



Old Town News

The newsletter of Old Allentown Preservation Association

OCT/DEC 2009

The mission of Old Allentown Preservation Association is to preserve and foster pride in our neighborhood through communication, education and social interaction. Our goal is to promote urban living, diversity and Allentown's architectural legacy and heritage.

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Christian Brown, President
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Matthew Tuerk, Treasurer
Dale Fritchman, Acting Secretary

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Kelly Minton

Executive Director Marie Sincavage

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Design – Deborah Rabinsky & Christian Brown
Neighbors & Economy – Scott Unger
& Tom Schleicher, acting chairs
Organization – Matthew Tuerk
Promotions – Matthew Tuerk, acting chair
Safe, Green & Clean – Christian Brown

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An elm street COMMUNITY

A Message from the OAPA President...

Hello members, friends and neighbors, a lot has happened this past year. Once again our list of accomplishments is staggering. The following is a quick overview of just some of the great things we did this past year:

- * OAPA held a well-attended Earth Day celebration and cleanup that attracted a large number of neighborhood children and their parents.
- * Funds from an Elm St. Residential Reinvestment Grant and Allentown Neighborhood Development Alliance (ANDA) grant funded the transformation of two vacant lots in the 900-block of W. Turner Street into a neighborhood park.
- * Thirteen wrought-iron tree well surrounds, funded by an Elm St. Sidewalk Accessories Grant (\$5,000), a grant from the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce Foundation (\$2,000) and an ANDA grant (\$1,300) were custom built and installed by Preservation Works, Ltd.
- * Continued progress on a standard streetscape design for the Old Allentown Historic District using funds provided by an Elm St. Design Grant. A sample prototype was built at the new Turner Street Pocket Park.
- * Completed emergency repairs to the blighted property at 343 North 8th Street using funds from an Elm Street Residential Reinvestment Grant (\$112,000).
- * Assisted three new businesses with signage (ANDA funded) and a partnership grant with Allentown Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) covered zoning and permit fees associated with the signs
- * Seven single-family residential and five commercial (multi-unit residential) facades were restored throughout the Historic District using funding from: Elm Street Residential Reinvestment Grant, CDBG, ANDA and Century Fund.
- * The Design Committee worked with the Allentown School District and the Baum Art School to complete a mural on the new playground stage at Central Elementary School. Elm Street funding contributed to the project - \$2,000.
- * ANDA arts funding supported two youth arts programs this past summer. Fifth and sixth grade children (13) walked to the Allentown Art Museum for an arts program, followed by additional arts experiences and lunch at OAPA's office. The second activity teens (26) visited the Allentown Art Museum to tour the exhibits, followed by a hip-hop dance class at the Allentown Arts Park and lunch. Design Committee staff assisted with the program arrangements and details, plus designed t-shirts for the program.

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Now celebrating our 33rd year!

- * An estimated 350 people attended OAPA's 33rd Annual House Tour.
- * A marketing study was conducted, spring 2009, by Excelsior Marketing to determine the best approaches for attracting more homeowners and businesses to the Historic District.
- * We continue to update and improve the Old Allentown web site. The OAPA newsletters are now available on line.

Many, many thanks to those who made the above possible. Thanks to our volunteers, past and current board members, former outreach coordinator, funders and various partners and affiliates. An extra special thanks to our Executive Director, Marie Sincavage. Marie puts in countless hours above and beyond the normal call of duty every day. She administers the programming, projects and reporting necessary to keep this organization up and running each and every day.

As with any organization success brings fatigue, stress, and burn-out. We've lost some very dedicated, hardworking and loyal directors this year. We will miss them. Now more than ever we need you or someone you know, maybe a neighbor, someone that often has something to say about the neighborhood, to get involved. This January we will be looking to fill several positions on the Board of Directors. Submissions and nominations should be made now. Please send Marie Sincavage a simple bio or resume and/or letter of interest for consideration at the 2010 annual membership meeting.

What's just as important as running for the board?...VOTING!
All paid members are eligible voters. Voters MUST be present at the annual membership meeting to vote. Please stay tuned, stay involved and come out and VOTE! The directors are your voice and it all starts in January.

Trying times are ahead. Elm Street will be coming to an end next year. The nation's economy will certainly have an impact on our other funding sources. We must remain positive, resourceful and committed to progress in our neighborhood. Please consider getting involved in either an annual event, regular committee, or maybe a position on the board. Please contact Marie Sincavage or myself for any additional information you may need.

Here's wishing you and your family a Happy Holiday Season and wonderful New Year! —*Christian Brown*



Park Transformation in Progress

Two vacant lots in the 900-block of W. Turner Street will be transformed into a neighborhood park thanks to ANDA funding (PPL and KNBT) and a Elm Street Reinvestment Grant.



House Tour 2009
Over 350 people attended this year's Tour. In honor of completing the 100th façade, orange balloons were hung throughout the District on Tour Day to showcase façades completed since 1994.

Your Opinion Counts...

—Marie Sincavage, Executive Director/Elm St. Manager

Perhaps, you saw our college interns distributing this year's Elm St. community annual survey throughout the neighborhood over the summer months. Our goal this year, which we achieved, was to provide Elm St. surveys (English & Spanish) to all Old Allentown Historic District properties – nearly 1,400 properties.

Survey highlights:

- For the third year in a row, topping the list for what you like about living in the Old Allentown Historic District is the fact that you are living in a historic neighborhood. Second in importance are your neighbors. You described your neighbors as trustworthy and caring. Coming in third is the proximity of your neighborhood to shopping, cultural activities, public library, etc.
- Unfortunately, there are things you do not like about your neighborhood. Number one on this list is trash and litter most often associated with poorly maintained rental properties. Speeding traffic, constant and loud noise came in second, with many mentions of dogs barking and loud car stereos.

Third place is a major concern about drug activity, gangs and crime. Parking continues to be mentioned as a constant frustration—double parking issues, tickets and a shortage of parking spaces.

- Finally, after comparing this year's survey responses and results from two previous years, one issue mentioned quite often related to "out of control" children in the streets day and night. This is the first year this issue was mentioned frequently—11% of those answering the survey.

As in past years, the Elm St. community survey final report will be forwarded to the mayor, city council members, city bureaus and the City of Allentown police department. Should you wish to have a copy of this year's Elm St. Survey final report, please send an e-mail with your request to: oldallentown@enter.net.

Thank you to all of you taking the time to complete this year's survey and for the many thoughtful or thought-provoking comments – your opinion does count!

Mural Update...

This is the latest with regard to the mural projects in Old Allentown. A large full scale mural will no longer be seen in Old Allentown, well at least not anytime soon. The smaller billboard mural, proposed for the south side of 201 North 10th street is happening and will be a welcome improvement to the stark white graffiti magnet that currently exists on the corner. The project has board approval and is in the process of final planning and coordination. HALA, the Hispanic American League of Artists remains the lead organization in cooperation with the Lehigh Valley Mural Committee and the OAPA Design Committee. The project is funded through the ANDA Arts program and a grant received from the Lehigh Valley Arts Council/PA Council on the Arts.

This will be a unique mural project in that the actual art work will be applied to a cloth that can best be described as being like parachute material. This is so the mural can be removed in the future if the owner wishes to use the billboard sign. The owner, Mr. Nelson Diaz is expected to sign a five-year agreement to allow the mural to be in place, unless otherwise mutually agreed to by OAPA. If and when the mural is ever removed, it will be able to be relocated or perhaps auctioned as part of an OAPA event.



Lehigh Valley Arts Council Awards Ceremony

Deborah Rabinsky, Joyce Marin and Chris Brown at the Lehigh Valley Arts Council Awards Ceremony, held at the America on Wheels museum October 1st. OAPA is the recipient of a \$1,196 grant award.

The design of the mural will be heavily influenced by the information gathered at the two previous public meetings. Design ideas that reflect the historic nature and preservation-based mission of the organization were some of the most common themes mentioned. Other ideas that appeared to be desirable among those in attendance included imagery of historic advertisements (ones that you might have seen painted on a building) or perhaps some other vintage packaging or label. The design process will likely take place over late fall into early winter overseen by the OAPA Board and Design Committee. A final public meeting will be held to reveal the final vision prior to finalizing. Since the art work is being applied to the fabric, the mural will be performed off-site and prepared over the winter into early spring, with an installation celebration in late spring! —*Christian Brown*

Amongst the Scaffolding —*T. Scott Schleicher*

You'll find paint being removed from bricks, aluminum removed like tuna from a can and wood shutters adorning windows!

A banner year for OAPA in this department, 11 residential and commercial grants nearing completion for this season. Three signage grants along North 8th Street, and a total of five mini grants approved to area property owners—nearly \$110,000.00 of bricks and mortar physical improvements within the Old Allentown Historic District just this year.

Were you touring on the 3rd of October and noticed all the orange balloons? These signified over one hundred façade grant recipients from the inception of the program way back in 1994 (yes, it is true I had more hair, and a 32" waist) but it was quite an impressive display. We as residents should be proud of our accomplishments and look forward to another year of progress.

Have an iota of spare time, some related talents and a pulse? Consider joining the Neighbors and Economies committee! Contact the OAPA Office or visit the web site for this and other committee meeting times.

January is Membership Month

—*Dale Fritchman*

Old Allentown Preservation Association will be holding its annual membership drive during the month of January 2010. Renew or become a new member in the most active and involved neighborhood organization in the City of Allentown. Membership fees are \$15.00 for a student or senior citizen (62yrs+), \$25.00 for a single, \$40.00 for a family or household, and \$80.00 for a business membership. To join/renew your membership, use the Membership Form provided on the following page of this newsletter.



Façade Restoration— 311 North 8th Street

One of our most involved façade restorations this past summer. A surprise at every turn, but the end result speaks for itself!

FACADE RESTORATION GRANT APPLICATIONS...

Contact OAPA's office for a facade restoration grant application at 610-740-9919 or send an e-mail with your request to oldallentown@enter.net. Applications will be reviewed February/March 2010. Façade restoration grants are awarded based on the visual impact of the proposed improvements and must conform to all Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) rules and regulations.

HOLIDAY TIME IN OLD ALLENTOWN—*Dale Fritchman*

WINTER HOLIDAY PARTY & TREE DECORATING EVENT—DECEMBER 5, 2009

Mark Your Calendar! Old Allentown Preservation Association will hold its annual Winter Holiday Party on Saturday, December 5, 2009 at 420 North 8th Street.

Catherine Husak and Kelly Minton will co-host this year's extravaganza starting at 7:00 PM until midnight. Invitations are being sent out requesting that you bring your favorite nibbles and or bubbly. We are looking forward to a fun filled evening to say hi to old friends and make some new ones as well. Catherine and Kelly are requesting a **RSVP by November 28, 2009.**

PRIOR TO THE HOLIDAY PARTY, The Old Allentown Annual Tree Decorating festivities will take part at the Hazel Stauffer Pocket Park on the corner of 8th Street and Gordon Street. Bring any ornaments that you wish to place on the tree or you can make some bird-friendly ornaments. If you do not have any ornaments to bring, OAPA will provide ornaments. Refreshments will be provided.

SAVE THE DATE

The Annual Membership Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 31, 2010. OAPA will present a short program on the past year's activities and future projects. **This is the meeting where new Board members are elected. Remember—you must be present to vote!** Bring a covered dish to share.

Join/Renew Now!

Old Allentown Preservation Association Application Jan. 1, 2010 – Dec. 31, 2010

Please print or type:

Name: _____ Business/Corporation: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Home Telephone: _____ E-Mail Address: _____

(used to distribute the newsletter and to update Members on OAPA events – confidential)

Please indicate membership status (check one): Renewing Member New Member (*welcome!*)

Please indicate your level of membership (check one): Individual \$25/yr Family/Household \$40/yr
 Student/Sr. Citizen \$15/yr Business \$80/yr

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Please make checks payable to Old Allentown Preservation Association, Inc.
Mail check with completed application to:
OAPA, 147 North Tenth Street, Allentown, PA 18102

The success and strength of OAPA has always been the individuals who make up the membership and those who support our efforts. If you are interested in getting involved or wish to know more about the organization, please indicate below:

Contact me about an Elm Street Committee Other _____



Join us for holiday cheer at the...

Old Allentown Preservation Association

Holiday Party

Saturday, December 5th

7:00pm to 12midnight

The Husak Residence

420 North 8th Street, Old Allentown

Please bring your favorite holiday nibbles or drinks.

*RSVP by November 28th to catehusak@yahoo.com
or 610-653-9758.*

CITY CONTACTS

Zoning – 610.437.7649

Code Enforcement – 610.437.7690

**Noise – Allentown Police
610.437.7751**

**Old Town Neighborhood Watch
610.821.9638**

HARB – 610.437.7613

**Neighborhood Housing
Services (NHS)
610.437.4571**

**Recycling/Trash/SWEEP/Graffiti/
High Grass & Weeds
610.437.8729**

**Shopping Cart Pick-up
800.244.2278**