

# REGENT SQUARE

CIVIC ASSOCIATION  
NEWSLETTER

December 2004, Volume 28 Number 8

## Nov. Meeting Minutes

*November RSCA Meeting Quick Recap  
Monday, 1-Nov-2004*

- Discussion of Holiday Toy Drive, Holiday Lighting Contest and Holiday Open House at December meeting
- Report on Three Rivers Film Festival and RSCA volunteer opportunities
- Report on mural poster sales
- Committee reports

## Join us in December

The RSCA Annual Open House and brief Board Meeting, 7:00 PM Monday, 6-Dec-2004 at the Wilkins School Community Center located at the corner of Milton and Charleston Avenues.

## In January

The monthly RSCA Board and Community Meeting, 7PM Monday, 3-Jan-2005 at the Wilkins School Community Center (location above).

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE :

Halloween Party Wrap-Up.....	2
Stonebreaker's Re-Opening.....	2
Thank You.....	2
Holiday Concert.....	2
Chinese Restaurant Opens.....	3
Community Survey Report.....	4
What to Do for Wet Basements.....	4

WWW.REGENT-SQUARE.ORG

The voice of the Regent Square Civic Association, serving Regent Square's diverse residential and business community.

## Holiday Decorating Contest

### *Decorate for the Holidays and Win a Contribution to Your Favorite Charity*

The annual Regent Square Holiday Home Decorating Contest will take place on Sunday 21-Dec-04. Houses need not be extensively decorated to win! Past winning decorations include the lavish, the simplistic, and everything in between!

Everyone living within the boundaries of Regent Square, as defined by the Civic Association, is eligible to win. First, second and third prizes are \$75, \$40, and \$40 respectively. There is also a \$25 prize for "most creative" use of lights. In observation of the holiday spirit, awards will be donated to the charity of the winners' choice. All Regent Square houses are eligible, so if you do not want to be included please contact Carrie Webber at 412-371-2895 or at [carrie\\_webber@hotmail.com](mailto:carrie_webber@hotmail.com). If you want to participate as a judge, please call or e-mail Carrie by December 12th. We will notify winners by 21-Dec and issue checks to the selected charities by 30-Dec.

Bring out your snowmen, deer, wreaths, sparkling lights — and your holiday creativity! ■

## Holiday Toy Drive

### *Fourth Annual Toy Drive for Regent Square Holiday Season*

It's time to start thinking about the *fourth* annual Holiday Toy Drive in the Regent Square community! Community residents are asked for donations of new, unwrapped toys for distribution to a local agency that serves children in need in our area. This year, the toy drive will run between **1-Dec and 15-Dec**, and we will have two drop-off locations: The Wilkins School Community Center, and our newest toy drive partner location, Neighborhood Realty, at 1028 S. Braddock Avenue (across from the movie theatre). While the RSCA coordinates the toy drive, the ultimate success depends on the generosity of the local community — last year we collected over 75 toys, games and puzzles, and together with those from other community organizations, these donations helped make holiday dreams come true for hundreds of children.

*(Continued on page 3.)*

## Working to Save the 63B

### *Saving More Than a Ride to Work*

Like 68 other bus routes, the 63B — running through Regent Square to downtown Pittsburgh — is on the proposed elimination list developed by the Port Authority of Allegheny County. I have been a 63B bus rider for over five years. Every day during my commute, I take pleasure in what is essentially a necessary errand undertaken to get me to work — I share stories with people I met on the bus, I have vacationed with people I met on the bus, I know and have babysat the children of the people I met on the bus, and I have a monthly happy hour with the people I met on the bus. We network, we vent, we help and support each other.

There are all sorts of reasons people use public transportation — protecting the environment, a lack of alternate transportation, avoiding traffic congestion, saving parking fees, not becoming victim of road rage. We are all familiar with these justifications. But there is a more personal side to this basic business transaction. It's neighbors getting to know neighbors and developing a stronger, more close-knit community. It is being able to

*(Continued on page 3.)*

# Stonebraker's Grandly Re-Opens

## **Regent Square Business Working to Rebound After Robbery**

As you may know, in early October Regent Square's neighborhood jeweler was robbed. Stonebraker's Jewelers has been a staple on S. Braddock Avenue for years and has suffered a huge loss from this unfortunate incident. Stonebraker's held a Grand Re-Opening/Customer Appreciation Day in November — prizes, refreshments, and a layaway and storewide sale were big attractions. Thanks to all who supported one of Regent Square's longtime businesses.

And remember, when doing your holiday shopping this year please stop by Stonebraker's Jewelers at 1112 S. Braddock Avenue. If you didn't make it to the November Grand Re-Opening, stop by Stonebraker's before Saturday, 18-Dec-2004 and show this newsletter to receive a discount on your purchase. You'll support a valuable Regent Square business and show your support to Mr. Stonebraker in this tough time — and have beautiful jewelry to show for it! ■

# Halloween Party Wrap-Up

## **An Afternoon Filled with Fun and Festivities**

The annual Children's Halloween party sponsored by the Regent Square Civic Association was held on 30-Oct-2004, from 2PM-4PM. Over 45 children dressed in a variety of creative costumes and accompanied by parents and grandparents attended the party.

Mike the Balloon Guy designed custom balloon accessories to match the children's costumes. Then a game of Pin the Broom on the Witch was enjoyed by all the children. This was followed by a pumpkin raffle where ten lucky children went home with their own Halloween pumpkin. A parade of all the costumed children was the final event. Each child received a ribbon award for dressing up in a costume and a treat bag filled with toys and candy.

A special "Thank You" to our sponsors: Maureen States of Neighborhood Realty Services for underwriting the services of Mike the Balloon Guy; Bob Snyder, Manager at Giant Eagle, for the great assortment of candy; and Eat 'n Park for the Halloween Smiley Face cookies.

Joan Reefer, Chair of the event, also wants to thank all the volunteers who helped make this party such a success: Julie Crawford for registering guests and making the award ribbons, Terri Rosen for purchasing the pumpkins, Fran Hensler for face painting; Lisa Turner and Nancy Pat Delionibus for making all the cute "brooms" to pin on the witch; and especially to Mike Sanchez and Brenda Boboige for organizing the game and helping all the children have a great time "Pinning the Broom on the Witch." ■

**Contributions:** This edition was edited by Ann H. Gaul with help from Alina Keebler. Thanks goes to contributing writers from the community or those who provided information for the newsletter. This includes:

- Carrie Webber – Decorating Contest
- Sara Werner – Symphony; Stonebraker's
- Cari Marty – Toy Drive
- Pam Lieberman – Hunan Kitchen
- Amy Stevenson-Mayfield– Saving 63B
- Ann Gaul – Survey Results
- Joan Reefer – Halloween Wrap-Up
- Lois Harkness – Wet Basements

Articles may be submitted for publication via post or email. Please visit the web site [www.regent-square.org](http://www.regent-square.org) and see "Newsletter submission guidelines" under the "Newsletter" menu item for complete submission guidelines, or contact the editor to receive a hard-copy or email of the guidelines. Please see the last page for complete contact information regarding the Newsletter editor, e-mail or post office address.

# Events Calendar

4-Dec-2004

## Food Donations

*Mifflin Avenue United Methodist Church -  
905 Mifflin Avenue, corner of Mifflin and  
Whitney*

Collection on first Saturday of every month,  
drop off items at church.

Benefit Wilksburg Food Pantry

**Info:** 412-731-2511 or [www.mifflinave.org](http://www.mifflinave.org)

6-Dec-2004 7 PM

## RSCA Monthly Meeting & Annual Holiday Open House

*Wilkins School Community Center, between  
South Braddock and Milton at Charleston*

Meet Rick Sebak and see his new  
documentary "It's the Neighborhoods"  
and mingle with your neighbors.

**Info:** To request an agenda item, call 412-  
243-0702 or [president@regent-square.org](mailto:president@regent-square.org)

Happy & Safe Holidays to All!

# Thank You

## **Editor Resigns After Years of Dedication**

A big "Thank You" goes out to Jon Danzak, previously editor of the Regent Square Newsletter. Jon has worked with the RSCA and the community for many years, serving on the Board and offering assistance like a home phone number for the association to use. Known well in the community, Jon worked hard each month to make sure the newsletter was a reflection of the community. Best wishes to Jon as he pursues other interests, and sincere thanks for his many efforts. ■

# Holiday Concert

## **Start the Season with Musical Favorites**

Join the Edgewood Symphony Orchestra at the First Presbyterian Church of Edgewood for a holiday concert on Saturday, 4-Dec-2004 at 7:30PM. Guest conductor Efrain Amaya leads the orchestra in the annual Holiday Spectacular featuring traditional and classical favorites, including Vivaldi's Gloria, Winter from the Four Seasons, Waltz of the Flowers from the Nutcracker, Sleighride, Hanukkah selections, and the traditional Christmas sing-along. Tickets are \$10 (\$5 for students) and are available at the door. For more information, please call 412-473-8880. ■

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# Saving the 63B

*(Continued from page 1.)*

recognize the people who walk by your home and inviting them in for a few minutes to review the new restaurant that opened in the Square.

Everyone, from politicians to police and pundits, laments today's "demise of community." We are all too busy to meet our neighbors. We have our own appointments, overtime, soccer games and episodes of reality television to attend to. Parents I talk to often feel lucky if they know the names of their children's friends — even more rarely do they know the parents of those friends. Riding the bus forces you to face your neighbors — the good, the bad, and the "oh, please don't sit next to me."

For the elderly and disabled, public transportation provides what is often their only opportunity to continue relationships they are unable to maintain independently — we are talking about more than missed visits to the doctor. There are unintended and very intimate consequences to the loss of public transportation for these individuals.

I understand the political realities of the Port Authority's situation. I know that it is likely that there will be some sort of compromise, and I hope that my bus isn't eliminated. But I surely don't feel as confident as I have until now. It may be that riders will be forced like sardines into buses that will stop every couple of blocks, switching passengers faster than I can even

scan their faces, much less learn their names. It is not an easy situation to accept.

For information on how you can help to "Save the 63B" — including writing letters to state senators and representatives, please contact Regent Square residents and 63B riders Amy Stevenson-Mayfield at [astevenson@rocketmail.com](mailto:astevenson@rocketmail.com) or Karen Walter at [karenwalter@yahoo.com](mailto:karenwalter@yahoo.com).

*Portions of this article were previously printed in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette on Wednesday, November 3, 2004, as "First Person: 63B Society," written by Amy Stevenson-Mayfield. ■*

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## Hunan Kitchen

### **Squirrel Hill Residents Open New Restaurant**

After 50 combined years of experience in the restaurant industry, and a lot of hard work, Jenny and Soutseng Tao realized a life-long dream in mid-September when the doors to Hunan Kitchen opened to the public. Although this new restaurant is located in the former space of the Coral Garden Chinese Restaurant in the Edge-wood Towne Center, everything from top to bottom is new and inviting.

The modern décor, which was designed by Jenny, features comfortable booths, stylish lighting, a colorful art gallery and a large-screen plasma TV. The extensive menu offers a wide array of starters and entrees featuring favorites like General Tso's Chicken, as well as preparations that are unique to the chef, such as scallion pancakes and "coral" fish. Jenny is proud of the careful and unique preparations offered and believes that the food will speak for itself. Dishes are prepared in the Hunan-style, which tends to be spicy — however, heat levels can be altered to please your palate. Creative vegetarian and kid-friendly options are also available.

Hunan Kitchen is open daily for lunch, dinner and take-away meals. Reservations are not required. The restaurant is BYOB until a liquor license is approved. Free delivery is offered within a three mile radius of the restaurant. For more information call 412-731-1101 ■

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## Holiday Toy Drive

*(Continued from page 1.)*

Some suggestions for children in different age groups are:

**Infants/Toddlers:** Rattles and squeeze toys, musical toys or mobiles, unbreakable baby mirrors, crib toys, picture books, stacking and sorting toys, dolls, large cars and trucks, teething toys, sippy cups.

**Pre-schoolers:** Building toys (large Legos®, blocks), cars and trucks dolls and doll clothes, puzzles, puppets, books, crayons, markers, coloring books, bubbles, Play-Doh®, music-making toys, story and song tapes, stickers, Viewmasters®, Etch-a-Sketch®, pegs and pegboards, new stuffed animals, simple board games (Candyland®, Chutes and Ladders®, Memory®).

**School age children:** Craft sets, stickers, Nerf toys, playing cards, hand-held games, dolls and doll clothes, matchbox cars, books and comic books, jigsaw puzzles, clothing, collectibles (rock collections, magnets, sports collectibles), board games, activity books (connect dots, crosswords, word search), building kits (Legos®, Tinker Toys®, Erector Set®).

**Teenagers:** Wallets, calendars and posters, mirrors, grooming kits, address books and journals, walkmans, hair accessories, athletic equipment, music (contemporary CDs and cassettes), board games (Backgammon, trivia games, Uno®), craft kits (cross-stitch, wood-working, paint by numbers).

**What to avoid:** Used toys and used stuffed animals, toys stuffed with shredded foam, small pellets or beans, toys with detachable parts (like button eyes) that could be removed and swallowed or inhaled, electrical, spark-producing or friction-producing toys, fragile toys that can break into small pieces with sharp edges, toys made of glass or brittle plastic, toys with sharp edges or protrusions, toys or craft kits with toxic paints or glues, toys with parts that can pinch fingers or pull hair, toy guns and other violent toys.

Please remember that we can only accept **new, unwrapped items**. We appreciate your support! If you have any questions, please contact Cari Marty at 412-243-2358 or [carimarty@hotmail.com](mailto:carimarty@hotmail.com). ■

# Report on the Community Survey

## Question: What to Do with the Regent Square Elementary School Building?

The Regent Square Elementary School building now stands empty as the children who went there now go to the new elementary school in Homewood. So what to do with this beautiful building found between Frick Park and the Regent Square business district? We asked the community and 26 community members responded. Here's what they had to say:

Fifty percent of those who responded thought that the building should be turned into residential living space, with one person specifying that the space could have "an artists theme so that it encourages a bunch of artists to live there" and another suggesting that it could be "a community run school for the arts to include both adults and children."

With 15 percent were those who thought it should remain a school of some sort (one person thought that it would make a good "magnet or charter school environmental academy" and another resident thought that it might work to "keep the building open and operating until Wilksburg could join the Pittsburgh School District, which would provide enough local students to keep it an operating school." Twelve percent of those who responded thought it would make a great community building. Eight percent favored using the building for commercial space, but no one thought it should be demolished and the land used for something else.

Quite a few neighbors, 15 percent of those who responded, came up with some creative "Other" uses, such as having the building "include multi uses: Space for conferences, meetings and educational learning events, and low impact commercial/office space (for small firms); examples: graphic artist, computer professionals, educators and business/community consultants." Someone else thought that

"the building should become a residential condominium with adaptive facilities designed for seniors. There is not nearly enough specialized space within the county to accommodate our aging population. Designing and building a residence of this caliber would provide the opportunity to become a model for urban building reuse as well as bring good media coverage to our area. (It would also provide me with a place to live in my dotage!)." Finally, one resident thought that the building should be made into "an attraction. I feel that if it were turned into loft housing with the possibility of using some space for commercial/artist space this would enhance the 'uniqueness' that draws people to live and get involved in the Regent Square area."

Thank you for some great ideas and a good sense of where the community stands on this issue. ■

## Simple Steps Fix Some Wet Basements

### *Does Your Basement Get Wet Every Time the Ground Becomes Saturated?*

A severe summer storm, a long and steady rainfall, the remnants of a hurricane like we had this fall, a heavy snow melt ... if your basement gets damp, moist, or overly humid, you're not alone. Damp basements are like the common cold, says Rod Harkness, of Harkness Home Inspection. Anyone can get one and they usually come with wet weather. Unlike the common cold, however, wet basements are predictable and avoidable.

Rod has inspected many homes in Regent Square over the years, and has quite a few

fans who can attest to his expertise. "Having Rod inspect your house is really amazing," says one Regent Square resident on Laclair Street. "He inspected our house before we bought it 16 years ago, and the information we got was far more than what another inspector would have given us. We have consulted him several times since to make sure that advice we were given by other people was good advice."

And after the heavy rains earlier this fall, Rod was called upon specifically to inspect many damp, or just plain wet, basements. His primary words of advice? "Just don't let the water in." Often he finds that the problems are aggravated by poor maintenance. Clogged gutters, leaking downspouts, clogged drains all contribute to damp basements.

In a *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* story on Saturday, September 11, 2004, Rod encouraged all homeowners — whether their basements are wet or dry — to build a soil curb around their foundations by building up the soil — preferably clay or clay-bearing soil, which is plentiful in our area, and not topsoil, which is porous — to help keep moisture out of their basements. This soil curb should be six to eight inches higher at the foundation wall than it is two to three feet away — so that it slopes away from the house. This makes it necessary for water to flow away from the foundation all the way around the foundation.

To dry a damp basement, after taking the above precautions, all basement areas should maintain good ventilation, which will facilitate and maintain the drying out process. Dehumidifiers help, but they should be a temporary solution, says Rod. Simply placing a common room fan on the floor to circulate air is an improvement, says Rod.

A pleased resident of Macon Avenue said "Thanks to Rod's advice, we were able to fix our house problems through a series of minor repairs that we were able to make on our own at relatively low cost."

In most damp basements, says Rod, filling in soil around the foundation is somewhat less expensive than other approaches and tends to be a more permanent solution. Especially since the work can be done by the owner on a few weekends. For more information, visit [www.housecraft.com](http://www.housecraft.com) or call 412-241-1980. ■



### To contact the RSCA Newsletter:

Communications Committee  
Regent Square Civic Association  
7604 Charleston Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15218-1265  
412-371-2010

E-mail: [newsletter@regent-square.org](mailto:newsletter@regent-square.org)

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