

# ON THE WEST SIDE

THE UNIVERSITY  
CITY HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY



September, 2007

<http://www.uchs.net>

Mike Hardy, Editor

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM II

**Greg Donofrio, UCHS Board**

Most of the buildings in **West Philadelphia** are over a hundred years old. And while architectural character and history are, in part, what draw many people to the area, older properties can be a serious technical and financial challenge to maintain. **The University City Historical Society** is offering some assistance. For the second year in a row, UCHS is sponsoring a **Technical Assistance Program (TAP)** in partnership with the **Community Design Collaborative** of the local **American Institute of Architects**. The TAP provides property owners with two hours of consultation with an architect or building preservation expert.

Older properties have special maintenance needs and it can be difficult to know what should be fixed first, who to call, how much it will cost, and which parts of the project are possible to do on your own versus those best left to professionals. The TAP program is designed to address these types of questions. Those who apply and are chosen to participate in the program will have the exterior of their property examined by a building professional who can offer advice on issues which, depending upon your needs, may include foundations and drainage, roofing and gutters, porch repair and painting, or any other exterior problem. Each consultation is followed up by a brief written report given to the property owner that outlines the TAP professional's findings.

Property owners who received TAP consultation last year found the experience useful. "I had no idea, moneywise, what my project would cost or

who I should call for estimates," said **Lena Wetherbee** of the **5000 block of Osage Avenue**. A TAP expert helped her confirm the extent of her porch's deterioration and estimate repairs. Then, using **UCHS's Contractors/Suppliers Referral List**, Ms. Wetherbee solicited estimates this past summer from contractors experienced working on older homes; she's now looking forward to starting her porch rehabilitation next spring.

As shown below, **Ed Robertson's** exterior paint restoration and roofing project on the **4600 block of Springfield Avenue** is already done.

"The TAP consultant helped me to select a color scheme that was appropriate for the age and style of my house and it also confirmed my suspicion that I needed a new roof," he said. Robertson was also pleased with the contractors who were referred to him by other UCHS members.

Applying for TAP consultation is easy and inexpensive. It is one of the benefits of membership in UCHS; applications are available now in this newsletter and on our website and are due by **October 15, 2007**. Applicants are asked to briefly describe their exterior renovation priorities and provide a handful of photographs documenting the existing condition of problem areas. If you are chosen to participate in the program, you will be asked to pay a \$25 registration fee. The number of properties to receive these services this year is limited by the number of participating TAP building professionals; UCHS will select applicants who demonstrate the greatest need. **Deserving applicants who apply by October 5, 2007 may be chosen by UCHS to receive TAP services as early as October 28, 2007.**



TAP consultation is only available to UCHS members as a benefit of membership, but spread the word to others about this opportunity. As you already know, membership is only \$20/year for households or \$10 for seniors. Other benefits include subscription to *On the West Side*, the society's regular members' newsletter; registration on **Grapevine**, UCHS's e-mail list serve; access to UCHS members' local Contractors/Suppliers Referral List; and invitations or discounts to UCHS sponsored events, including house tours, workshops, date plaques, and publications. Those interested in becoming a member of UCHS and applying for the Technical Assistance Program consultation should check out [www.uchs.net](http://www.uchs.net), email [info@uchs.net](mailto:info@uchs.net) or call (215) 387-3019.

## LOIS



## BYE

## FUNDERBURG

9/17/26 – 8/15/07

Melani Lamond, UCHS member

Photo by Randy Bye

More than sixty years ago, an idealistic group of people formed the **Friendship Co-Operative**, an intentionally multicultural community, in the **Powelton Village** section of **Philadelphia**. Over the following twenty years, they purchased buildings and lived co-operatively - men and women of different races and religions, respecting one another's differences, and sharing leadership. When they began this venture in 1946, theirs was a very radical approach to housing. With banks redlining huge areas of cities and the **FHA** refusing to give mortgages in "mixed" neighborhoods, developing and maintaining a diverse community was not a simple matter.

Recognizing additional community needs, ten

years later Co-op members and others created the **Powelton Village Development Association**.

The goal of this second organization was to reverse the deterioration of their neighborhood, neglected after many of the houses were chopped into apartments and rooming houses. They raised money, bought dilapidated properties, and convinced homebuyers to live in "**the Village**." They brought enthusiasm and confidence to the area, encouraging neighbors to appreciate the diverse population and remarkable **Victorian** housing stock. At a time when other areas were experiencing "white flight" and real estate salespeople were accused of "block-busting," PVDA described itself as "**A Real Estate Firm With a Social Concern**."

**Lois Bye Funderburg**, who died on August 15th at the age of 81, was an early Co-Op resident and founding PVDA board member who went on to become an extremely effective community leader and a dedicated local business owner. Her idealism, interest in people, and appreciation for **West Philadelphia** neighborhoods led to her life's work in the area she helped name "**University City**." In addition to the Co-op and PVDA, she devoted countless hours of volunteer time to the **West Philadelphia Partnership, University City Historical Society, University City Arts League**, and many other local groups, committees and initiatives. She was a founder and co-owner of **Urban Developers**, the residential real estate sales firm which she and her second husband, **George Funderburg**, operated for thirty years, beginning in 1961. She remained a University City resident until they retired. George Funderburg died last year on August 16, 2006, exactly 365 days before Lois.

In a 1997 article in the *Penn Gazette*, writer **Samuel Hughes** quoted Lois: "Philadelphia is a city of neighborhoods... West Philadelphia was such a huge place, and we were trying to develop a market in these big Victorian houses around the University, to encourage faculty to move back into a diversified neighborhood. So we decided to designate the area University City."

I had the privilege of working with Lois and George at Urban Developers, at **4100 Walnut Street**, before they retired. (The firm was then combined with **Bye Real Estate** to become **Urban & Bye, Realtor**, now owned by Lois' son **Arthur**

**Bye** and his wife **Jan.**) Lois was a mentor and role model for me, and many others. Today, most real estate firms are gigantic corporations with lots of salespeople, operating wherever there is money to be made, but Lois and George **WERE** Urban Developers and did most everything themselves, whether or not working in their chosen neighborhood was profitable. They were passionate about and dedicated to University City, donating very generously to so many community causes. Lois probably spent at least as much time on volunteer work as she did on sales, networking before that concept had a name – but networking had its rewards when neighbors needed a real estate agent. Small but mighty, Urban Developers sold more houses in the area than all of its competitors combined.

Lois' friend **Sylvia Barkan** says that she and Lois organized the first **University City Historical Society House Tour in Garden Court** in the mid-1970s, before house tours were common. And they didn't just show the houses, Sylvia explains; they focused on the history and architectural styles as well. Lois was very knowledgeable and wrote beautiful, detailed, architectural descriptions of University City buildings and neighborhoods. Sylvia also recalls how hard Lois worked to encourage people to live in University City, a difficult task for many years. Lois and George drove potential buyers around the neighborhood and pointed out other houses they'd sold, hosted get-togethers, and continually promoted the features of the neighborhood.

**The University City Arts League** was probably Lois' favorite neighborhood organization. Her daughter **Gwendolyn**, who taught dance there before opening her own studio, recalls that Lois was on the board for twelve years or longer, president from 1982-1986, and still working behind the scenes for a few more years after she'd left the board. I remember that one year, Lois and George underwrote the entire cost of holding the Arts League's annual fundraising auction, so that all of the money taken in from the event was profit for the Arts League.

Born in **Royersford, PA**, **Lois P. Butcher** grew up in **Salem** and **Woodstown, NJ**. She graduated *Magna Cum Laude* from the **University of**

**Pennsylvania** with a degree in **Sociology** in 1948 and married her first husband, **Gerard Bye**. Their four children, **Randy, Gwendolyn, Alan and Arthur**, were born during the Co-op days. Later the Byes moved to a large home of their own at **3504 Hamilton Street**, which was still in the family until Gerard Bye's death in 1992.

While at the Co-op, living at **3617 Powelton Avenue**, Lois met **Ursula Bucki**. They worked together on community ventures and remained close friends for 57 years, and Ursula was with Lois the day before she died. "Lois was a people person," Ursula explains, but also adds, "She made things happen." Ursula's notes and clippings from the early days of their friendship show Lois, whose youngest child Arthur was born only the year before, on the original PVDA board – the only woman, along with 13 men. Perusing old Urban Developers files, I'd also noticed that so many of the pictures showed groups of men – and Lois – working on various endeavors, and this seems to have often been the case in Lois' early work. She never struck me as a feminist, but she was taken seriously by mostly-male organizations long before that was the norm. Clearly, her quiet efficiency and behind the scenes competence at getting things done were appreciated. Without fanfare, not interested in the limelight, Lois Bye Funderburg was responsible in large part for encouraging the continued vitality and preserving the architectural integrity of University City as we know it today. Those of us who care about our neighborhood owe her our gratitude.

Lois Bye Funderburg died peacefully, with her family around her, at the **Gladwyne** retirement community where she had lived since 1991. She is survived by her children and their families, **Gwendolyn Bye Schulman** and **Steven Schulman**; **Alan T. Bye**, **Yvonne Leach** and **Justin Bye**; **Randl H. Bye**, **Patty Gasper Bye** and **Sara** and **Sean Bye**; and **Arthur E. Bye 3rd** and **Jan Bye**, **Elizabeth Haley**, **Meredith Murrill**, and **Jennifer Fratini**. Also her stepchildren, **Diane**, **Margaret** and **Lise Funderburg**. Her sister, **Janet Butcher Andrews**, also survives her.

A memorial fund has been set up in her name to offer scholarships in dance and theater to talented children who would not normally have the resources

# Technical Assistance Program

Residential Property Owner Application

University City Historical Society  
Sundays, October 28 & November 4, 2007

## Property Owner Information

Date:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City State Zip

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Fax Home Cell

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Home

## Property Description

Return completed  
application to:

University City  
Historical Society  
PO Box 31927  
Philadelphia PA 19104

Neighborhood: \_\_\_\_\_

Property Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Property must be owned by applicant.)

Year Built: \_\_\_\_\_  National Register District  Local Register

Purchase date: \_\_\_\_\_

Property type:  Corner building  Stand Alone  Twin  Row  Multi Family  Single Family

Materials:  Brick  Stucco  Concrete  Masonry  Wood Frame

Photos: Please attach up to 10 photos that show the overall facade and areas that you'd like addressed.

## Improvement Priorities

Application Deadline:  
October 15, 2007

Describe your current concerns or needs regarding the exterior of the property:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Have you received any bids or quotes? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have interest in doing any work yourself? \_\_\_\_\_

Approximate budget:  Desired start date for improvements:

Exterior improvements which you are interested in addressing (please number, with 1 being highest priority):

- Windows  Doors  Cleaning  Painting  Lighting
- Bays  Porches  Trim/Detail  Masonry/Pointing  Walls
- Visible Roof  Accessibility  Landscaping  Energy Savings  Total Reconstruction
- Other (please note): \_\_\_\_\_

**Demographic Information (Optional)**

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Profession: \_\_\_\_\_

Household Income: \_\_\_\_\_ Family members: \_\_\_\_\_

Resident since: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you completed other home improvement projects? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you engaged professional design services before? \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about the Design Days consultation? \_\_\_\_\_

**Terms of Agreement**

*Please sign and date this application and return it to UCHS if you wish to be matched with a design consultant through the Technical Assistance Program. Applications are processed in the order received.*

*By signing this letter the PROPERTY OWNER is informing UCHS that the undersigned applicant has an interest in participating in a 1-2 Hour Consultation as organized by UCHS.*

*This letter of intent is not a final commitment by either party to undertake renovations in accordance with home improvement program policies, procedures and design guidelines. The PROPERTY OWNER desires to pursue the program by participating in the preliminary design consultation offered by volunteers of the Community Design Collaborative (Collaborative).*

*All applications must be signed by the PROPERTY OWNER. A fee of \$25 will be due upon selection.*

*Collaborative products are intended to provide concepts and to assist in project design and planning. All consultation advice is limited to conceptual design and is neither intended nor may be used for construction. Neither the Collaborative, nor its volunteers, assume responsibility or liability for the technical accuracy of work or any*

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Signature of Property Owner \_\_\_\_\_ Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Renovation Information Network Pilot**

*Technical Assistance Program A pilot initiative of the Community Design Collaborative to test the application of the Pittsburgh Community Design Center's Renovation Information Network (RIN) in Philadelphia neighborhoods.*

*The University City Historical Society, [www.uchs.net](http://www.uchs.net) A community-based organization that supports the activities of the members of the University City community in their efforts to preserve and promote the architectural heritage of West Philadelphia.*

*The Community Design Collaborative of AIA Philadelphia, [www.cdesignc.org](http://www.cdesignc.org) A nonprofit volunteer based community design center that provides pro bono preliminary design services to nonprofits in the Philadelphia region.*



to train at the **Gwendolyn Bye Dance Center.**

Donations can be sent to the “**Lois Bye Funderburg Scholarship Fund**” Dancefusion, **3611 Lancaster Avenue, Philadelphia PA 19104.**

(**Editor:** Lois was, for me and my partner, **Barry Grossbach**, the primary person responsible for our locating in University City as homeowners in 1970. She found us our house, badgered us to look at it (on a hideous block), helped us in extraordinary ways to obtain a FHA guaranteed mortgage, and served as our inspiration of what true community service was all about. We both worked with her and loved her company on many community projects, and every time a question about University City was raised we always turned to Lois for answers. We will miss her and George, but their memory will live forever in this community.)

## **NEW & RETURNING OFFICERS**

At the September meeting of UCHS’s **Board of Governors**, its members extended the society’s appreciation and thanks to **Arlene Matzkin**, long of **Powelton Village** for completing the second and

final of her two terms as President of UCHS and elected as her successor for the coming year, **Belynda Stewart**, a Realtor, University City resident at **4812 Springfield Avenue** and graduate of the **Wharton School** of the **University of Pennsylvania**. **Stephen Wagner** of **4506 Chester Avenue**, an architect and developer, continues as Vice President as does **Elizabeth Stegner**, a long time resident of University City at **4816 Windsor Avenue** as Secretary and **Joanne Kellerman**, another long-time resident at **208 St. Marks Square** as Treasurer. Newly elected Board Members, **Judy Lamirand**, **4910 Cedar Avenue**; **Mo Phillips**, **4505 Regent Street**; **Maria Recio**, **4815 Trinity Place** and **Mark Wagenveld**, **4308/10 Osage Avenue** were welcomed to the board.

## **THANKS**

to those renewing their dues and particularly those giving special contributions as **Friends of UCHS: NancyLee Bergey; Howard Deck & Marvin Brown** and **Michael Lynch**

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## ***ON THE WEST SIDE***

***THE UNIVERSITY CITY***

***HISTORICAL SOCIETY***

***P.O. BOX 31927***

***PHILADELPHIA, PA 19104***