

McMichael Park Play Space approaching realization



Rendering of climbing structure on the north pod of the play space. Artwork courtesy of Salt Design Studio and Sara Schuh.

by John T. Gillespie

The long-debated play space for young children in McMichael Park has moved a step closer to reality with news that the city plans to issue bids in March and complete construction this summer for the first phase of the nature-based addition.

Nancy O'Donnell, project manager for Philadelphia's Department of Parks & Recre-

ation, told a general membership meeting of the East Falls Community Council that she expected bids next month and a ribbon-cutting in July for the north pod of the play space, at 3,770 square feet. The second and final pod, at 3,225 square feet, will follow at a date yet to be determined as financing becomes available.

The news drew wide applause from most of the more than 100 people in attendance.

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East Falls **NOW**

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Health and Wellness Center on Ridge Ave. Expects to handle up to 2,000 patients

by John T. Gillespie

A new health and wellness center staffed by a team of doctors, dietitians, physical therapists and mental health experts plans to open by April in the 4400 block of Ridge Ave. on the ground floor of the Philadelphia Housing Authority's senior citizen residential building.

The Salveo Wellness Center will be accessible for appointments after hours and on weekends and will treat all illnesses and conditions except those that require emergency care or hospitalization. The center's personnel will triage those cases. It also will dispense drugs at discounted prices.

For a one-time enrollment charge of \$99 plus an age-based monthly fee from \$19 (up to 18 years) and \$99 (65 years and over), patients may join and receive treatment, if needed, on the same day or next day. There are no limits to visits and, unlike insurance-driven models, the plan

charges no co-pays or deductibles.

"We will provide cradle-to-grave care and deal with all types of conditions that might walk in our door," says Dr. Greg Skochko, air force veteran, founder of the center and, until now, its sole staff and general practitioner with a small office several doors down on Ridge Ave.

He will be assisted by general practitioners Dr. Kem Yenai, MD, and Dr. Melissa Borrero, MD; physical therapists Chris McKenzie, DPT, and Betsy Michel, PT; dietitians Marjorie Cohn, RD, and Allison Malowe, RD; phlebotomist Dawn Huling; a team of rotating mental health providers; and clerical staff. The specialties of the staff reflect the Center's focus on what Skochko calls the "four pillars" of the center: direct primary care, physical therapy, nutrition and exercise/conditioning.

"Our goal is to create a highly personalized, well-rounded experience for each patient in order to optimize

health and expectations," says Skochko. "Our practice model is a throwback to the old days."

In addition to standard treatments, the center will perform minor clinical procedures, including joint aspirations, skin biopsies, immobilizing joint injuries, and suturing uncomplicated lacerations. It will facilitate emergency care and hospitalization as needed, but the emphasis will be on prevention. The cost of visits to a hospital and emergency room are not covered by the monthly fee.

"Ideally we can prevent the majority of potential urgent and emergency room visits, simply because we can follow up daily. Delays in care are minimized and triage is performed with guidance by a physician who knows you and your medical history intimately," says Skochko.

Kochko estimates the length of an average visit will be 30 to 45 minutes. He will conduct house calls on a selective basis for patients with

(Continued on page 6)



Dr. Greg Skochko outside of his future office at on the 4400 block of Ridge Ave.

Zoning Committee to examine Ridge Ave. apartments

by Todd Baylson
Chair, EFCC Zoning Committee

The East Falls Community Council's Zoning Committee will meet as part of the EFCC general membership meeting at 7 pm Monday, Feb. 10 at the East Falls Presbyterian Church.

The agenda will include a presentation by officials of HOW Properties on their plans for an apartment building at 4440-4442 Ridge, next to the 23 townhomes they recently have completed.

The plans call for 136 units, 10,500 square feet of commercial space and 96 parking

spaces -- some underneath the building at grade level and some behind the building on its Kelly Dr. side.

HOW also has proposed modifying a long-discussed plan for the City-owned parking lot immediately adjacent and next to Castle Ringstetten. The new proposal is for a permanent parking lot, metered during the day and free at night. The revenue would go to the City.

HOW's apartment proposal did not trigger a refusal from Licenses and Inspection or request for variances. Instead, the City's design review process requires developers

with projects of more than 100,000 square feet or more than 100 residential units to appear before the city's Civic Design Review committee and the neighborhood, but the process is advisory.

Learn more about the zoning process at <https://www.phila.gov/documents/civic-design-review-cdr-meeting-materials/>

The Feb. 10 meeting also will include a request for support for a variance by the owner of 3676 Indian Queen Ln., who proposes adding a garage and a second story of living space on a long-standing parking pad.

(Continued on page 3)

Henry Ave. changes needed 'now'

The Traffic Committee of the East Falls Community Council has asked PennDOT to expedite its planned safety improvements to Henry Ave. following a continuing rash of crashes, including a January fatality at Henry Ave. and Dupont St. in Roxborough.

All crashes were driver-caused.

In a letter to St. Rep. Pam DeLissio, City Councilman Curtis Jones Jr., PennDOT District Manager Bruce Masi and Deputy Streets Commissioner Richard Montanez, Traffic Committee chair John

(Continued on page 11)

EFCC to meet Feb. 10

The East Falls Community Council's next general membership meeting will be at 7 pm Monday, Feb. 10 at the East Falls Presbyterian Church, Midvale Ave. and Vaux St. It will be a joint meeting with the EFCC's Zoning Committee.

In addition to the Zoning agenda, which will include a discussion of HOW Property's plans for a 136-unit apartment building on

Ridge Ave. (Pg. 1), the meeting will include a presentation by Vicki Riley, Public Information Officer with the City's Department of Revenue, about the City's 2020 real estate property bills.

Riley will describe programs to assist taxpayers, including senior citizens, low-income households and persons who are delinquent on taxes or water bills.

Your February 2020 East Falls **NOW** Calendar

Falls of the Schuylkill Library February hours: Monday and Wednesday, 12 noon to 8 pm; Tuesday and Thursday, 10 am to 6 pm; Friday, 10 am to 5 pm; and Saturday, 11 am to 5 pm. The Literary Enrichment Afterschool Program (LEAP), the Free Library's drop-in

after school program, will take place through February. It offers homework assistance, computer literacy and library skills for students in grades K to 12. LEAP also offers daily literacy enrichment activities for elementary school students. LEAP takes place Monday through Thursday

from 3 to 5:30 pm and Saturday from 1 to 5 pm. No sign-ups are required; children under seven must be accompanied by a caregiver. Visit the Falls Library to obtain the LEAP monthly calendar. The Library will open late, at 2 pm, on Monday, Feb. 13 for staff development, and

will be closed for Presidents' Day on Monday, Feb. 17. The program Read with a Therapy Dog is taking a hiatus. For more information call Librarians Drew Birden or Meredith McGovern, 215-685-2093.

1 Saturday

11 am to 1 pm: EF Farmers Market under the Twin Bridges (Pg. 8)

2 pm: Nature Observations for kids, outdoors at the Falls Library (Pg. 10)

3 Monday

3 pm: Kids make a dairy-free Swedish chocolate snack, Falls Library (Pg. 10)

6:30 pm: Wagner Institute of Science class at Falls Library (Pg. 10)

4 Tuesday

10:15 am: Music and Movement Time for babies and toddlers, Falls Library (Pg. 10)

3:30 pm: Fiber arts spool knitters, Falls Library (Pg. 10)

5 Wednesday

4 to 7:30 pm: US Census job info table, Falls Library (Pg. 10)

6 pm: EF Historical Society election of officers and program, Falls Library (Pg. 6)

6 Thursday

10:30 pm: Motown Jr. Music and Motion or young children, Falls Library (Pg. 10)

8 Saturday

11 am to 1 pm: EF Farmers Market under the Twin Bridges (Pg. 8)

1 pm: EF Village program on PennDOT's REAL ID driver's license, Falls Library (Pg. 9)

2 pm: Kids' Breathing Buddies for yoga and meditation, Falls Library (Pg. 10)

10 Monday

Sundown: Check out the Love Lights of the Friends of McMichael Park – all week!

6:30 pm: Wagner Institute of Science class at Falls Library (Pg. 10)

7 pm: East Falls Community Council general membership meeting (Pg. 1)

11 Tuesday

10:15 am: Music and Movement Time for babies and toddlers, Falls Library (Pg. 10)

3:30 pm: Fiber arts for kids, Falls Library (Pg. 10)

12 Wednesday

9 am: Meet at Henry Ave. and Queen Ln. for No. 32 bus for EF Village tours of the Central Library (Pg. 9)

4 to 7:30 pm: US Census job info table, Falls Library (Pg. 4)

13 Thursday

2 pm: Falls Library opens late due to staff development (Pg. 10)

4 pm: Black History Month Quiz for kids and teen, Falls Library (Pg. 10)

6:30 pm: Philadelphia Stoics monthly discussion group, Falls Library (Pg. 10)

7:30 pm: EF Town Watch monthly meeting (Pg. 8)

14 Friday

Happy Valentine's Day from the East Falls NOW team!

15 Saturday

10 am to noon: EF Town Watch monthly Litter Crew Ahead cleanup, Ridge Ave. and Scotts Ln. (Pg. 8)

11 am to 1 pm: EF Farmers Market under the Twin Bridges (Pg. 8)

2 pm: Fiber arts: kids make their own sensory bottles, Falls Library (Pg. 10)

17 Monday

Falls Library closed for Presidents Day (Pg. 10)

18 Tuesday

10:15 am: Music and Movement Time for babies and toddlers, Falls Library (Pg. 10)

3 pm: Fiber arts turns to yarn paintings, Falls Library (Pg. 10)

19 Wednesday

4 to 7:30 pm: US Census job info table, Falls Library (Pg. 10)

6 pm: EF Town Watch meets with 39th District Police Service Area 1 (Pg. 8)

20 Thursday

11:45 am: EF Village Lunch of the Month, Terron (Pg. 9)

3:30 pm: The art of Michele and Barak Obama's portraits for kids, Falls Library (Pg. 10)

22 Saturday

11 am to 1 pm: EF Farmers Market under the Twin Bridges (Pg. 8)

3:30 pm: The art of Michele and Barak Obama's portraits for kids, Falls Library (Pg. 10)

24 Monday

6 pm: EF Town Watch meeting with 39th District Police (Pg. 8)

6 pm: Falls Book Group meets at the Falls Library (Pg. 10)

6:30 pm: Wagner Institute of Science class at Falls Library (Pg.10)

25 Tuesday

10:15 am: Music and Movement Time for babies and toddlers, Falls Library (Pg. 10)

3:30 pm: Fiber arts for kids, making bowls using fabric, yarns and glue, Falls Library (Pg. 10)

26 Wednesday

4 to 7:30 pm: US Census job info table, Falls Library (Pg. 10)

28 Friday

10:30 pm: Storytime Dance Party for kids ages two to six with caregivers, Falls Library (Pg.10)

29 Saturday

11 am to 1 pm: EF Farmers Market under the Twin Bridges (Pg. 8)

Stay informed. If you don't receive the EF Community Council's weekly emails, send your name and email address to info@eastfallscommunity.org. To join the EFCC, visit www.eastfallscommunity.org.

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Good news at Penn Charter; election law changes for all voters

Good news for students, families, faculty and staff at Penn Charter: The test for coronavirus on an exchange student who had flu-like symptoms proved to be negative, school officials told East Falls **NOW** on Jan. 28.

They said the student was part of a group of 18 exchange students and three adults visiting Penn Charter. The group had passed through Wuhan, China – the center of the coronavirus outbreak – on their way to JFK Airport in New York City. The students arrived at Penn Charter Jan. 21 and left Feb. 4.

Penn Charter has cancelled the exchange program.

Buses, buses, buses

I had hoped by now to report better news regarding the seven school buses that are choking out the air and blocking traffic every school afternoon on Crawford and Conrad Sts. The idling buses are waiting to pick up students from the rear of 3300 Henry Ave. on Scotts Ln. The students are from

Pierce Elementary School in North Philadelphia, using the 3300 Henry Ave. building while asbestos is removed from their school.

The buses have created a hellish situation for residents. The air is fouled, and the residents who need to get to their blocked cars have been told to “come back in 15 minutes.”



A message from the
EFCC
President

by Bill Epstein

Several weeks after I asked for help we've had nothing but silence from the School District and the bus company.

The EFCC is not going to give up on this – not when the easy solution is to have the buses wait one long block away on Henry Ave. where there are no residences and the buses can idle all they need to and come in one or

two at a time to pick up the children.

If we don't resolve this in the next few days, I'm going to ask to appear before the School Board to plead our case. But I can't do it alone. If you want to participate, send an email to info@eastfallscommunity.org and we'll work on the details.

Register and vote!

Many thanks to State Rep. Pam DeLissio (D-194) for her explanation in the December East Falls **NOW** of Pennsylvania's new and important voting law. With the Tuesday, April 28 Primary Election Day closing in, I thought it might be useful to summarize the key elements of the new provisions. They will make a difference in our voting experience if we chose to take advantage of the new opportunities they offer:

- The new law establishes no-excuse mail-in voting. No more, “I need an absentee ballot because my boss insists that I go to Nevada on Election Day.” Anyone now has

the option to vote by mail without a reason or excuse. Congratulations, Pennsylvania. We've caught up to 31 other states that already allow this.

- It sets up to a 50-day mail-in voting period. Voters can request and submit their mail-in or absentee ballot up to 50 days before the election.

- It creates a permanent mail-in and absentee ballot list. You can request applications for mail-in or absentee ballots for all elections held in a year. Counties, or in our case the City government, will mail applications to voters on the list by the first Monday of each February. Voters who return those applications will receive ballots for every election scheduled through the next 12 months. Once you get on the list, you're on it until you ask to be taken off it.

- The law provides more time for voter registration. Until now, one had to be registered within 30 days of an election. Now it's 15 days, meaning April 13 for this year's Primary Election.

- It extends the deadline for mail-in and absentee submission deadlines. Not by much, but by some. It used to be that your ballot had to be submitted by 5 pm the Friday before an election. Now a voter can submit mail-in and absentee ballots until 8 pm election day. That means received by election officials, not postmarked.

- Finally, no more straight party voting under the new law. Sure, the old big lever – now button -- was quicker and easier for many of us, but it appears that giving it up was the political price the Democrats had to pay to get the above concessions.

Philadelphia election officials still are working on the details of how best to carry out the terms of the new voting law. We'll post the latest news here in East Falls **NOW**, and also in the East Falls Community Council's weekly email updates. If you don't get the updates, feel free to let us know at info@eastfallscommunity.org.

Perfect together: Gun safety and the 2nd amendment

Even though I've written about or commented on gun safety at my town halls, the topic warrants repeating because nothing has changed in Pennsylvania related to gun safety.

First and foremost, in addition to contacting me with your thoughts, ideas and concerns about this topic at RepDeLissio@paHouse.net or 215-482-8726, you should also contact the majority and minority chairs of the PA House Judiciary Committee, as all legislation related to this topic has been referred to this committee.

Majority chair Rob Kauffman can be reached at 717-705-2004 or at www.repkauffman.com/ contact. Minority chair Tim Briggs can be reached at

717-705-7011 or at www.pahouse.com/Briggs/contact.

On January 25th at my 91st town hall we addressed the topic of gun safety and the 2nd amendment. My preparation



Pam's
Viewpoint

by St. Rep. Pamela A. DeLissio

for this event was intense and, as always, I learned a lot, too.

I read 33 pieces of legislation related to gun safety and signed onto 10 bills as a co-sponsor as a result of this

preparation. I can state unequivocally that none of the bills I am co-sponsoring infringe on any citizens' right to bear arms. The PowerPoint for the town hall is on my Facebook page at Rep. Pam DeLissio. My office also can e-mail you a copy of the presentation or print you a hard copy and mail it to you.

Approximately another two dozen bills were discussed at the town hall, and given the input of the constituents in attendance, I am considering co-sponsoring a few additional bills.

I also learned that Allegheny and Philadelphia counties have the highest number of homicides by firearms. The rural counties have the highest numbers of suicides by firearms.

Pennsylvania has no requirement for any gun safety training either upon initial purchase of a gun or subsequent application for a license to carry a firearm (commonly referred to as a conceal carry permit).

According to the Center for Disease Control, death by firearms in Pennsylvania has steadily increased in the past four years; in 2014 the recorded deaths by firearms in PA was 1,390 and in 2017 the recorded deaths were 1,636. These statistics account for

deaths, overlooking the costs of gun violence for those who have been injured and traumatized by guns.

Gun safety remains a sensitive topic that evokes strong emotions in the PA General Assembly. The loss of life that our country continues to experience in mass shootings has not changed hearts or minds.

In April of 2018, the PA House Judiciary Committee held special public safety hearings on gun laws and gun violence for six days. These hearings were without precedent, and many of us were encouraged because they happened. Only members of the PA House were permitted to testify, and I did so on behalf of my constituents.

My testimony reflected my understanding of the challenges facing the legislature in moving any gun safety legislation forward. My closing remarks implored committee members to take definitive action on at least some of measures before them.

I regret to report that no gun safety legislation made it out of the PA House Judiciary Committee in the 2017-2018 session. Now we are in the 2nd year of the 2019-2020 session and I am determined to help move some of the most basic

gun safety legislation, such as universal background checks, to the House floor for a vote.

The outcry of citizens made the difference that led to the unprecedented hearings held in April 2018. I am convinced that citizens can make the difference in ensuring that gun safety legislation moves through the PA legislature before our current session ends on November 30, 2020. Please be sure to call the Chairs listed above in this East Falls **NOW** column if you are interested in advocating for a specific piece of legislation.

My commitment is to work toward the enactment of some very basic gun safety legislation while preserving constituents' rights under the 2nd amendment, and to work towards keeping citizens safe.

I do not think that gun safety legislation is a panacea for stemming the gun violence taking place in our city. We need a holistic approach and a multi-pronged solution. A quality, fairly funded basic public education is one of the prongs, followed by the opportunity for a living wage and jobs that include career ladders, so citizens are encouraged and rewarded by hard work and initiative -- all topics for future articles.

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Zoning Committee to examine Ridge Ave. apartments

(Continued from page 1)

3503 Midvale Av.

East Falls **NOW** has learned that the City has issued a permit for the construction of a four-story multi-use building at 3503 Midvale Ave., site of a former Texaco gas station next to the Falls Library.

The permit calls for two commercial spaces on the ground floor, 44 residential units on the top three floors, with “no disturbance to existing steep slopes to take place.” It appears that no parking spots

or zoning variances are necessary due to the property's commercial zoning.

We understand that this parcel has been the subject of a great deal of discussion, and felt that it was important to let the community know that the City has issued the owner this permit.

3521 Ainslie

The proposal to bring into zoning compliance an existing triplex at 3521 Ainslie St. will be discussed at a subsequent Zoning Committee meeting,

likely in early March. The owner has revised her plans and now seeks identification of the property as a duplex.

Elsewhere, the EFCC Zoning Committee has learned that the owner of 3679 Indian Queen Ln. has won his court case to proceed with construction -- a step that was opposed by the EFCC. If the committee receives any information it will share it with the EFCC membership on Feb. 10. Questions, comments or ideas can be emailed to zoning@eastfallscommunity.org.

We all can explore the wonderful world of lichens

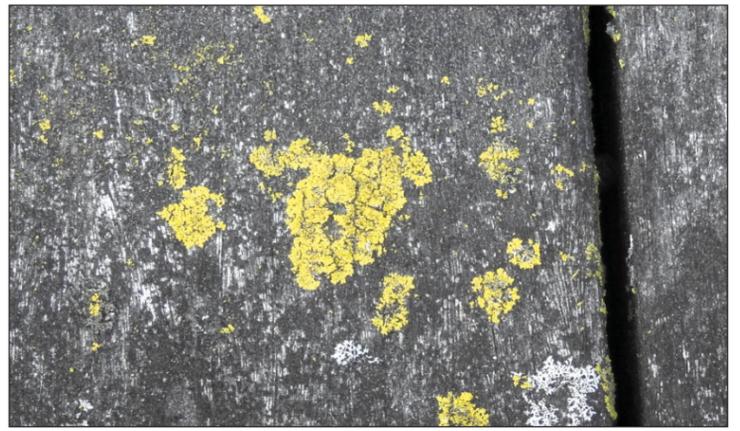
One of my goals for the year 2020 is to make a wildlife observation every single day using iNaturalist -- a phone app or website that lets you keep track of wildlife you see around you.

This can be a bit of a challenge in the winter, when most plants have died back and the insects haven't emerged yet. The birds that are still around and the occasional spider that I find in the house kept me going through the first few weeks of the year, but as week one turned into two and then into three, it became more difficult.

Sure, I could take a picture of the same squirrels that came to



The Common Greenshield lichen.



The Candleflame lichen.



Navin on Nature

by Navin Sasikumar

my feeders day after day, but what's the fun in that? After all, the goal of this challenge was to help me explore our surrounding areas.

That's when I discovered the wonderful and often overlooked world of lichens. Sure, I knew

what they were and had taken a few pictures before, but I had barely scratched the surface.

One of the most interesting things about lichens is that it is not a single organism! Any lichen you see around you is a symbiotic relationship between a fungus and an alga or cyanobacterium.

The algae or cyanobacterium, known as the photobiont, can photosynthesize. That is, it can take energy from the sun and convert it into food. The fungal partner, or the mycobiont, cannot do this and benefits from the photobiont's food production, in turn providing protection to the algal partner from ultraviolet radiation.

This association allows lichen to grow in many environments where they would not be able to do so on their own. You can find lichen from arctic tundras to hot arid deserts to tropical rainforests. You can find them in urban areas, farmland and forests. They can grow on many substrates -- wood, rocks, soil, bone and even concrete.

They also come in many forms, broadly classified as foliose, crustose and fruticose.

Foliose lichens are the most easily observed types. They have a lobed, almost leaf-like appearance, but remain mostly close to the substrate. Crustose lichens, on the other hand, are firmly attached to the sub-

strate, forming what looks like a crust or spots on the surface. Fruticose lichens are at the other extreme -- three-dimensional and often appearing erect or bushy.

Lichen also come in many colors, ranging from the common grey-green to bright yellow, orange, and even red. You can find the foliose Common Greenshield Lichen on trees on a walk around the neighborhood. If you see spots of yellow on fence posts or trees, they might be a Candleflame lichen. Orange spots might indicate the lichen called Firedots, and black spots on rocks might be the Smoky-eyed boulder lichen. Tiny greenish wine glasses

could be a member of the Pixie Cup lichens.

Another member of the pixie cup lichens, but not really pixie cup shaped, and one I would really love to find, are the British Soldier lichens. These are tiny green 'stalks' with bright red tops. Let me know if you ever see one in the neighborhood!

There's a lot more to lichens than I can cover here, but maybe this article will inspire you to look a little closer at all the lichens around us. As always, if you have any questions, comments or suggestions for future articles, please email me at navin_sasikumar@gmail.com.

EF Census finds 31 species, but only 684 birds

by Winston Moody

It took an unusually warm January 11 and cooperation from both nature and many East Falls residents to create a successful mid-winter census on the number of species of birds in EF, although we were less successful in the total number of birds counted. Our census was part of a city-wide initiative.

We combed the neighborhood -- the river, the reservoir, wires, rooftops, campuses, and up and down streets -- spotting 31 species. This tied a high record, but, puzzlingly, only 684 birds were counted, compared to 1,018 last year.

This is by no means a total count of birds in our neighborhood, but an indication of trends of the numbers and kinds of birds. The low bird

count is significant in light of the global bird decline reported in the journal Science.

We observed no birds at many fully stocked feeders; the owners were needlessly apologetic. The low sighting likely was due to the warm weather, enabling birds to forage for themselves in their natural habitat, as opposed to relying on feeders. We also observed more raptors than

(Continued on page 6)



Ring-billed gulls spotted January 11 at the Queen Lane Reservoir during the mid-winter EF Bird Census.

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For the love of gardens: What to do about bamboo

by Peter Samuel

My wife and I recently purchased a house in W. Mount Airy and moved this past summer. The first few months of our time here we were mostly focused on making improvements to the inside of the house -- painting, repairing and replacing windows, sanding floors, dealing with electric and plumbing issues. We were fully aware of a project waiting for us outside that we were trying to ignore.

We had interspersed our work days on the inside of the house with time spent in the yard where we removed an unkempt and totally inappropriate boxwood hedge. We trimmed overgrown shrubs, and sawed down an enormous American Holly that was positioned in a place that would scratch anyone who tried to visit.

Our new house had not been occupied for a year or more, so the yard was in need of much love. Some interesting plant material grew randomly in areas from which they would need to be moved, but overall we were beginning to see it as blank slate. "How do we turn this small yard into our very own Sissinghurst?" we wondered.

And then there was one more problem we were trying to get ourselves prepared to tackle -- the side yard. The thought was this would become my vegetable garden. It seemed to get lots of sun --

from what we could tell -- and was out of the way of general traffic in and out of the house.

The problem: the previous owner had chosen to plant bamboo along the 50-foot property line to screen the house from the backs of the neighbors' garages. While we appreciated the tops of the bamboo trees fluttering in the wind and adding a touch of green when we looked out the windows on that side of the house, we knew these plants were not welcome and would have to be eliminated.

Golden bamboo, *Phyllostachys aurea*, is a perennial, fast-growing, oversized member of the grass family Poaceae. Native to Southeast China, golden bamboo was introduced into the United States in 1882 in Montgomery, AL, where mature stems were used for fishing poles and walking sticks. It reaches a maximum height of 30 to 40 feet and is one of the most common bamboos in the United States, available from most garden centers and nurseries. Invasive bamboos are among the fastest-growing plants on Earth, and quickly can form into a dense, nearly impenetrable stand. It spreads without hesitation through an extensive network of underground stems, called rhizomes, to grow new shoots and form new plants. What to do?

From everything I had ever heard about bamboo I knew once it establishes itself in an area, it's very difficult to erad-



Bamboo -- Tough, and tough to get rid of.

icate because of its rapid vegetative reproduction. It can be controlled by cutting and

mowing, although this needs to be repeated several times throughout the growing sea-

son, since bamboo will readily re-sprout. Herbicides are another option if one can be sure of not contaminating other plants or the water table.

In mid-January when Philadelphia had a brief warm spell we ventured out to begin the process of removal and reclaiming our side yard. I used a chain saw to cut the stems near the ground, and then carted the debris off to the dump in Roxborough. Progress was slow. I still have many yards of land to recover. And then we will need to dig out the rhizomes or spread herbicide. The bamboo sections without leaves seemed like they should be valuable to someone. Fishing poles, walking sticks? I asked an architect friend, and he said in some countries they make massive structures with bamboo.

For those of you out there who may be struggling with an invasive species problem of your own -- Norway Maples, Japanese Knotweed, Poison Ivy, Bittersweet and many more -- you have my sympathies. See the link for a comprehensive list here: <https://www.dcnr.pa.gov/Conservation/WildPlants/InvasivePlants/InvasivePlantFactSheets/Pages/default.aspx>.

This column has been created to inspire your stories of how you've experienced gardens or the wilderness. I'm hoping to see some kid's stories too! Please submit 450 words and a photo to Deborah Kaplan, dkaplan8@verizon.net.

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Health and Wellness Center on Ridge Ave.

(Continued from page 1)

chronic illness and dementia. The Salveo Wellness Center represents a major addition in size and scope to the Ridge Ave. commercial corridor, which has been showing little growth in its retail business. It comes as a new retail and apartment building is scheduled to rise across the street – a five-story, 144-unit on the site of the former Rivage ballroom.

The Wellness Center will occupy 3,000 square feet of long-vacant storefront space in the 4400 block of Ridge, including space released by the newly formed S&T bank that will serve as patient consultation and exam rooms.

Meredith Johnson, executive director of East Fall Development Corporation, says the center will “fill a sizeable vacancy and generate foot traffic in an area with relatively low pedestrian

activity.” In other words, it should contribute to retail activity.

With three physicians, Dr. Skochko expects to quickly build up to 1,500 to 2,000 patients drawn from East Falls, Roxborough, Manayunk, Mt. Airy, Chestnut Hill, Germantown and Allegheny West. “We will add physicians as capacity and our served population demands.”

As founder of the center and sole practitioner since 2015, Dr. Skochko is familiar with East Falls. He and his wife own a home on the corner of Henry Ave. and Queen Ln. and send their two children, ages 3 and 7, to Mifflin School.

“Salveo” originates from Latin, meaning “to be well” and “in good health,” while salve, the verb, means “to soothe” or “to promote healing or protection.”

Growing up in EF – a neighborhood of small businesses

by Ellen Sheehan

East Falls was a neighborhood of small, family-owned stores in the mid-century. It was a time when soldiers returning from WW II sought education through the GI Bill of Rights, enabling them to receive their college degrees and enter the work force earning good salaries. Women were busy raising a generation of baby boomers. Automobiles were not so prevalent; few families in EF owned a car. The corner store, owned and operated by our neighbors, had everything we needed. The Cursons owned the Hardware store at Ridge and Midvale Aves., site of Palestine Hall. (Their niece, Sophie, owned the fashionable dress store on Rittenhouse Square.) Joe Burns and Earl Verbeck owned the butcher store on Midvale Ave., presently Dr. Kim’s dentist office. Felix Herrera owned the barber shop on

Ridge Ave., site of the present AM/PM. Ruth & Dave Grill, brother and sister, owned the corner grocery store at Krail St., now Fiorino’s Restaurant. Plenty of doctors and dentists operated their business from their homes. Conrad St. and Ridge Ave. were the thoroughfares for merchants. Visits to the grocer, the butcher, the pharmacy and Five & Dime were trips you made every day. They enjoyed daily deliveries of fresh fruits, vegetables and meats. You always had the services of an expert you trusted. They were your neighbors and likewise customers of your family business. My good fortune was to be part of a family of florists. We always knew who was getting married, had a baby or died. Flowers were a part of all major events of life. It was a seven-day-a-week business. Weddings on Saturday and funeral viewings on Sunday or any other day of the week. What I remember most were the smells. To walk into the shop

and inhale the sweet mix of roses, carnations, gardenias and violets. All the colors were in no particular order, but somehow they blended as in a Monet painting.

But this was a business. Phone ringing, customers selecting, and my father loading the truck for deliveries to hospitals, churches, funeral parlors and homes.

One wall of shelving was lined with vases, all sizes and colors. Planters with baby spelled out in pink or blue, here a piano shaped planter or a lady’s hat. Pop a plant in, add a fancy ribbon and send to say “congratulations,” “thank you” or “happy birthday.” A long bar the length of the wall held spools of ribbons in every color and width, spiraling down, begging to be picked.

Holidays such as Thanksgiving, Easter, Valentine’s Day and most of all Mother’s Day meant round the clock work for days before the holiday. We kids wired stems for my father to grab and arrange in beautiful containers. Or, we made bows to be placed on each arrangement. Pretty little cards appropriately selected were signed to accompany the deliveries.

February is the month for lovers. If you love someone, why not say it with flowers?

Registration open for EFSA baseball and soccer

The East Falls Sports Association has opened registration on its website for spring sports at the McDevitt Recreation Center.

Children ages three to seven are invited to participate in co-ed Saturday morning baseball. They will play in two age divisions: Tee-ball for ages three and four, and Rookies for ages five to seven. Both will play at 9 am on Saturdays.

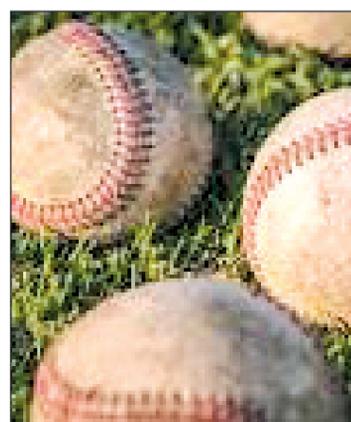
Practices will begin on Sat-

urday, March 28.

Spring soccer will play on Sundays at 10:30 am for children ages six to 11 at McDevitt. That season will begin Sunday, April 5.

Both sports are seeking volunteers to help coach. Please reach out to Jen Arnoldi by email if you are interested: jmartell@att.net.

More information and the links for registrations can be found on the EFSA’s website, www.efsasports.com.



EF Census finds 31 species, but only 684 birds

(Continued from page 4)

we have before – likely another cause for birds to stay in protected areas.

On any given day, one never knows what birds will appear. On this particular day, we observed only one goldfinch, one mockingbird, and two robins. Some potential birds turned out to be plastic bags in trees or falling leaves, but special sightings highlighted our day: a pair of Eastern Towhees, a Yellow-Bellied Sapsucker, and a Pileated Woodpecker. The last two were phoned in by experienced birders.

Walking along the Schuylkill, skirting bikers, we observed much bird activity – four Common Mergansers and a Bufflehead (both diving ducks), Mallards, and soaring Red-Tailed Hawks.

Huge flocks of Starlings and House Sparrows swelled the numbers. Raptors were abundant – a Sharp-Shinned Hawk and seven Red-Tailed Hawks.

Without the help of 32 East Fallers who graciously invited us to observe their feeders, and five reliable birders who reported sightings, we (Winston and Wendy Moody) could not have achieved such success.

Copies of the checklist of what we saw are available by emailing wmoodyw@aol.com

Thanks to all who participated. Keep your feeders filled, and happy sightings!

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Old Academy features Shepard's Buried Child

East Falls' historic Old Academy Players continues its 97th season with American playwright Sam Shepard's *Buried Child*, opening February 24 through March 15.

Directed by Nancy Ridgeway with set design by T. Mark Cole and produced by Rob Rosiello, the show will run February 28, 29 and March 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, and 15. Friday and Saturday curtain time is 8 pm; Sunday at 2 pm.

In the tradition of other award-winning plays such as *Next to Normal*, *Other Desert Cities*, and *August: Osage County*, *Buried Child* takes a searing look at the American family in all its dysfunction. Over the course of one day on an isolated Illinois farm, Shepard introduces us to a family lost in its secrets and unable to rise above its past. When the family's prodigal grandson returns unannounced with his spirited girlfriend, the past and present suddenly collide with dark

humor and brutal honesty that is characteristic of Shepard, taking what we thought we knew about love and family and turning it inside out.

Buried Child won the 1979 Obie Award for Playwriting and the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, launching Shepard to national fame. The Broadway revival in 1996 received five Tony nominations, including Best Play.

Shepard, was an American actor, playwright, author, screenwriter, and director whose career spanned half a century. He won ten Obie Awards for writing and directing, the most won by any writer or director. He wrote 44 plays as well as several books of short stories, essays, and memoirs. Shepard was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor for his portrayal of pilot Chuck Yeager in the 1983 film *The Right Stuff*. He received the PEN/Laura Pels Theater Award as a master American dramatist in 2009.



Lee Stover as Vincent in Old Academy's *Buried Child*, by Sam Shepard, opening February 24.

New York magazine described Shepard as "the greatest American playwright of his generation."

Old Academy Players' cast includes: Charles Hoffmann as Father Dewey, Eric Rupp as Bradley, Kelsey Hébert as Shelly, Lee Stover as Vincent, Lorraine Barrett as Halie, Rob Rosiello as Tilden, and Tim Andersson as Dodge.

Parking for all performances is free at the theatre, 3544 Indian Queen Ln.. Ticket price is \$20 per adult; \$10 per student with valid ID. Buy tickets online at www.OldAcademyPlayers.org.

Old Academy welcomes groups! Take advantage of group discount pricing at \$17 per person with 15 or more people. Call 215-843-1109 for more information and tickets.

Old Academy Players has provided continuous community theater since 1923 and is a member of the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance. *Buried Child* marks its 524th production.



Annie Hnatko

Old Academy will present an afternoon of *Love Songs* from the Stage on Sunday, Feb. 9 at 2 pm. Theatre goers will enjoy wine and light refreshments after the ensemble performance. Tickets are \$15 and can be purchased with cash at the door or online at love-songs-at-oap.ticketleap.com/love-songs

More importantly, they will enjoy the stellar singing voices of Annie Hnatko, Gina Schwoerer, Kristin Hegel, Dana Corvino, Megan Murphy, Michalina Goral, Melissa Nielson, Brian Padla, David Wolf and Christian Conklin.

Love Songs will take place in the Old Academy Players Carfax building, located next to the theater at 3544 Indian Queen Ln. For more information contact Annie Hnatko at MusicalsAtOldAcademy@gmail.com.

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'Litter Crew Ahead' tackles blight in two clean-ups

East Falls Town Watch mobilized two attacks on community clean-ups in January – the second one a special Martin Luther King Day outing that saw teams of neighborhood mothers, fathers, daughters and sons join the core group of Town Watch volunteers in removing trash from East Falls sidewalks and streets.

The outings are tabbed "Litter Crew Ahead" cleanups because of the bright orange warning sign provided to Town Watch by PennDOT to assist with safety in the efforts. The January outings left two areas looking much sharper once the litter was removed.

On Martin Luther King Day, Jan. 20, the Town Watch team fanned out in all directions from the intersection of Midvale and Ridge Aves. The result was dozens of bags of trash and recyclables later removed by PennDOT.

One week earlier, TW volunteers convened in the area under the Twin Bridges and the parking lot bordered by

Kelly Dr., Ferry Rd. and Ridge Ave. The areas under the Route 1 ramps are a constant source of littering. The volunteers picked up enough rubbish to fill 30 bags of trash and recyclables. The bags were collected and removed by PennDOT crews.

Mary Jane Fullam, Town Watch President, said that for ease of planning the TW board members have decided to establish a pattern of clean-ups on every third Saturday of each month. The next clean-up is set for Saturday, Feb. 15 from 10 am to 12 noon at the EF Community Garden, Ridge Ave. and Scotts Ln.

Taking part in one or both of the January clean-ups were Andrea Sunderland, Cory Czuczman, Joan McIlvaine and her daughter, Debra McIlvaine, Peggy Gertz, Marie Filipponi, Chris Bachman, Monica Lengkong, Mary Jane Fullam, Mary Jean Cunningham, Bill Epstein, Julie Margulies, Carolyn Sutton, Joe Potempa, Henrietta Mergen and her father, Mike,

Todd Baylson and his mother, Frances, Payton Phillips, Arianna Krajewski and Kathy Anderson, Elaine Weigelt.

All East Falls residents should feel free to join Town Watch's regularly scheduled meetings with the Philadelphia police, and to join the EF Town Watch patrols and community clean-ups. To volunteer or for more information, call 215-848-2033.

The EF Town Watch calendar:

- Thurs., Feb. 13, 7:30 PM: EFTW monthly meeting, 3540 Indian Queen Ln.

- Sat., Feb. 15, 10 am to 12 noon: Monthly EFTW Litter Crew Ahead Clean-up, Scotts Ln. and Ridge Ave.

- Wed., Feb. 19, 6 pm: EF Town Watch meets with Lt. Sean Bascom, supervisor for Police Service Area 1 in the 39th District, Canaan Baptist Church, 5430 Pulaski Ave.

- Mon., Feb. 24, 6 pm: Meeting with 39th District police officials, 22nd St. and Hunting Park Ave.



(Left) Andrea Sunderland and Cory Czuczman were part of the 12-member volunteer team that cleaned up under the twin bridges

(Below) Clean up on MLK Day (from left) Joe Potempa, Cory Czuczman, Peggy Gertz, Elaine Weigelt and Julie Margulies. And (Right, below) Arianna Krajewski, Kathy Anderson, Mike Mergen and his daughter, Henrietta.



Happening in and near East Falls...

Farmers Market

The East Falls Farmers Market will continue through the winter months on Saturdays from 11 am to 1 pm on the parking lot under the Twin Bridges, 4100 Ridge Ave.

Those taking part in the market in February include McCann's Farm produce and its premium goat milk, yogurt, cheeses and fudges; Spring Hollow Farm; Side of the Road barbeque; Everwild Farm microgreens; Amira's Delites (vegan baked goods);

and Taiku's handmade greeting cards.

Historical Society program

The East Falls Historical Society will feature a program on the Battles of Germantown and hold an election for new officers and board members at 6 pm Wednesday, Feb. 5 at the Falls Library.

Dr. David Young, Executive Director of the Delaware Historical Society, will discuss his new book, *The Battles of Germantown: Effective Public History in America*.

Women: Ready to Run Feb. 8

A day-long training session for women ready to run for public office, ready to work on a political campaign or ready to learn more about the political system is set for 8 am to 5 pm Saturday, Feb. 8 on Jefferson University's East Falls campus.

Jefferson employees can participate in this non-partisan program at no cost. The fee for non-Jefferson persons is \$95. Register at chatham.edu/readytorun. For more information, contact

Karen Albert, Coordinator at Jefferson's Arlen Specter Center, at karen.albert@jefferson.edu.

Jefferson students in Habitat for Humanity

Ten students from Jefferson University's East Falls Campus are planning to spend their Spring break in Raleigh, NC building homes for Habitat for Humanity. Before they do that, however, they have to raise \$4,500 for transportation, food and registration and fees for Habitat.

Fallsers who would like to support the effort can make checks payable to Philadel-

phia University with "Alternative Spring Break" on the memo line, and mail to Jefferson East Falls, 4201 Henry Ave., 301 Kanbar Campus Center, Philadelphia, PA 19144.

Coming in the next East Falls NOW:

If events unfold in a timely manner, watch for the March 2020 East Falls NOW and reports on the East Falls Development Corp. selling its building at 4133 Ridge Ave., plus the approach of a new pub on Midvale Ave. – home of the former Taproom.

EAST FALLS COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Volunteer powered, the East Falls Community Council represents the interests of the people of East Falls. We improve our quality of life through the work of our Zoning and Traffic committees, and by supporting:

- EF Town Watch • Friends of Mifflin
- Falls of Schuylkill Library • EF Village • Grants
- EF Tree Tenders • EF Sports Association
- EF Historical Society • McMichael Park
- Inn Yard Park • EF Community Garden
- Solarize East Falls • EF Dog Park, coming soon

We also sponsor events that improve and bring together our community:

- Mifflin Arboretum Clean-up • EF Flea Market
- Fallser Fest • Holiday Sing • EF House Tour

Use a credit card or PayPal online at www.eastfallscommunity.org or mail a check to: EFCC, PO Box 12672, Philadelphia, PA 19129



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EF Village sets program on REAL ID

by Mary Flournoy

A number of EF Village members have had questions about the REAL ID card, and some members have had problems getting one, so we have scheduled a free information program at 1 pm Saturday, Feb. 8 at the Falls Library, 3501 Midvale Avenue. The program is open to all East Fallers who have questions about the REAL ID card.

Merle Zucker, Legislative Assistant in the office of St. Rep. Pamela A. DeLissio, will present the program. She will have handouts, and will share her own experience and difficulty in obtaining her REAL ID card.

Effective October 1, 2020, all travelers will need a REAL ID card or a valid passport to board a commercial flight or to enter a military base or certain federal buildings. Ms. Zucker will explain how some people who received their first PA driver's license after 2003 can apply online.

She will go over all the documents needed for verification – birth certificate or valid passport.

Social Security card, proof of all legal name changes (marriage certificate, divorce decree, or court order), two proofs of current PA address. In some cases, it might take extra time and effort to obtain the required documents.

Most people will need to go to a Pennsylvania Driver's License Center to apply for a REAL ID, and only a few centers are able to offer a same-



day over-the-counter REAL ID card. Same-day service is available at the PennDOT locations in King of Prussia, at 143 S. Gulph Rd.; Norristown, at 1700 Markley St.; and South Philadelphia, at 2904 S. 70th St. Other PennDOT locations will provide applicants the REAL ID card within 15 days.

Tour the Central Library

Join East Falls Village members for a tour of the Central Library on the Benjamin Franklin Pkwy. on Wednesday, Feb. 8. The group will meet at 9 am at Henry Ave. and Queen Ln. for the No. 32 bus or meet at 1901 Vine St. by 10 am. Register by calling EFV at 267-444-4507.

The 10 am tour will provide information on the history and architecture of the library, plus a visit to all the departments, including new areas created in the Library's 2019 renovation. An 11 am tour is of the Rare Book Department, which houses special collections from medieval manuscripts to Beatrix Potter and Charles Dickens.

Lunch of the Month

Most months East Falls Village sponsors a lunch of the month, usually in a local restaurant for good food and conversation. We split the bill. On Thursday, Feb. 20, we will meet at Terron, 3426 Conrad St., formerly Milo's for a vegetarian/vegan lunch at 11:45 am. Register by calling 267-444-4507.

Join East Falls Village

East Falls Village has programs – some on “senior issues”, some on interesting topics, lunches and tours of museums. Services for members include help with technology, including phones, all types of computers and printers, and rides to medical appointments or grocery shopping.

For more information, visit eastfallsvillage.org. The “How to Join” page includes information on our service area and membership levels, including Assisted Memberships. Pick up a membership brochure at the front desk of the Library or call 267-444-4507 to have one sent to you.

Local tree canopy declines 6.3 percent

by Cynthia Kishinchand

At the December Tree Summit organized by Philadelphia Parks and Recreation (PP&R) and the city's Office of Sustainability, arborists, educators and community leaders learned the city is launching a 10-year Urban Forest Plan to increase the city's tree canopy to 30 percent.

The Tree Canopy Assessment held some grim news: In spite of the efforts of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's (PHS) Tree Tender program and the PP&R TreePhilly campaign, Philadelphia had a six percent loss in tree canopy between 2008 and 2018. Over this ten year period the tree canopy lost 1,095 acres, decreasing from 18,450 acres in 2008 to 17,356 acres in 2018.

According to the Tree Canopy Assessment, the USDA Forest Service developed the protocols for such studies “to help governments and their citizens chart a greener future.”

At the Summit I learned that in East Falls the canopy decreased 6.3 percent, even though, per EFTT records, EFTT planted 597 trees along local streets between 2008 and 2018. Although East Falls, with a current canopy of 33.93 percent, exceeds the city's goal of 30 percent, according to the study the community could have a canopy of 75.26 percent. Local residential yards and parks as well as local streets bereft of street trees could accommodate more trees. For a copy of the Tree Canopy Assessment contact Erica Smith Fichman, PP&R Community Forestry Manager, at Erica.Smith@phila.gov or (215) 683-4459.

PP&R Commissioner Kathryn Art Lovell noted the city wants to create “more opportunities to plant new trees in parts of the city historically lacking the benefits of trees.”

PHS, whose tree tender volunteers plant 1,300 plus trees each year, is also committed to have a 30 percent tree canopy in each of the 152 neighborhoods.

Register for the on line PHS Tree Tender so you can be part of the solution to increase the community's local canopy. Yes, many local streets are tree-lined, but, alas, many are not. You will learn about tree biolo-

gy, urban stresses on trees, tree identification, and much, much more. Online register at <https://phsonline.org/programs/tree-tenders> or call (215) 988-1898. The course is available online by Penn State Extension Wednesday, January 29 through March 11, one hour each week at noon.

For more information, contact Vinnie Cotrone at vjc1@psu.edu or call 570-825-1701. For information about EFTT, contact Cynthia Kishinchand at crk3114@msn.com or (215) 849-2474.

Kitchen Corner

Overripe bananas – Don't waste them!

by Anne Farnese

Attention! Do not throw out overripe bananas. Their off-putting blackened appearance camouflages the fruit's edibility. Its dark flesh is a sign of increased sweetness and softness that will give rich flavor to smoothies, pancakes, muffins and banana bread, so don't let it go to waste. Instead, freeze your ripe or overripe bananas.

Simply peel and cut the fruit crosswise into one-inch size slices, and place in a single layer on a parchment-lined baking sheet or plate. Freeze for approximately two hours. Transfer the frozen pieces into a resealable plastic bag, label and date.

Frozen bananas take the place of ice cubes and thicken a smoothie. A rule of thumb is to blend one cup of sliced bananas with ¼ cup yogurt and ¼ cup of milk of choice with a splash of vanilla.

If a favorite recipe calls for mashed bananas, freeze some to have on hand. Peel and mash overripe bananas, then measure the specific amount needed. Deposit in a freezer-safe bag, press to let out extra air before sealing. Date and label the amount; freeze flat for quick thawing.

Bananas can be frozen for up to six months. Thaw at room temperature or defrost in the microwave. Timing depends on the size of the pieces.

Celebrate National Banana Bread Day on Sunday, Feb. 23.

Kitchen Corner recommends this recipe from Martha Stewart. It's easy to make and the sour cream imparts a bit of tang.

Martha's Banana Bread

- Ingredients:**
- ½ cup butter softened to room temperature
 - 1 cup granulated sugar
 - 2 large eggs
 - 1½ cups all-purpose flour
 - 1 teaspoon baking soda
 - 1 teaspoon salt
 - 1 cup mashed very ripe bananas
 - ½ cup sour cream
 - 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
 - ½ cup chopped walnuts

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Butter a 9-by-5-by-3-inch loaf pan; set aside.

In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking soda, and salt; set aside.

In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar with an electric mixer until light and fluffy. Add eggs and beat to incorporate.

Add flour mix until just combined.

Add bananas, sour cream and vanilla; mix to combine.

Stir in walnuts and pour into prepared pan.

Bake until a cake tester inserted in the center comes out clean, about an hour and 10 minutes. Let rest for 10 minutes, then turn out onto a rack to cool.

Falls Library holds full agenda for February

February holds the usual full and interesting schedule of programs – some old and reliable, some new and interesting -- at the Falls Library. That's East Falls NOW's opinion, at least.

Before we get to the good stuff, let's note that the Library will open late on Thursday, Feb. 13 – at 2 pm – due to staff development. And it will be closed entirely on Monday, Feb. 17, for Presidents Day.

Census jobs

We'll start the adult program report with news that the US Census Bureau will set up in the Library from 4 to 7:30 pm every Wednesday in February to discuss job opportunities with the 2020 big count. Stop by on any of these four days to talk with a Census Bureau representative about the jobs available.

Here's something new!

The Wagner Institute of Science will present a free weekly course exploring the history and controversies surrounding the Nobel Prizes in physics and chemistry. The class will be held at 6:30 pm Monday, Feb. 3, and run every Monday through March 9, except for Presidents Day.

No registration is required. Just appear.

Rounding out the February adult programs will be the monthly meeting of Philadelphia Stoics, at 6:30 pm Thursday, Feb. 13, and the 6 pm Monday, Feb. 24 monthly meeting of the Falls Book Group.

The Book Group is open to new members. Meetings take place in the story room. The selection for February is the One Book, One Philadelphia selection There There, by Tommy Orange.

For the kids

On the Children's front, the Library's Literacy Enrichment Afterschool Program (LEAP), is a drop-in afternoon deal that offers homework assistance, computer literacy, and library skills for students in grades K–12 and daily literacy enrichment activities for elementary school students. This program takes place Monday through Thursday from 3 to 5:30 pm and Saturday from 1 to 5 pm. Sign-ups? Not necessary. Children under the age of seven must be accompa-

nied by a caregiver.

The Library's Read with a Therapy Dog program is taking a rest. For more information, contact Meredith at mcgov-ernm@freelibrary.org or 215-685-2093.

For toddlers and pre-schoolers

Here's an oldie but goodie: at 10:15 am every Tuesday in February, the Library will rock and roll with Music and Movement for babies and toddlers. Bring the small ones and enjoy a parent-led music and dance story time. Children will play maracas, shake pom poms, dance, and listen to music and dance-themed books. It's a great opportunity to tire out your little ones and meet local parents. Groups and daycares should call the library to set up their own special visits.

That's just the beginning of the music scene at Midvale Ave. and Conrad St. At 10:30 am Thursday, Feb. 6 it's time for Motown Jr. Music and Motion, as younger children are invited to learn popular dance moves and groove to percussion and Motown classics. This workshop is led by Ali Richardson and is inspired by the 2020 One Book, One Philadelphia selection, There There.

And there's more! At 10:30 am Friday, Feb. 28 the Library will stage Storytime Dance Party!, featuring the reading of a dance-themed book and lots of moving together. This is best for youngsters ages two to six, along with an adult caregiver. Groups, please call ahead. This program is presented by Merge Dance Studio and is sponsored by the Friends of Falls of Schuylkill Library.

LEAP for School-Age Kids

The Library's Literacy Enrichment Afterschool Program (LEAP) for school-age children includes:

Outdoor Nature Observations: From 2 to 3 pm on Saturday, Feb. 1, Nature Observations will provide an opportunity for youngsters to exercise their observation skills outside and stretch their ability to focus through mindfulness games. Dress warmly and appropriately for the weather.

Swedish snacks: At 3 pm

Monday, Feb. 3, learn about the Swedish coffee break, "fika," at a Swedish Chokladbollar. Participants will make a dairy and egg-free coconut chocolate snack.

Spool knitters: At 3:30 pm Tuesday, Feb. 4, it's time for LEAP Fiber Arts: Spool Knitters. Fiber arts fans will learn how to make a spool knitter out of a cardboard tube and knit the easy way.

Breathing Buddies: From 2 to 3 pm Saturday, Feb. 8, Breathing Buddies will offer instruction in breathing in yoga and meditation, as participants make a "breathing buddy" animal to help them focus on their own breathing.

Straw weaving: At 3:30 pm Tuesday, Feb. 11, fiber arts are back in a class on straw weaving. Youngsters will make a woven bracelet using straws.

Black History Quizzo: At 4 pm Thursday, Feb. 13, the Library will host Black History Month Quizzo for kids and teens who want to show off everything they've learned about black history. Win prizes in this fun-filled, family-friendly event.

Sensory bottles: From 2 to 3 pm Saturday, Feb. 15, kids will make their own sensory bottles. They'll enjoy mindfulness exercises and create the bottles with glitter to help focus their attention.

Yarn Paintings: At 3 pm Tuesday, Feb. 18, LEAP Fiber Arts turns to yarn paintings. Youngsters will discover their inner fiber artist as they make paintings with colorful yarn scraps.

Inspirational portraits: At 3:30 pm twice – Thursday, Feb. 20 and Saturday, Feb. 22, pre-schoolers and school age children will read Parker Looks Up at Storytime and Activity. After reading the book, they'll explore the importance of representation and the art of the Michelle and Barack Obama's portraits. Then, they'll make their own inspirational portrait.

Fiber bowls: At 3:30 pm Tuesday, Feb. 25, the final LEAP Fiber Arts program for the month will involve students using fabric, yarn and glue to craft a bowl of their own design.



A bargain at two cents per gallon, compared to four cents per ounce for commercially bottled water, according to the Philadelphia Water Department.

Seeking a healthy drink in Philadelphia? Turn on your tap

by Tom Smith

The City's Water Department has declared 2019 the Year of the Tap.

Why? Here are five reasons:

- Philadelphia's tap water is among the purest in the country, meeting all federal and state requirements;
- All those plastic bottled water bottles: Americans now buy about 42 billion annually;
- Concern for the environment: in production costs for the bottles, those scattered on the roadways, and the expense of recycling. Not all 42 billion are in Philadelphia, but still...;

• The mark-up to consumers: bottled water costs about four cents per ounce; Philly tap water costs about 2 cents per gallon;

• Finally, this: much of the bottled water you purchase

and drink in fact comes from municipal water systems, not some pristine, hidden mountain stream

So why the surge in bottled water consumption? In part, consumers are looking to get away from sugared drinks, and bottled H₂O was held out (by bottlers) as just the alternative needed. And convenience: surveys conducted by the City found that 40 percent of City residents drink bottled water at home.

The City's Year of the Tap campaign features events such as the City Water Bars, distributing water at public events, City Water Ambassadors, and several mural projects.

Think about The Tap next time you're tempted to buy a bottle. Refillable water bottles can be had for little more than a dollar. Fill them with tasty Philly water. Voila!

REAL ID – What You Need to Know

Have you heard? Beginning October 1, 2020, you will need a REAL ID or a valid passport to board a domestic commercial flight or enter a military base and some federal buildings. If you do not have a REAL ID, come to this information session presented by Merle Zucker, Legislative Assistant to State Rep. Pamela A. DeLissio – and then get started on the process!

Saturday, February 8 at 1 pm

Falls Library, 3501 Midvale Avenue (Garden Entrance)

Learn

- What REAL ID is
- What documents are needed for verification
- How to apply online (only those who received their first PA driver's license after 2003 may apply online)

This program is free and is open to all.



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McMichael Park Play Space approaching realization

(Continued from page 1)

The mood was reinforced when Parks & Recreation Commissioner Kathryn Ott Lovell said she expects funds to be available to hire a “seasonal maintenance attendant” to clean and maintain the play space, which will take up less than five percent of the six-acre park in two playing pods – side-by-side near the center of the park slightly toward the Henry Ave. side.

Ott Lovell said the play space would not rob McMichael of open space, given the plan’s naturalistic design and lack of enclosure. In a statement following the meeting she elaborated on the reasons for the play space:

“We worked collaboratively with community members over several years to design a park that will serve the evolving recreation needs of the community while maintaining its role as a place where families can have an immersive and peaceful connection to nature. This project aligns with Parks & Recreation’s goals of being stewards of the City’s parkland and for providing high-quality, affordable and accessible pro-



Location of play space proposed for McMichael Park

gramming for all.”

Landscape architect Sarah Schuh of Salt Design Studio has described the play space as maintaining the pastoral, natural feeling of the park by using simple, sustainable materials such as wooden logs. She said the design will help foster the native ecology of the park, managing storm water and increasing biodiversity.

“These are all things that would enhance your enjoyment of this woodland, and would make it an ecologically healthier place to be,” Schuh said.

“And by doing some of those

things, we also could make it much more interesting for kids.”

For several years the prospect of a play space has been debated by those who want it for young families with children and those who see it as a threat to the pristine space and bucolic nature of the park. The latter include the members of Friends of McMichael Park, who have championed and maintained the park as principal caretakers for 30 years. Noting that East Falls already has playgrounds -- including McDevitt

Recreation Center on Scotts Ln. and Inn Yard Park on Ridge Ave. -- Beth Gross-Eskin, a member of the Friends of McMichael, maintained that “East Falls does not need this playground.”

Alexis Franklin, coordinator of the Friends, said in a statement that many members were unable to attend the meeting because of “last minute” notice. She said Friends of McMichael Park “is looking forward to seeing the final plan of the playground when it becomes available.” She asked when the city would honor its com-

mitment to take care of broken sidewalks and storm water runoff.

Supporters and opponents have debated what’s fair and unfair with the play space. Proponents say it is only fair to offer young parents and children of East Falls a centrally located playground in an underutilized park; opponents say that it is unfair to build another playground in “privileged” East Falls when other city neighborhoods lack adequate recreational facilities.

On the subject of fairness, Ott Lovell asked if it was fair for the Friends of McMichael Park to seek money for storm water runoff and sidewalk repairs, which the city has promised to provide, but reject it for a playground. “The city is committed to greater inclusiveness and usage in its parks and this playground will bring out young children and families.”

Ott Lovell praised the work of the Friends and said the park system depends on citizen input. “I know there are people who don’t want change, but we feel we’ve come up with a compromise that respects traditionalists and satisfies the need for greater inclusiveness,” she said.

Henry Ave. changes needed ‘now’

(Continued from page 1)

Gillespie wrote, “In light of the continuing problems on the road and the intractable behavior of drivers...we are asking for remedial steps now – in effect a down payment on PennDOT’s plans.”

The \$16.8 million Highway Safety Improvement Plan for Henry Ave. calls for traffic calming measures such as roadway deflections, vegetated islands, median barriers, high friction surfaces and sidewalk bumpouts. Construction originally was

scheduled for 2020-2021, but the EFCC learned that it has been pushed back until 2022.

“We need active restraints that will force drivers to slow down and change their behavior,” Gillespie told the state and city officials. “That means physical impediments, such as speed tables, choke points, roadway deflections, median barriers and the like.” He added:

“Two years is too long to wait. In the meantime, we continue to live with havoc on the road.”

Feb. 10: ‘Love Lights’ to shine in McMichael Park

The Friends of McMichael Park and Alexis Franklin, Coordinator, have announced the return of an annual week-long favorite to mark Valentines Day week – the McMichael Park Love Lights.

Starting Monday, Feb. 10, a brightly lit tree will be dedicated to and sponsored by:

Marie Anne Spedding Gibbs, with all his adoration, appreciation and love, your husband, Steve; **Harriet Sofa**, with love from Mark and Kris Soffa; **Brian**, love you more, Christina; **Sabrina**, love you, Mom and Dad; **Wally and David**, from Daisy, Brian and Christina; **East Falls Pack Walk**, thanks for the treats, Daisy; **Friends of McMichael Park**, congratulations on 30 years of service to East Falls; **for loved ones**, Betty Miller; **Happy 30th Anniversary to the Friends of McMichael Park**, an old Parkside neighbor who appreciates all the volunteers over the years; **in honor of our retiring board members** Paul Furlong, Susan Kretsge and David Breiner, East Falls Historical Society.

Also: **Nancy**, love Don Donaghy; **for my husband, Dwight**, the love of my life, Chris Martin; **in memory of Jim and Betty Wilkinson**, Betsy Wilkinson; **Joe Leube**, East Falls Historical Society; **for Cathy**, the love of my life, Peter Logan; **in memory of Vinni Abate**, Charlene Brock; **it is the community** that makes East Falls special to me, and all the volunteers that put in so much of their own time to make this a great place to live, Gayl Henze.

Also: **Andrea Vogel**, I miss you, girl, Cathy McCoy; **Valentine B.D. Marvin Hobbs**, Chris Martin; **Dot and Sir Donaghy**, Nancy and Don; **in memory of Mike and Mary Wilkinson**, Betsy Wilkinson; **Tessa, my dear sister**, Peter Logan; in memory of Michael Bauman, Geoff and

Charlene Brock; Friends of McMichael Park, Gayl Henze; **Jack Slawson**, the best work buddy, Cathy McCoy; **Best to All**, Tom Williams and Keith Shively; **dear Amber**, Chris Martin; **in memory of Ed and Sarah Byrns**, Betsy Wilkinson; **Ann and Bill Rodenberger**, Nancy and Don; **in memory of Ken Hinde**, East Falls Historical Society; **Peter Logan, for the love of my life**, Cathy McCoy; **Friends of McMichael Park**, Anonymous; **Guenevere**, who I miss every day, Peter Logan; **in memory of Michael Bauman**, Geoff and Charlene Brock.

Also: **Charlie**, my sweet, sweet doggie, who is my best buddy, love you. Mommy; **East Falls Community Council**, Gayl Henze; **in memory of Timothy Johnsen**, Betsy Wilkinson; **Our Park!**, Chris Martin; **Dan and Kristin Donaghy**, Nancy and Don Donaghy; **Bumble, GOOD DOG!**, Cathy McCoy; in memory of Alex Montanez, Dr. Charlene Brock; **Eli**, my adorable, loveable and huggable grandson, you are the joy of my life, love, Bubbie; **East Falls Village**, Gayl Henze; **Power Corps** for their recent help, Friends of McMichael Park; **my three wise men**, John-david, Zachary and Sam, Alexis; **Brigid, Fionn, Tug, Rory and Molly Donaghy**, Nancy and Don; **the Turtle**, who always speaks the truth, Peter Logan; **in memory of John Geoghegan**, Betsy Wilkinson; **in memory of Romaine Patterson**, Geoff and Charlene Brock; **my daughters Danielle and Hannah**, love you with my whole heart, grateful for our special bond, love, Mom; **Neal**, my sweet, funny and silly son-in-law, wonderful husband and dad, your favorite mother-in-law; **East Falls Historical Society**, Gayl Henze; Julie H. C. Rocco, Mary Jane Fullam; in loving memory of Peter Kishin-

chand, Cynthia and Kumar.

Also: **In memory of Mary Wilkinson Hargadon**, Betsy Wilkinson; **for Beth**, the love of my life, Bill; **East Falls Tree Tenders**, Cynthia and Kumar Kishinchand; **in memory of Antea Vece**, Geoff and Charlene Brock; **Liz Donaghy and Jamie Mullen**, Nancy and Don Donaghy; **Luna and Scout**, happy together, Sam and Erica; **in memory of Ed and Lucille Byrns**, Betsy Wilkinson; **Thomas Mifflin School staff and students**, Cynthia and Kumar Kishinchand; **East Falls Presbyterian Church**, Gayl Henze; **Friends of McMichael Park**, Bill Hoffner and Frances Bourne; **in blessed memory of Stephanie Kacur Epstein**, Bill Epstein; **in memory of Maryanne McGlynn Leuby**, Betsy Wilkinson; **First Presbyterian Church of Germantown**, Gayl Henze.

Also: **With love to Angela, Matt, Miles, Ben and Josie**, Dad and Pop-Pop; **with love to Amanda, Pepe, Gabe and Carolina**, Dad and Pop-Pop; Dolores and Jim Mullen, Nancy and Don; **in memory of Patrick Quinn**, Betsy Wilkinson; **Judi and Bill Morrow**, Nancy and Don; **the Turtle and his friends**, Cynthia Kumar Kishinchand; **St. Bridget’s Church**, Gayl Henze; **in memory of Michael Wilkinson**, Betsy Wilkinson; **Ann-Marie, Adrien, Henry and Marcus Knowles**, Nancy and Don; **Gayl and Herb Henze**, Nancy and Don; **for Members of East Falls Town Watch**, Anonymous; **Manuela and Gerd Kulage**, Nancy and Don Donaghy; **Alexis and Kris, my dear friends** who share the same love and passion for preserving and nurturing open green space, love you both! Beth; **Leading Lady**, Don Donaghy; **in memory of Jack Alexander**, Betsy Wilkinson; **in memory of Eleanor Tompkins**, Louanne Stratton.



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