I, like many people, typically focus on the lighter side of Thanksgiving. The things that make our lives a little more pleasurable this week – a long holiday weekend, a meal full of comfort food topped with gravy and washed down with pie and quality time spent with family and friends. Honestly, it is one of my favorite holidays.

This year, I am thankful for so much more.

To live in Pittsburgh, a wonderfully diverse city that stands united in the face of terrorism and anti-Semitism; one that confronts hate with love and support for those who have been impacted by it. The fellowship shown between people of all religions in the weeks since the shooting warms my heart and gives me hope for the future.

I’m thankful for our equally diverse neighborhood where origin, ethnicity, race and religion vary from house to house.

And I am thankful for our HPCC membership, who continued to support our efforts to make Highland Park one of the best neighborhoods in the city to live and raise a family. We could not do it without your annual membership dues.

As we enter this wonderful holiday season, I want to leave you with a few words of wisdom from Zone 5 Community Resource Officer Karen McNeal. She spoke at the November community meeting about how to stay safe this season.

When shopping at the mall for the holidays, if you need to put your purchases in the car to lighten your load and head back in the mall for more shopping, consider moving your car to another location in the parking lot, preferably on the other side of the mall. If anyone sees you putting purchases in your car and gets the idea to steal them, or they are one of the bad guys who preys on holiday shoppers, they will think you have left the mall. And with the continued theft from vehicles that continue to happen in and around our neighborhood, please do not leave or hide any gifts in the trunk of your car. An once of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

Monica Watt
HPCC President

Happy Thanksgiving!

Monica Watt
HPCC President
October 18, 2018

Meetings Called to order at 7:10 p.m.
by Monica Watt, President

FOCUS Pittsburgh - Rev. Paul Abernathy, Director

The Hill District-based organization is a faith-based non-profit working to meet the needs of the community through trauma-informed community development. Rev. Abernathy thanked residents of Highland Park for their generosity in donating hundreds of items to the organization through neighbor Mike Nadler’s monthly mobile pick-up. He described the faces of recipients who “light up” and feel like they are not forgotten when receiving the donations.

FOCUS Pittsburgh is in its 8th year and began initially to meet the basic needs of the community. The program has expanded to specifically address the health and behavioral impact of a disproportionately high rate of community trauma in the Hill District.

The organization is working to heal the community with strategies under three programs:

1. Community Support - FOCUS provides donations of food, clothing, household goods and more, as well as a feeding program for children in the community.

2. Health and Well-Being - FOCUS offer a free clinic to those without health insurance that includes primary care, behavioral care, and dental care. It trains and fields a volunteer Trauma Response Team that serves Allegheny County and is dispatched to provide community intervention after a homicide.

3. Leadership Development - FOCUS develops leaders within the community.

Neighbors can help by donating cold-weather items, new socks and underwear, feminine hygiene produces, toiletries, and any household items or clothing. Everything is needed, and everything is used. Volunteers are also needed for the Trauma Response Team. For additional information, visit focuspgh.org.
City of Pittsburgh, Department of Mobility and Infrastructure- Karina Ricks, Director

Director Ricks discussed a need to look at traffic concerns through the lens of the transportation network as traffic calming initiatives often migrate problems to nearby streets. The desire for traffic calming initiatives in Highland Park has arisen on several streets due to increased neighbor complaints and increased aggressive driving throughout the neighborhood. Apps such as Waze have been sending cars to side streets, further challenging the system.

The City is moving away from a vehicular focus to a multi-modal approach, prioritizing bike and pedestrian safety. People need to improve how they use the system with patience and respect for all.

The newest department in the City, the Department of Mobility and Infrastructure has recently developed a Traffic Calming Program with three different kinds of solutions. The program primarily targets speed reduction and speed compliance. Traffic volume reduction and conflict reduction are other goals of the program.

When a traffic problem is reported in the community, the department responds by:

1. Identifying the problem.
2. Setting up speed and volume counters.
3. Analyzing distribution of speed—how many vehicles are exceeding legal limit and is the speed limit appropriate?
4. Analyzing crash data—what types of crashes, are pedestrians and bikes involved? Are youth, children, or seniors involved?
5. Identify solutions.

Tools and Measures from the Traffic Calming Toolbox were discussed and explained including:

1. Visual Controls—vertical enclosure, yield streets, and narrow lanes.
2. Vertical Controls—speed hump, speed lump/cushion, and speed table.
3. Horizontal Controls—chicane, bulbout/neck down, pedestrian refuge island, raised median, traffic circles, and reduced corner radii.
4. Operational Controls—opposing one-way, and turn and access restrictions.

The Neighborhood Pace Car program is a new initiative coming soon to Pittsburgh. In the program, residents sign a pledge promising that they will always drive the speed limit not only in their own neighborhood, but also in all neighborhoods. As a participant, they will receive a decal to display in their cars.

The common Pittsburgh practice of parking on a two-way street facing the wrong direction is illegal. Cars could be ticketed for parking in this manner.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Reminder – there is NO December meeting.
Visit the homes and studios of five Highland Park potters and the Union Project Ceramics Co-op at the eighth annual Highland Park Pottery Tour. Meet the artists, enjoy refreshments, and buy local artwork for the holidays.

The Highland Park Pottery Tour is an intimate experience that welcomes guests right into artist homes. Art lovers and artists mingle in studios and living rooms, discuss ceramics techniques together, and share snacks at kitchen counters.

You’ll experience Highland Park in a whole new way, as you walk from cozy stop to cozy stop.
The Highland Park Pottery Tour features the work of:

- **Joseph Delphia** with guest artists **Scott Cornish, Ryan Greenheck** and **Talon Smith**
- **Stephanie Flom** with guest artists **Kyle House** and **Holly Van Dine**
- **Jeff Guerrero** with guest artists **Gary Greenberg** and **Bryce Hemmington**
- **Keith Hershberger** with guest artists **Mark Arnold** and **Sasha Barrett**
- **Jenna Vanden Brink** with guest artists **The Glastonbury Collective, Mary Martin** and **Reiko Yamamoto**
- **Union Project** with Ceramics Co-op members: **Molly Bee, Citizen Clay Collective, Carina Kooiman, Mark Vander Heide, Emmanuelle Wambach**, and **Janet Watkins** (This location is wheelchair accessible)
For full details and a map, visit the Highland Park Pottery Tour website.

Thank you to our sponsors Standard Ceramics, Monmade, and Pittsburgh Theological Seminary and The Kelso Museum of Near Eastern Archeology, which will be open to visitors during the tour.
One bird to keep watch for this winter is the Fox Sparrow. At 7” in length, it is somewhat larger than a typical sparrow. The Eastern variety of this bird is a rich reddish brown on its tail and lower back, with gray at eyes and neck and a breast that is heavily streaked with brown.

The Fox Sparrow breeds way up in the Arctic, then spends the Winter in the Southern U.S. Pittsburgh is right at the northern edge of its winter range. There is some confusion about this, however, as some maps indicate that it is just here during its migration. With climate change, it appears that the winter range is gradually shifting northward.

Fox sparrows tend to rustle among the dead leaves on the ground searching for food, so a likely spot to observe them would be in a protected area under a bird feeder… More on Sparrow identification next month.
MORE ON TOXIC BERRIES

With all the young kids in the neighborhood these days, it might be a good idea to review other poisonous berries that are found here. A prime suspect is **Bittersweet Nightshade**, an evil looking vine with dark, arrowhead shaped leaves, purple flowers with yellow centers and juicy red berries. It is often seen tangled in shrubs along the sidewalk. Close to the ground is **Lily of the Valley**, which grows a large orange berry in the Fall.

A similar berry is found inside the seed husk of the low-growing **Chinese Lantern**. The husk starts out bright orange, but in Autumn it decomposes into a delicate lace cage with the berry inside. The effect may be beautiful, but the berry is toxic. Finally, steer clear of **Yew** shrubs with their juicy pinkish red berries. The flesh of the berry is not itself toxic, but the seed inside is extremely so if its exterior is damaged by chewing.

VIRGINIA CREEPER

One of the unsung heroes of the Fall foliage season is Virginia Creeper, a very common native vine around here. Its 5-fold leaves often turn a bright red, which shows off especially well when they decorate the branches of trees with leaves of another autumn color. (Unfortunately, my vines are showing a dull dark purple-brown this year.) This plant is also called Woodbine, although that name is associated with other plants as well.

Virginia Creeper is very robust and tolerant of different growing conditions. Some gardeners might consider it a bit too aggressive, but as a native plant it is not considered “invasive.” Vines can grow nearly 100 feet long if they find a tall enough tree.

People sometimes confuse Virginia Creeper and Poison Ivy. Young Creeper vines can sometimes show the 3-leaf pattern of Poison Ivy, but as the vine matures it quickly assumes the usual 5-leaf structure. The rule to remember is “leaves three—let it be; leaves five—let it thrive.” Some people are sensitive to the chemicals in Virginia Creeper leaves, and its hard, dark purple berries are toxic to humans. However, the berries are an important winter food source for birds.
Our neighborhood is blessed with a great deal of natural beauty. Send your observations regarding unusual birds and other aspects of the "wild side" of Highland Park to my email on the previous page — I’ll edit and compile them for this monthly newsletter. Your photos would be most welcome. No names or yard locations will be given without your approval. More timely bits of information will be posted on the Highland Park ListServ.

FALL FOLIAGE PORTFOLIO

The Autumn color has been pretty lackluster this year (as of November 3), so I thought I’d provide a reminder of the glories of the past…

A RECOLLECTION: Dusk before the first hard frost, a cricket feebly chirping as it cringed in the crevice between the lawn and bricks lining the flowerbed… like a smoke detector begging to have its battery changed.

A RECOMMENDATION: For Thanksgiving, how about a special home-made treat for the birds? Audubon has a recipe for a vegetarian suet, found at https://www.audubon.org/news/make-your-own-suet

You can also make or buy a more traditional suet, a mix of rendered animal fat and birdseed. Place it behind a wire mesh tacked to a tree—your feathered friends will give thanks.

Our neighborhood is blessed with a great deal of natural beauty. Send your observations regarding unusual birds and other aspects of the "wild side" of Highland Park to my email on the previous page — I’ll edit and compile them for this monthly newsletter. Your photos would be most welcome. No names or yard locations will be given without your approval. More timely bits of information will be posted on the Highland Park ListServ.
The leaves begin to turn and the last out of the World Series is recorded and all of a sudden, it seems, and in the blink of an eye it’s all Happy Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! The Old Year begins to fade away, a New Year on the horizon, and through it all we would wish all our neighbors a season of joy and peace.

A highlight for all of us in November comes each year on the Sunday before the Thanksgiving Day holiday, November 18 this year, when we of St. Andrew’s celebrate our Patron Saint’s Festival Day with our good friends of the Syria Highlanders Pipe and Drum Corps. The day begins (weather permitting) with a 15 minute concert out in front of the church on Hampton Street at 10:45 or so and then continues with many flourishes at the 11 a.m. service—and with a fun reception afterwards in Brooks Hall. All are invited!

On Wednesday evening the 21st of November at 8 p.m. we have a simple service of Holy Communion in the St. Andrew’s Chapel, with a couple of traditional a capella hymns and special prayers. We’re invited to bring a non-perishable food item as a part of our offering on Thanksgiving Eve, in support of the EECM East End Food Pantry.

Then of course the Church Year will turn to Advent, and we roll into the season with a flourish on Sunday, December 16, when our 11 a.m. service is given over to the annual presentation of A Children’s Pageant of Christmas, led by young people of our Church School. Then at 4:30 p.m. that same day we return for the much-loved service of Nine Lessons and Carols—a rich and meaningful offering of the holy season featuring readings from Scripture by members of the Congregation and Wider Community and Anthems sung by our Parish Choir. High Tea follows, and all are most welcome indeed!

Just to note on the advance holiday calendar, we will have two services for Christmas Eve, Monday, December 24, with a 4:30 p.m. Family Service of Holy Communion to include the Blessing of the Creche, familiar carols, and a Sermon for Children and Families. The traditional Midnight Service begins by candlelight at 10:30 p.m. with Service of Music for harp, organ, and Choir, featuring guest-artist Sierra Pastel, and then with the Holy Communion following at about 11 p.m.

For those who prefer a quieter service, or who don't care to venture out at night, a Christmas Morning service of Holy Communion will be offered in the Chapel at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, December 25, with a capella carols, followed by a Christmas Morning Coffee Hour.

St. Andrew’s, in the 5800 block of Hampton Street, has been in ministry in the heart of this neighborhood of Highland Park for over a century. 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—please feel free to give our Church Office a call at 412 661-1245—to find and “like” our page on Facebook, or to check us out on the web, standrewspgh.org. We’re always glad to hear from you, and to help if we can.
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