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Maybe it is just me, but I feel like this winter was exceptionally dark and gloomy. In an attempt to fight the doldrums, I began running again after a 24 year hiatus. In high school I was a long distance runner. Running came easily to me back then. I grew up with 2 older brothers and all of their friends. In the days before smart phones, iPads and the Wii, kids started running as soon as breakfast was over - mostly just chasing each other around - and only stopped when dinner was on the table.

I had been thinking about running for a while, but it took this winter to finally get me on the treadmill and a few weeks later on the track around the reservoir. I’ll be honest, it wasn’t easy. I did my first mile outdoors in 37 degree weather, lungs burning from the cold air. I had to walk 3-4 times for the count of 10 to catch my breath and regain my confidence. Another week or so on the treadmill and I was able to do a full lap around the reservoir without stopping, this time in slightly warmer weather, which I am sure helped. As I continued to run in the Park on weekends as the days got nicer, the crowd started growing; kids on bikes, walkers, joggers, pet lovers. It was inspiring to watch the Park come to life again.

As my laps around the track got easier, I began to notice the new benches Public Works installed last year. I was admiring them in general thinking what a great improvement over the old benches that were bent, rotting and missing wooden slats in some cases. Then I started to take a closer look as I passed by each one, now noticing donation plaques on many. I was aware of the “In Memory” of bench plaque near the entrance to the Park dedicated to Tony (Chocco) Ciocca, the Italian ice vendor, who brought joy to generations of Park goers when he was alive. These listed new names, ones I was not familiar with such as Harvey J. Moen, Rachel Harriet Bundy, John and Susan Strayhorn, Clarke M. Thomas and Mr. & Mrs. Richard B. Fisher, who donated a number of the new benches.
(After a quick Google search, I discovered that Mr. Fisher was a co-founder of Federated Investors.)

After making some inquiries about the benches, I found out that there have been more donations throughout the years. The urns near the Victorian fountain were a donation for example. And no discussion on donations and support of the Park would be complete without giving credit to the Parks Conservancy, who were instrumental in the reconstruction of the Victorian fountain and the creation of the babbling brook.

I am used to thinking of our Park as owned by the City, but it never occurred to me that donations would not only be accepted, but welcomed.

Donations or gifts, large and small, can often make a long term impact. As I walk around the tidal basin in Washington DC, desperately hoping the cherry blossoms will burst into song while I am in our nation’s capitol for the weekend, I thought about a marvelous gift they made from the City of Tokyo in 1912. What most people don’t realize is that the first donation of 2,000 cherry trees had to be destroyed when they arrived due to a severe bug infestation and diseased. The trees I am admiring now were from a second (successful) attempt consisting of 3,020 cherry trees from twelve varieties that eventually arrived in good condition in Washington DC on March 26, 1912.

In 1915, the United States Government reciprocated with a gift of flowering dogwood trees to the people of Japan. In 1981, the cycle of giving came full circle when Japanese horticulturists were given cuttings from the trees to replace some cherry trees in Japan which had been destroyed in a flood. And in 1982, cuttings from the Tidal Basin Yoshino trees were collected by Japanese horticulturists to retain the genetic characteristics of the trees and replace trees destroyed in Japan when the course of a river was changed.

Alas, I did not get to see the cherry blossoms during my weekend getaway. The beauty of a donation to a park or public space is that the gift will last long after my visit and be there for years to come and many others to share in and admire.

For the full story on the famous cherry trees, which now have an entire festival dedicated to them, go to
www.nps.gov/cherry/cherry-blossom-history.htm

Monica Watt - HPCC President
HPCC March Meeting Minutes

The HPCC March meeting began at 7:15pm on March 21 at St. Andrews with about 15 people braving the snow to attend.

Dave Atkinson and Monica Watt announced the spring tree planting scheduled for April 27. Volunteers are needed.

Monica spoke briefly about TalkPGH which will be coming to Highland Park on April 15. Volunteers are needed.

Dave discussed the results of the domain name survey. HighlandParkCC.org was chosen. Dave will follow up with the subcommittee about purchasing the domain name.

Dave asked if anyone was administering the HPCC Facebook page. Eric said that he might have the password; Dave will contact him.

Nancy Schultz gave an update on the 503(c)(3) status. HPCC should be notified by the IRS by the end of April whether the application was accepted or not.

Glen Schultz gave an update on transportation improvements plans in East Liberty.

Dave proposed that the HPCC endorse the A+ Schools board member pledge. This issue will be reviewed next month, giving board members time to read the pledge.

Monica gave a presentation on the HPCC Highland Park Street and Major Intersection Pedestrian Safety Review. Feedback from the community was discussed and applied to the report.
The Bucs are playing ball, winter gives way to Spring - and we move on here in Highland Park and at St. Andrew’s and in the Church Calendar from Lent to Easter-tide. Blessings in the season!

A special invitation in this month to services of Choral Evensong sung by St. Andrew’s Schola Cantorum on Sunday, April 21, at 4:30 p.m., with the Rev. Dr. Heather Hartung Vacek, Assistant Professor of Church History at the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary as our Guest Preacher, and on Thursday, May 2, at 8 p.m., followed by a musical recital with Paul Shepard, clarinet, and Jenifer Johnson, piano - and with a festive springtime reception in Brooks Hall.

And a reminder that Sunday, May 5, will be the annual Pittsburgh Marathon. For those of the parish and neighborhood who may be running in one of the Marathon Day events, or volunteering, or cheering for friends and family, or simply hoping to avoid Sunday morning traffic adventures, a simple service of Holy Communion will be offered that weekend at 5 p.m. on Saturday, May 4. (Sunday morning services for non-runners who can find their way to Highland Park will continue at the usual times of 9 a.m. and 11 a.m.)

Later on “Marathon Sunday” afternoon the Parish Choir of St. Andrew’s Church will join the Choir of Calvary Church, East Liberty, the Choir of the East Liberty Presbyterian Church, and the Choir of the Shadyside Presbyterian Church in a “Four Choir” Choral Festival for Eastertide – at 4 p.m., at the East Liberty Presbyterian Church, North Highland and Penn Avenues. Guest conductor: David Hill, from London, England (formerly Master of the Music at Westminster Cathedral, and Director of Music at Winchester Cathedral). Should be a great way to end a great day in the East End!

St. Andrew’s, in the 5800 block of Hampton Street, has been at the heart of this neighborhood of Highland Park for over a century now. If you have a pastoral concern we can help with - a baby to be baptized, a marriage to celebrate, a sick or shut-in family member or neighbor who would appreciate a visit and a blessing, a family to comfort at the time of the death of a loved one - or if you simply would like to borrow a table or find some space for a family gathering too large for your living room, please feel free to give our Church Office a call at 412 661-1245 - or check us on the web, www.standrewspgh.org.

We’re always glad to hear from you.
Celebrate Earth Day in Highland Park

Help Plant Trees on April 27

By Nancy Levine

TreeVitalize Pittsburgh has awarded Highland Park 59 street trees for planting on Sheridan Ave., Farragut St. and the Farmhouse. The trees are free, but the community needs to plant them. We need volunteers on April 27 from 8:45 am to noon (rain or shine). If you can volunteer, sign up at www.paconserv.org/216. Volunteers will meet at the Farmhouse, located on the corner of Heberton and Grafton in Highland Park. Children ages 7 and older are encouraged to help along with their parents or a responsible adult.

If you can’t make it, there are other ways to contribute. You can make a tax-deductible donation of $5 to $25 to buy food for the volunteers. Make your checks out to the TreePittsburgh. Be sure to write “Highland Park” in the memo line on the check so that our neighborhood gets the money. Mail them to:

Tree Pittsburgh
5427 Penn Ave.
Pittsburgh, PA 15206

Or, you can bake something for the volunteers such as, cookies, muffins, breads etc...

Thanks to our community volunteers and organizers, this will be our 7th Highland Park tree planting since 2009!

Here is what trees do for our community:
1. Make our neighborhood a beautiful and pleasant place to walk in or drive through
2. Decrease crime
3. Increase the value of our houses
4. Calm traffic
5. Decrease our heating and cooling costs
6. Decrease air and water pollution
7. Help manage storm water run-off

For more details on how trees benefit our neighborhood and a look at the studies that support these claims about trees, go to: www.treepittsburgh.org.

Thank you from the Spring 2013 Tree Planting Team!

Contact Nancy Levine, Highland Park Tree Tender, at 412-439-5172 or nlevinearnold@gmail.com for additional information.
A Hard to Recycle event is being held at the Galleria at Pittsburgh Mills parking lot near Dingbats Saturday, April 20 from 9am-1pm.

Materials collected FREE of charge include:
- Hard white polystyrene molded packing material (NEW for 2013)
- Televisions, computers and peripheral equipment
- Stereos, large speakers
- Ink and toner cartridges
- Cell phones, home phones
- Small appliances
- CFL bulbs

The following FEES apply:
- Batteries ..........................$1.50/lb
- Fluorescent tubes .................$0.25/ft
- Small Freon-containing appliances .......................$10
- Paper shredding ..................$5/box

proceeds benefit PRC

For details on how to prepare materials for shredding, visit www.zerowastepgh.org

For more information and other Hard to Recycle collection dates and locations, please visit PRC’s Zero Waste Pittsburgh website:
www.zerowastepgh.org/ ZW-PRC-hardtorecycle.html

Carl Vitti, Sr. sent a little note out to the ListServ in February asking people to send birthday cards to his Aunt Connie Vitti DiSalvo who was turning 100 years old in March. In true Highland Park style, the neighborhood’s response was overwhelming. He not only reached the goal of 100 birthday cards, but greatly exceeded it thanks to the generosity of our HP neighbors. At last count, Aunt Connie received 150 cards and they are still coming!
HPCC Officers
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Monica Watt (412) 980-4208
Vice President
Dave Atkinson
Treasurer
Paul Miller (412) 365-0675
Secretary
Bob Staresinic (412) 441-8972

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Eric Randall
Lynn Banker-Burns (412) 361-8863
Teri Rucker (412) 482-2533
Nancy Schultz
Glen Schultz
Laura Smith
Vernon Simmons
Janine Seale
Christine Adams

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Nancy Levine-Arnold
Children’s Events -
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Education - Dave Atkinson
House Tour - OPEN
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Reservoir of Jazz - Tania Grubbs
Super Playground -
Monica Watt (412) 361-7902 &
Vernon Simmons (412) 661-1366
Yard Sale - Paul Miller (412) 365-0675
Welcoming - Nancy Schultz
Zoning - Dell Ziegler (412) 363-0742

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Sales Associate
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