned to offer an unobstructed view of the home exterior as well as the street if feasible. With the proliferation of doorbell cameras and technological advances in consumer products, most major brands will now meet these requirements. Please factor in the additional monthly cost of cloud recording or local recording capabilities when selecting a product. Leaving porch lights on at night can further improve image quality and discourage crime in general.

Businesses looking to install a camera: Businesses and commercial properties may be eligible for financial assistance with up to 50% of the purchase and installation costs through the Commerce Department's Business Security Camera Program. <https://www.phila.gov/programs/business-security-camera-program/>



With trashnado season approaching, please be sure to secure your recyclable materials and garbage so your rubbish won't blow around before collection. And please hold your materials in your property until the night before collection, or until the morning of, if you are able.



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OUR MARKET PROJECT

By Emily Schulman

Michelle Angela Ortiz, a visual artist, community arts educator, and filmmaker, was born and raised on the same block of the Bella Vista neighborhood that she lives on today, and her roots here run deep. Michelle attended St. Paul's, and was the May Queen in 1991 while her mother, Epifania Ortiz, worked for 25 years in the Italian Market. It is partially her history here that provides Michelle with



Photo source: Kevin Nguyen

Artist Michelle Angela Ortiz

such a rich and nuanced understanding of the Market. She is fiercely passionate about its importance and acutely aware of the different groups that claim it as their own. This is perhaps why, when receiving the distinguished artist fellowship through Pew in 2018, Michelle decided to direct some of the funding towards supporting community conversations focused on rejuvenating the beloved Market. Her goal is to fortify the Market, and to unite the community around it through art; and thus the "Our Market" project was born.

Michelle approached her vision to bring art into the Market at the convergence of beauty and function by meeting with the vendors, produce purveyors and neighborhood associations that flank and support the Market. Through those conversations, two curbstands were identified, both consistently dedicated to the Market, even on the hottest and coldest of Philly days. To Michelle, the produce vendors are the most under-resourced and vulnerable group in the Market, so she decided to begin the work from there. One of those stands belongs to Lydia and Joel, 12-year veterans of the Market who came to Philly from Mexico where they had worked at a different end of the farm to consumer food pipeline; a connection Michelle aimed to exemplify in her work. The other stand has been run by Mr. and Mrs. B Tran since 1985 when they immigrated from Vietnam. Michelle held ongoing conversations with each to ensure that both

the design of the stands and art that embellished it were reflective of their needs and stories. The deteriorating wood was replaced with sustainable waterproof material, adorned with art that reflects their culture, immigrant journey, and their connection to the Market beyond their labor.

While Michelle's work on these two stands has currently wrapped up, her work within Bella Vista is ongoing. Currently, she is working on a series of light installations highlighting stories of business owners in the Market south of Washington Ave; again, merging functionality and art. She has also started collecting oral histories of the Market from those who live, work and benefit from it; conversations which may serve as a catalyst for bringing different stakeholders together to more closely collaborate on future projects, events, and common goals and vision for the Market.

For over 20 years, Michelle has designed and created over 50 large-scale public works nationally and internationally. Michelle has led art for social change public art projects in Costa Rica & Ecuador and as a Cultural Envoy through the US Embassy in Fiji, Mexico, Argentina, Spain, Venezuela, Honduras, and Cuba. She considers the "Our Market" project as a love letter to her community.

You can learn more about Michelle and her work by following her on Instagram (@ourmarketproject) or at <https://www.ourmarketproject.com/>. To get more involved in Michelle's work please consider sharing your own Market story, dedicating space for events, volunteering at an upcoming art event or project, or donating as Michelle hopes to continue to invest in the Market and its history.



Photo source: Kevin Nguyen

Lydia and Joel, veteran produce vendors



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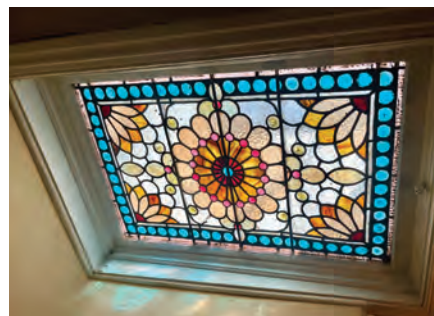
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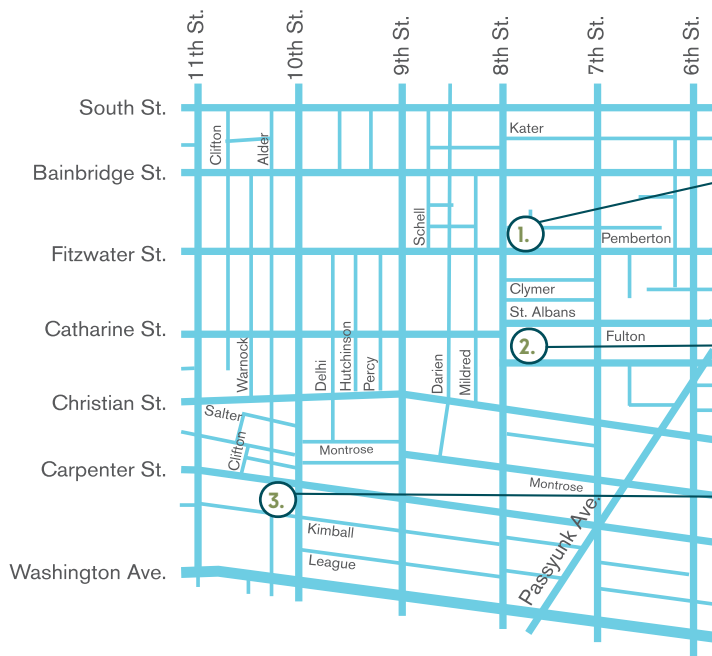


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THE PARKS OF BELLA VISTA



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2. **Palumbo Park, 723 Catharine St**
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le Caveau
bar à vins

TUES - SAT
5PM - LATE
NO REZZIES

YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD WINE BAR.

614 S. 7th Street
(above **The Good King Tavern**)

* enter via separate door on 7th *

NOW BOOKING...

PRIVATE EVENTS

- * happy hours, birthdays, rehearsal parties, graduations!
- * events of up to 55 guests
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events@thegoodkingtavern.com



HONORING JOSEPH D. ALKUS

By Eugene Desyatnik, BVNA President

As many of you may know from our electronic communication, our friend, neighbor, and BVNA board member, Joseph D. Alkus, passed away on Saturday, February 19. Joe was a devoted husband, brother, uncle, and mentor to many. Joe retired after a 35-year career in law enforcement and then began teaching at Temple University, where he enriched the lives of many students. Joe was dedicated to helping students post-graduation with everything from resume writing, interview coaching, and navigating the law enforcement job market.

In Bella Vista, Joe was an integral part of the community. He served on the BVNA and PDAC boards, was liaison

to the 3rd District Police, facilitated monthly PSA1 meetings, wrote grants to pursue violence reduction initiatives, coordinated city services issues on behalf of neighbors, and facilitated conversations with Streets and OTIS on safety issues in the neighborhood.

He was a great leader who was always looking to better our community. We all learned so much from him. Joe had several projects in the pipeline, and we will do our best to keep pushing them forward in his honor. He generously designated BVNA and other recipient charities for donations in his memory.

A celebration of life will be held at the Constitution Center on May 21st, 6-10 pm.

The Joseph Alkus Community Impact Award

Steve Lorenz, Chief Highway Engineer, will be the first recipient of the Joseph Alkus Community Impact Award, awarded to both volunteers and exemplary employees who made a positive impact in service to community. Steve has kept us safe by repaving countless potholes, striping crosswalks on weekends before school started, and working on improving intersections in record time and with professionalism and dedication.

APRIL IN PALUMBO PARK



Philly Goat Project visited Palumbo Park, April 2



Deconstructed Landscapes, an exhibit of sculptures by artist Sara Peoples, curated by Da Vinci Art Alliance

BELLA VISTA NEIGHBORS ASSOCIATION

A Pennsylvania
Nonprofit Corporation

Bella Vista Neighbors Association (BVNA) is a volunteer organization. None of our members receive compensation for their service. Your involvement and contributions are essential to our success and the quality of life in our area.

YES! I support Bella Vista Neighbors Association, Inc.

I am interested in helping as (please check all that apply):

- ☐ Newsletter Sponsor \$ _____ ☐ Contributor \$ _____
☐ Sidewalk/Curb Sweeping Sponsor \$ _____ ☐ Anonymous Donor

Enclosed is my check in the total amount of \$ _____
 Please make check payable to BVNA, Inc.

Mail check and this portion to: BVNA, PO Box 63955, Philadelphia, PA 19147

 Save postage by donating via PayPal!
 Please visit BellaVistaNeighbors.org



BVNA Meetings

Due to the ongoing uncertainties around hours of operation of the library, rec center, and impending renovation at the church, meeting locations may continue to shift as needed, with some taking place virtually. Check our website and social media for details and updates:

BellaVistaNeighbors.org



@BVNeighbors

BVNA BOARD

Board of Directors business meetings are open to the public.

ZONING

Open meetings for community input on building and renovation projects requiring variances of the zoning code.

PSA 1

First Wednesdays at 4:00 pm

Meeting between police leadership and stakeholders in Police Service Area 1 of the 3rd District. Review of monthly crime statistics.

Your Ad: Here!

Reach 3,000+ homes in Bella Vista

For info/rates: BellaVistaNeighbors.org/Newsletter
 Contact Mark Kasten: MKasten1@gmail.com

BELLA VISTA SIDEWALK AND CURB SWEEPING REPORT

The sweeping program is entirely funded by neighbors. Here are our goals for 2022. We can only accomplish this with your support!



Donations

\$10,000 NEEDED
to complete the 2022 program



Going the Distance

75 MI. CLEANED
5+ mi./wk



795 bags

35,000 GALLONS
let's beat our 2021 collection!



Priceless

\$0.4/GALLON
of garbage collected



Local Business
ACAM

\$12,810 PAID
for sidewalk and curb cleaning in 2021



BVNA is excited about the continued success of our sweeping program in 2022. We are currently fundraising to pay for bi-monthly sweeping through November and monthly sweeps in December. This program is entirely funded by neighborhood support

AMAZON SHOPPER?

You can make a local impact while you shop online!



Before your next online shopping trip, make sure you visit smile.amazon.com. Once logged in to your Amazon account, select the Bella Vista Neighbors Assoc Inc from the list of eligible charities. Each time you shop, Amazon will donate 0.5% of the eligible purchase to BVNA!

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