

# HIGHLAND PARK

Community Club  
Newsletter for  
February 1999



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Edited by Ollie Rieley

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## A Tale of Two Issues

*Mitch Kates*

Issue One: Cuppa Joe to Go, Please!

We in Highland Park have a neighborhood that boasts some of the greatest assets in the city: distinct housing stock, a beautiful park, a zoo visited by thousands, and a community of individuals that are active and committed. There is however one "feature" that still eludes us. That of a viable commercial district. For quite a number of years many people have spent countless hours conducting various meetings, fund-raisers and studies trying to come up with the right elements to pull our business community together with the residential.

All the surveys from within and studies conducted on behalf of the community point to one business as the catalyst toward achieving those goals - a neighborhood coffee shop. And so as the phrase goes, "timing is everything"! After servicing the community for many years, Highland Park lost a good friend and business when Carl Boyce, owner and operator of Marcus Pharmacy passed away. Many of us remember fondly the time and energy Carl put into the neighborhood by doing everything from home delivery of prescriptions to serving ice cream and candy in the early days. During his time in business, in fact in recent years, Carl was approached by a large drug store chain to buy his store and his invaluable customer list, but he turned it down. Carl didn't feel that a large chain would necessarily function in the best interest of Highland Park. Because of his caring touch in the neighborhood we were spared the visual offensiveness of a major chain on our stretch of Highland Avenue.

A year ago Amy Enrico moved to this neighborhood fulfilling a life long dream of living in Highland Park. Her other ambition was to continue in her family's tradition and start her own business in the field of food service. Amy set her goals on opening a neighborhood coffee shop right in her own community. As she worked through her business plan, crunching numbers and envisioning her shop, there was no space in the neighborhood to

house it. Then came the day when a "For Sale" sign appeared on the old Marcus Pharmacy building. "Timing is everything!"

Word of an impending coffee shop reached the ears of the neighborhood and the Community Club who both enthusiastically offered support and guidance. News of this newly proposed business also reached those who had concerns about any changes that might be made within the old Marcus Pharmacy space. The Community Club, under the guidance of Councilman Ferlo held meetings with both sides to identify concerns and try to come up with ideas and compromises to meet everyone's needs.

Since those early meetings some compromises were made and some possible issues have been resolved. There has also been a Zoning Board of Adjustment hearing and a decision. The Community Club spoke at the hearing in favor of the proposed business as did the Highland Park CDC. For those businesses on Bryant Street that have viewed the Club as "not business friendly" and members of the community who have felt that the Club was "not representative of the community," times have changed. It should be noted that there were so many supporters at the hearing that there was an unofficial statement; the Board had never in its history had as many people "in favor" of a new business be present to show their support. The zoning decision was lengthy and fortunately positive. The coffee shop was approved.

Unfortunately, as with everything in life, not everyone is happy. The decision as of today is under appeal. The CDC and Community Club were asked to appear on the Petition of Intervention which Ms. Enrico needs to file (since the Zoning Board is listed on the Appeal as the Defendant). The Boards of both groups voted on the question of whether or not they would be willing to get behind this petition and, in unprecedented decisions, both agreed to appear on it. I told you, times are changing?

Ultimately we would like everyone to be delighted about this impending business and what it would mean to our community and our neighborhood, but that may not be possible. What we (the Club) are doing, however is answering the needs and desires of the vast majority of the neighborhood. In the end we are doing what

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THE NEXT HPCC MEETING IS 7:15 P.M., THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18<sup>TH</sup> AT ST. ANDREWS

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we hope and believe is best.

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## Issue Two: A PAT on the Back

At the January meeting of the Community Club invited officials from PAT came to hear and address concerns of the neighborhood. There was a tremendous turnout. I have to say that there were a couple of things that personally affected me about what people said.

My first observation was that the problems addressed have been issues for quite a number of years. Many of these "issues" that have carried on for an incredible length of time have been a constant nuisance to many families. I was impressed by the way that those in attendance contained their frustration and were more than cordial to the guests they addressed. There were quite a number of occasions when people in the audience (many who had problems with PAT) commended PAT on their service and reiterated PAT's value to our community. I think that speaks volumes about this neighborhood.

On the subject of "issues" there was an underlying theme - "where is the policy enforcement?" There were those that called for routing changes and other actions that, let's face it, would take an act of Congress to change. There were, however, a few repeated offenses that to the layperson would appear to be "no-brainers." These obvious "violations" seem to be the area where we as a community and a Club can focus our attention. Here is a breakdown of the seemingly obvious or, dare I say, easy ones:

Running Engines: According to the officials in attendance engines are to be turned off for layovers that last more than two minutes.

Layovers at locations other than the end of the route are not permitted.

Unattended buses (that are running): Duh!

If we as a group converge on PAT and make sure they step up efforts to monitor their drivers and enforce their policies it is my guess that we may make headway in the task of alleviating some of these nagging problems.

My intention, as President of the Community Club, is to form a committee to help come up with the right solutions for the "issues." I want to let those who came to this past meeting and aired out their concerns know, if PAT didn't hear you, I did. I invite you to please come back in February and help us form a group of people who really are committed to seeing this one through.

Before I leave you for the month, a suggestion - In the age of video taping, when one of your friendly neighborhood buses decides to hang out for a while - "Driver snoozing at the wheel" - Take "1"!!!

Aloha

## H. P. C. C.

Officers, Directors & Committees

President: Milch Kates (661-4995)

President Elect: Diane DeNardo (363-2092)

Comm. Dev. V.P. Debbie DeAngelis (363-4948)

Treasurer Norma Lipscomb (362-6562)

Secretary Paula Flaherty (361-2203)

Past President Bob O'Connor (362-1239)

### Directors

Maura Brown 362-0534 (99)

Paul Dougherty 362-9517 (99)

Bruce Robison 361-4892 (99)

Ed Sullivan 361-1101 (99)

William Zlatos 661-6395 (99)

Carol Dyas (00)

Jay Gilmer 363-9100 (00)

Kelly Meade 362-0331 (00)

Mary Lee Snuffer 734-8477 (00)

Bob Staresinic 441-8972 (00)

Tom Burns

David Hance 361-4935 (01)

M. Meyers (01)

Ollie Rieley 661-1205 (01)

Kathy Ziegler 363-1252 (01)

### Committees

Beautification: Dell Ziegler 363-1252

Block Watch: John Reinsel 361-7973

Bryant Street: Milch Kates 661-4995

Children: Daviea Davis

Day Camp: Janice Burgett 361-2195

Education: Jay Gilmer 363-9100

Hospitality: Kelly Dougherty 362-9517

House Tour: Norma Lipscomb 362-6562

Membership: Kelly Meade 362-0331

Newsletter Ollie Rieley 661-1205

Program: Bruce Robison 361-4892

Public Safety: John Di Pucci 361-1023

Recreation: Charlie Peterson 441-2766

Reservoir Covers: Dave Hance 361-4935

Restoration: Debbie DeAngelis 363-4948

Super Playground: Steve Pettler 363-3978

Yard Sale: Judy Wolfe 441-7830

Voice Mail: Paula Flaherty 361-2203

Welcoming: Maureen Emerling 441-5244

Zoning: Barbara Howe 363-4699

Voice Mail 734-5261

## Highland Park Business Profile -- P.M. Pizza

*Muzz Meyers*

Anyone who has stopped in or called PM Pizza knows the friendly face and friendly voice of the owner, Phil Moran. On August 1, 1988, Phil left the world of corporate restaurant management (Red Lobster and Wendy's) to open P. M. Pizza. Specializing in traditional pizza, hoagies, and P. M. pizza pockets (made on fresh pizza dough, mmm!) Phil has always prided himself on making a quality product with quality ingredients. Ten years later, he's still producing a great product. But that's not all he's producing! Phil and wife Susan have two daughters, Samantha and Christina, and are expecting another child in August.

Phil's two words for Highland Parkers are: "Be Positive! Bryant Street has come a long way since I've been here and with community support it could really become something great" Phil welcomes feedback on his product or suggestions for new ideas. If you haven't been to P.M. Pizza on Bryant Street in a while, stop by soon and say "Hi" to Phil. He is an asset to our neighborhood.

### P.M. PIZZA - COMMUNITY CLUB COUPON

**ENJOY ONE LARGE CHEESE PIZZA  
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***THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!***

**Wanted:** Administrative Assistant - part or full-time position for a highly organized assistant, very experienced with MS Office products, should also be a capable Internet surfer for research purposes. Experience with QuickBook Pro and/or ACT is a plus. Send resume to; Perform, Inc, 5824 Bryant St., Pittsburgh, PA 15206 or [perform@telerama.com](mailto:perform@telerama.com).



**Dog Grooming**



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## February at St. Andrew's

*Bruce Robison*

February is Mardi Gras Month at St. Andrew's, and all in the neighborhood are invited to join the fun on the evening of Tuesday, February 16th, at our annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner and Mardi Gras Party, with food and fun beginning in Brooks Hall at 6 p.m.

The service schedule on Ash Wednesday, February 17th, is planned to provide convenient times for worship on this important day of the church year, with Holy Communion and the Imposition of Ashes in St. Andrew's Chapel at 7:15 a.m. and in the Church at noon, with a choral service in the evening at 8 p.m. All are welcome.

The month of February begins at St. Andrew's with our "First Thursday" evening service of Evensong and Recital on February 4th at 8 p.m. The recital program will feature students (and a teacher) from the Winchester-Thurston school--including Highland Park resident Alex Eversmeyer.

On Friday evening, February 12th, at 8 p.m., the St. Andrew's Adult Education Committee will sponsor a "Friday Forum" to explore the ramifications of last summer's Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops. Speaking will be the Rev. Dr. Harold T. Lewis of Calvary Church, East Liberty, and the Very Rev. Dr. Peter C. Moore, Dean and President of the Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry in Ambridge. The program is free and open to the public.

And finally, the Bach Choir of Pittsburgh will be in concert at St. Andrew's at 8 p.m. on Saturday, February 13th. Tickets may be purchased at the door.

For more information on services and events at St. Andrew's, please call the Church Office at 661-1245.

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### Community Organization Training Series

The Community Technical Assistance Center (CTAC) will be presenting a series of eight seminars to sharpen the skills required to build and operate an effective community based organization. These highly interactive programs are tailored to meet the needs of community based organizations in Southwestern Pennsylvania. Classes are open to both staff and board members. Seminar titles are:

Leadership Skills	January 27
Basic Board 1	February 10
Basic Board 2	February 24
Effective Meetings	March 10
Communications Skills	March 24
Financial Management	April 7
Strategic Planning	April 21
Fund-raising	May 5

Each seminar will be presented twice, once at 2:00 PM and once at 7:00 PM and all are at the East Liberty Presbyterian Church. Call CTAC at 231-2822 to register or for more information.

## Highlights of January 21, 1999 HPCC Meeting

The meeting was opened at 7:40 PM by President Mitch Kates.

Mitch reminded the audience that the meeting will follow a different order from past practice - Opening remarks will come first followed by old and new business and the meeting will conclude with committee reports, time permitting.

### Opening remarks:

1. Next month there will be representative of the parking authority in attendance. Have questions and comments ready.
2. There's a general concern about run-down property with absentee landlords and careless tenants. In a future meeting we hope to have a brainstorming session about actions that can be taken to improve these situations.
3. A zoning meeting will follow the January 26, city Council Meeting at 2:30 PM. The purpose of the meeting is to consider a change to the rules for Bed and Breakfast establishments. Current rules permit only overnight stays and breakfast service at B&B's. The change would permit B&B's to hold small social functions and to have incidental retail sales. Councilman Ferlo said he

### St. Andrew's Church

5801 Hampton Street \* Highland Park

#### Sunday Morning Services -February

9:00 a.m. Holy Communion in the Chapel

11:00 a.m. Choral Morning Worship

Nursery and Church School at 11:00 a.m.

Wednesday Morning Holy Communion 10:30 a.m.

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wrote original bill permitting B&B's in Pittsburgh seven years ago; this change is merely fine tuning the rules. The proprietor of the one B&B existing in Highland Park was present and strongly supported the change.

4. A 24 hour MAC machine is to be installed on Bryant Street by National City Bank for a one year trial. Presumably it will be removed after the trial if there is insufficient business. The machine currently in Peppi's at the Park will be moved to another Peppi's location. It was noted that National City has been good to the community and we should return the favor by doing business with them.
5. Coffee Shop status - The zoning board has approved the zoning request, but the neighbor has appealed to a judge. The building has been bought by Ms. Enrico. The HPCC Board of directors was canvassed by Mr. Kates and approved a motion to enter the case in favor of the Coffee Shop. The HPCDC is doing the same. It is unusual for community organizations to FAVOR a zoning exception, they generally only enter cases to OPPOSE.

**New Business:** See separate article: **PAT, City Engineering & Construction Respond to Comments.**

### Committee Reports:

*COP* - The Community Oriented Police reported that although there currently is no answering machine in the COP office, she is working on getting one.

Other committee reports deferred because of the lateness.  
Meeting Adjourned at about 9:30 PM.

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## PAT, City Engineering and Construction Respond to Comments

In an hour long exchange that at times was quite lively, Representatives of Port Authority Transit and the City Department of Engineering and Construction answered questions and responded to comments from Highland Park Residents during the regular January 21, 1999 HPCC meeting. It was a good exchange but no "eurekas" were uncovered to solve the identified problems. Heightened awareness of concerns and improved communications between residents and PAT and the City should result however.

Several specific complaints about PAT operations were voiced, some of them repeatedly:

1. Excessive number of empty busses to and from the garage along N. Highland Ave.
2. Excessive number of busses and duration of layovers at Bunkerhill and N. St. Clair and along Mellon Terrace. Drivers leave engines running, creating noise and pollution in violation of posted signs.

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3. Logic of the 77D Routing through the neighborhood east of N. Highland Ave.
4. Excessive speed on Grafton St.
5. Layovers at unauthorized places, e.g., St. Clair or N. Euclid at Elgin St.
6. Since removal of the bus stop at the old Sears location there's no 500 route stop for a long way on N. Highland
7. The driver stops the bus and runs into a store such as Walnut Market or Peppi's for a snack or drink.

The PAT representatives made several comments explaining their current practices and rules. The layovers that exist at the end of the lines are a planning measure to help maintain schedules. Each route has a scheduled layover to accommodate variations in the time to run the route. Actual travel flow may delay the busses arrival so that there is less than scheduled time available or maybe even no layover. The idea is for the bus to start from the beginning of the route exactly "on-schedule". It is a standing rule in PAT that a bus parked for more than two minutes should have its engine turned off, but they acknowledged that many drivers don't obey that requirement. A former driver, now in management, said reasons for keeping the engine running include: for warmth in winter, for cool in summer and to avoid the possibility that the engine won't start when it is time to go again. One of the jobs of road supervisors is to monitor compliance with the "engine-off" rules and other rules about layovers. A contract rule requires drivers to have a break at least every five and one-half hours. So after a maximum of five and one-half hours on the job, each driver gets a lunch break when he drives his bus back to the garage and enjoys his lunch. That accounts for many of the empty busses on the streets.

They encouraged the audience to call in complaints to the normal PAT complaint line or directly to the PAT representatives at this meeting (Phone numbers follow). For the complaint to be effective, the complainant should include the ROUTE number, the bus number, the time of day, the date and location of the complaint as well as what was wrong. These specifics are necessary to permit them to review the complaint with the driver responsible. The PAT representatives will review the issues brought up and develop a plan to correct the complaints. (See note below)

Complaints, comments and questions for the City Department of Engineering and Construction included the following:

1. Speeding down the hill on Grafton from Heberton to N. Highland. How about installing speed bumps? How about installing a stop sign on Grafton at Farragut?
2. There seems to be increasing speeding on the "long" North South streets between N. Highland and N. Negley. Would we be better off if those streets were one way?

3. Speeding on N. Highland.
4. What is plan for increased traffic that will be attracted by the new Home Depot?
5. Consider closing One Wild Place (Hill Road) to thru traffic.
6. Consider stop signs on N. Negley at Bryant Street. For some reason, that appears to be a dangerous intersection, probably because of the sight lines.

The representatives of the City Department of Engineering and Construction said: Speed bumps are not permitted on public roads in Pennsylvania and use of stop signs is strictly controlled by the 1978 Pennsylvania Code. Installation of a stop sign or unusual usage of one must be justified by a traffic study. Many of the stop signs in Highland Park were grand fathered in when the code was enacted. In response to the question of one-way streets, it was noted that a 2/3 or 3/4 majority of the residents of the streets would have to agree with one-way before the plan would be implemented; in addition, it is not clear that going to one-way would reduce speed. On the narrow streets, speed is somewhat controlled by the need to pass on-coming vehicles, with one-way there are no on-coming vehicles. Councilman Ferlo pointed out that a lot of effort was put into justifying the N. Negley stop signs at Hampton St. and it was based in part on the presence of Fulton School and St. Raphael's School on Hampton St. Mr. Ferlo also said VASCAR could be used on N. Highland Ave. to deter speeding.

PAT Representatives in attendance, title, phone number:  
 Robin Rochez, Director, Harmarville, 237-7347  
 Fred Mergner, Service Planner, 237-7225  
 Lynda Conway, Director, Operations Analysis, 237-7225  
 Floyd Cephas, Sr., Director of Service Delivery, East Liberty, 665-2670

City Engineering & Construction Representatives in attendance Fred Reginella and Darryl Phillips.

*(Editor's Note: Lynda Conway called me Monday January 25 with the following message. They have already alerted the Road Supervisors to the problems brought up in the January 21 HPCC meeting and asked them to better enforce the existing requirements. Since that hasn't worked in the past, a meeting has been scheduled for February 1 to plan additional actions to correct these problems. She will send me a summary of the meeting for inclusion in a future newsletter.)*

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## Update on Home Depot

Ollie Rieley

To respond to a reader's letter I made some inquiries about the Home Depot coming to the old Sears location. A representative of HOME DEPOT informed me that they expect to take possession of the site in March and open their store late this year. Councilman Ferlo told me that the URA has obtained possession of all the parcels necessary and that he expects the site



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The Next HPCC meeting is 7:15 p.m., Thursday, February 18th at St. Andrew's

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will be ready to turn over by March, if not sooner. Vento's has closed and will reopen in a new building to be erected by Home Depot. This continues to be good news for East Liberty and the entire East End.