

THE NEWS of BELLA VISTA

Fall 2015

SPONSORED BY BELLA VISTA NEIGHBORS ASSOCIATION INC., A REGISTERED COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

BELLA VISTA NEIGHBORS ASSOCIATION

The Bella Vista Neighbors Association (BVNA) improves Bella Vista's quality of life and strengthens community bonds. BVNA encourages civic involvement, provides a neutral and public discussion forum, preserves and augments our institutions and character, supports the delivery of government services, and promotes dialogue with elected officials. We are an independent and non-profit organization.

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Civic Association Update

It's been almost 2 years since Bella Vista Town Watch members voted to approve a name change to Bella Vista Neighbors Association. The newer name reflects our purpose better - to serve as a resource for all who call BV home. We host informational meetings and this year have presented speakers including a state senator, the director of the Office of Emergency Management, and a representatives from the Department of Streets, Planning, and Mayor's Office of Transportation and Utilities. We've hosted happy hours and collaborated with other groups to sponsor events.

BVNA's accomplishments are only as great as its volunteer capacity and we are always seeking to improve both. There are many ways to get involved - everything from delivering this newsletter to planning a happy hour, applying for a grant or

From the BVNA President

staffing a sign in table at a meeting.

Start YOUR involvement in Bella Vista by attending a meeting: Zoning (1st Tuesday each month, 7:30 pm, Palumbo Rec), Beautification (2nd Tuesday, 6:30, Palumbo), PSA1 police-community discussion (1st Wednesday, 6:30, Santore Library) or upcoming events: TreePhilly Giveaway & Weird Waste Recycling, October 10, 10 am-1 pm, Palumbo; Kids Pumpkin Painting, October 16, 4-6 pm, Palumbo; Pumpkin Carving Workshop, October 28, 6 pm, Fleisher Art Memorial. Please visit our website for updates to our meeting and event schedule. If you have an idea you'd like to work on or want to get involved but don't know how, please get in touch with me: carcher@bellavistaneighbors.org. ■

— Claudia Archer

Bike Share Is On a Roll In Bella Vista

By Jonathan Geeting

By the city's count, a great many of our neighbors have used Indego Bike Share, as Bella Vista is home to two of the busiest Indego Bike Share stations in the city.

Ridership varies depending on weather and the day of the week, but this summer there have been over 1600 trips to and from the Darien & Catharine station, and over 1400 trips to the 11th & Washington station every month.

Looking only at ridership, these two stations are in the middle of the pack. But that only tells part of the story.

Among those stations serving mainly residential areas (versus commercial corridors, or the central business district), the station at Darien & Catharine is the third most popular neighborhood bike share stations.

The Darien & Catharine station is also more frequently in an empty or full state, especially during the morning and evening commuter peaks.

Cara Ferrentino at the Mayor's Office of Transportation and

Utilities says this indicates there is more demand for bike share in Bella Vista than the two stations can satisfy.

This isn't surprising. For years South Philadelphia has ranked nationally in the top 25 neighborhoods for percentage of bike commuters.

Even so, we still beat the city's ridership projections, and officials had to add more bikes here faster than expected.

"Based on higher than expected demand for bike share in Bella Vista, we expanded the

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Indego Bike Share has proven to be a popular new addition to Bella Vista.

Restoration Pays Tribute to Store's History

By Martha Freeman

Amalia Petherbridge had a good feeling about the storefront she was rehabbing to serve as a sewing school.

The retail space on the southwest corner of Eighth and Catharine streets had deteriorated by the time she started work in 2014. But the tilework on the front step, punched tin ceilings and interior tile – exposed when the dry wall came down – led her to think a previous owner had loved it as much as she did.

But who was that owner?

She got her answer one day in line for a hoagie at Sarccone's Deli. On the wall she noticed a 1990s-era map that identified neighborhood businesses. The one on her corner was a butcher shop, Guarre-ra's Quality Meats.

Curiosity piqued, Petherbridge did some research and learned that in 1920 Salvatore and Anna Guarrera opened

the butcher shop that in time became known as the best in the city. The last owner of the shop was Vito Guarrera, Salvatore's grandson. His wife, Rose, was a celebrated hostess and cook.

The shop closed in 1996,

recently enough that Petherbridge figured there might be family members around. Soon she turned up Alexa Ellman, Vito's granddaughter. Alexa grew up in Florida but, as luck would have it, happened to be in Philadelphia, studying at

the Wharton School.

"I sent her an email at her school address," Petherbridge said. "I didn't think she'd get back to me. I figured she was a kid and the history wouldn't mean much to her. To my surprise she replied immediately, and she was overjoyed. She had never been to the shop but she had heard stories about it."

Rose Guarrera died in 1992, and Vito in 2011. But through Alexa, Petherbridge met Vito's daughter, Marianne – who is Alexa's mother – and his sister, Serena, who had lived above the shop at one time and been a designer and dressmaker specializing in children's wear. Like Petherbridge herself, she studied at Moore College.

In the spring of 2015, Alexa and her brother, Brad, Brad's wife, Veronica, and Marianne visited the by then trans-



Pictured from left to right in front of Butcher's Sew Shop: Alexa Ellman, Brad Ellman, Marianne Guarrera, Amalia Petherbridge and Veronica Ellman.

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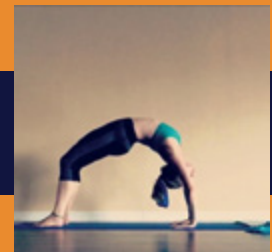
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BIKE SHARE *Continued from Page 1*

Darien & Catharine station by 14 docks, up to 29 docks total," Ferrentino said.

Given Indego's popularity, we're probably in line for more stations in the next round of installations in 2016. Where should those stations go?

Ferrentino said that based on the spatial gaps officials see in the network, it would make sense to install new stations to serve the northern section of Bella Vista and the South Street commercial corridor.

At community meetings this past spring, there was strong interest in a station serving the Palumbo Recreation Center, and there have been recent discussions about a South Street station near Whole Foods and Super Fresh.

"Based on high demand for Bike Share at the Darien & Catharine station," Ferrentino said, "we know that another station in the heart of the neighborhood would improve service to the area by providing additional docks and bikes." ■

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Clean Your 16

By Robert Bershad

Clean Your 16 is a Bella Vista Neighbors Association initiative intended to beautify the neighborhood. Look for Clean Your 16 information and tips in the weekly News of Bella Vista email. (Subscribe to the email newsletter for free at www.bellavistaneighbors.org/home/newsletter).

Clean Your 16 means keeping the 16 feet in front your home clean. Why 16? Because 16 feet is the width of many Philadelphia row homes.

Clean sidewalks look great and even help keep your street safe. "Criminals avoid clean, well maintained streets in favor of vandalized and poorly maintained ones, which signal that residents have resigned themselves to crime," according to the Philadelphia Rowhouse Manual.

Clean Your 16 will provide tips for keeping your sidewalk clean. And it will feature neighborhood heroes and heroines who lead by example.

Marianne Squillaciotti is

one such heroine. A longtime Bella Vista resident, Fitzwater Street block captain, and committee person, Squillaciotti has been keeping the sidewalk in front of her home clean for so long that it has become "automatic." She enjoys keeping

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Marianne Squillaciotti, neighborhood heroine.



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it clean because it looks nice and it's rewarding to see work pay off so quickly - and visibly. Squillaciotti also recruits neighbors to join in Philadelphia's Cleanup Events. She is someone who makes Bella Vista a great place to live.

Clean Your 16 wants your suggestions for neighborhood heroes and heroines and your tips to making Clean Your 16 easy. Send your candidates and tips to info@bellavistaneighbors.org, and look for them in upcoming e-newsletters.

In the meantime, Clean Your 16! ■

SEW *Continued from Page 2*

formed shop.

Marianne Guarrera was touched that her family's legacy was being honored, Petherbridge said.

"From what I understand, it was a pretty hard decision for them to sell the building and close the business," she continued, "and they feel relieved that it's in the hands of someone who respects what they built."

Petherbridge, whose undergraduate degree from Bryn Mawr is in anthropology, sees continuity in the storefront's use first as a butcher shop and now as a sewing school.

"Sewing, which is what I'm teaching people, is a trade that uses your hands. It's not dissimilar to being a butcher," she said. As her website puts it, "Guarrera's maintained a level of excellence that earned

**Cianfrani
Park Capital
Improvements**

The Cianfrani Park Capital Improvements project is scheduled to start in mid-October. You can read all about it on the park bulletin board (8th & Fitzwater) or on the Cianfrani Park blog at CianfraniPark.com. The Friends of Cianfrani Park Meetings are held in the small room at Palumbo Recreation Center at 7:00PM on the first Tuesday of each month. All are welcome. ■

the loyalty of chefs from Philadelphia's finest dining establishments. With our name, we pay homage to the Guarrera family and to the legacy of lives earned through diligent commitment to a craft."

Speaking of the name, Petherbridge had been casting about for just the right one. When she learned the storefront's history, bingo, she had it: Butcher's Sew Shop.

"Now that I'm a year into having my own business," said Petherbridge, "I find the accomplishment of maintaining one in a single family for almost 80 years to be unimaginable."

Do you have a story you'd like to share about Bella Vista history? Write to us at info@bellavistaneighbors.org and we'll try to include it in the print or e-newsletter. ■

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