

President's Message

It has been a rough summer for Slopes' houses, parked cars, and historic fences. Residents of Mission, Barry, Shelly, and Stella Streets are still recovering from a PWSA truck incident in which an employee "having a medical situation" hit more than twelve parked cars, pushing one into a house. This came after two separate incidents of people driving under the influence and crashing through the fence along 18th Street above the former Neville Ice Rink. Adding to this was a police chase in which a stolen car smashed into a house on Salisbury Street. And finally, a severely alcohol-impaired man unable to navigate the curve on Pius Street crashed his car into the front of a beautifully restored house owned by one of the Slopes most diligent volunteers.

In response to these and other issues, the South Side Slopes Neighborhood Association (SSSNA) will share the following list of priorities with the Zone 3 police department:

1. Impaired drivers. [*Please do not drive under the influence!*]
2. Parking that limits the access of emergency vehicles, specifically fire trucks. [*Please do not block fire hydrants, or make difficult intersections worse by parking close, limiting turning radius.*]
3. Citations for gross and negligent litter/overgrowth code violations [*Please keep trash stored in a bin, with a lid, out of sight.*]

Together we can make this neighborhood a better place to live.



Thanks neighbor,

Brian Oswald

President, SSSNA

brian.oswald@southsideslopes.org



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"Neighbors working together to make the Slopes a more livable, beautiful, and safe community."



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Neighbors, City Clean Up Leticoe Street

The end of dumping at the base of the Leticoe Street steps may be the surest sign that the South Side Slopes has notched a win in its efforts to manage trash in the neighborhood.

For years, the corner of Kosciusko Way and Leticoe Street has been a repository for neighbors' trash. Bags would start accumulating within hours of the city pickup, and grow throughout the week. Bags would break and animals, both wild and domestic, would spread garbage the wind didn't catch.

The trash was not just a nuisance, but an eye sore.



Leticoe St. today—looking good!

To start, an effort was made to identify the offenders and notify them. That was difficult since the concerned citizens did not witness the dumping. When envelopes with addresses were found among the trash, contact was made to advise the offenders, and the behavior changed.

"I had no idea," said one neighbor. "I just assumed it was okay since others were doing it."

The residents engaged the city, which posted signs advising of a \$10,000 fine for dumping. Between the individual and city efforts, the dumping at the corner has stopped and shows no signs of reoccurring.

The problem extended beyond when or where residents put out their trash to how they stored it through the week. By city code, household trash is to be kept in containers with lids. Trash is to be out of sight and secure.

At issue also on Leticoe St. was the storage of trash bags in the area under the front steps, which run parallel to the street.. Another problem was the dumping of trash bags on the sidewalk as they were filled, rather than being held and stored until garbage day.

Studies have shown that visible garbage decreases the desirability of a neighborhood, which decreases property values and results in economic decay. Economic decay is associated with apathy and crime, which in turn decreases the quality of life in the neighborhood.

When residents ignored requests to store trash properly, the citizen activists again engaged the city. Bill Klimovich, assistant director, Bureau of Environmental Services, and his South Side crew met with concerned residents. The crew wanted to help and after the meeting, walked to houses with violations. Once the violators heard directly from the city, the storage problem was fixed.

Email trash@southsideslopes.org with trash concerns, and the SSSNA will help you formulate a plan to get your street to where it belongs.

It's That Time Again.....Time for StepTrek!

In its 15th year, Pittsburgh StepTrek will be held on Saturday, October 3, at 12 noon at South Side Park (Josephine & 21st Streets) on the South Side.

The support from Trekkers, some of whom have been walking with us since year one, has kept a focus on maintaining steps in the neighborhood. Because the South Side Slopes has the greatest concentration of public stairs of any neighborhood in the city, step maintenance is crucial. StepTrek participants and sponsors have assisted the SSSNA its mission of maintaining and improving this unique neighborhood and its assets.

StepTrek is what each trekker makes it. Participants may choose to use this noncompetitive event as a test of fitness or a leisurely stroll. The benefits of a stirring walk through the Slopes have earned this event the heart-healthy rating of the American Heart Association. Special pricing makes the walk an attractive way to experience the city on an autumn afternoon. Join us!



Laura Officer: Volunteer Turned SSSNA Board Member

After moving to the Slopes in 2011, Laura first learned of the South Side Slopes Neighborhood Association through the newsletter! She was working full time and attending graduate school at night, which left little time to meet the neighbors. "I was so excited to learn about an organized group of community members who were working to improve the neighborhood" Laura said. After completing a Master of Public Administration, Laura and her husband, John, started to get more involved. "Despite the hail and chilly weather, I fell in love with StepTrek. The views were incredible and I discovered so many intricate streets and pockets of my neighborhood I never knew existed. The more I learned, the more I wanted to know."

Since then, Laura has participated in several neighborhood meetings, the Brosville Blitz cleanup, and joined the SSSNA's Outreach Committee to help spread the word to other neighbors. Through her enthusiastic involvement with the Outreach Committee and nonprofit experience, the SSSNA nominated her for an open position on the board—she accepted in May, and has gotten right to work!

Laura works for Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank where she serves as a liaison between the Food Bank and more than 100 food assistance programs, many of which are located in the Slopes, Flats, and other Hilltop communities. Laura and John enjoy camping, playing soccer, and traveling. Their favorite trip was to Peru, where she and John spent five days hiking 26 miles of ancient Incan steps to reach Machu Picchu (shown above). Needless to say, the Slopes provided plenty of steps to help them train for the trip.



Laura and John Officer at Machu Picchu



Oakley Street Steps mosaic design above will adorn the steps in full color.

Oakley Street Mosaic Steps Project

The Oakley Street Mosaic Steps project is a neighbor-driven public art project. The goal is to create a mosaic tile picture applied to the risers of the steps that can be seen as a piece of art when standing at the bottom of the set of steps.

A small group of neighbors has been meeting to plan this project since January. We were inspired by the public murals around Pittsburgh, the many sets of public steps in the South Side Slopes, and step art around the world. In particular, the San Francisco 16th Ave Tiled Steps project was a huge inspiration. During the winter, we researched artists using the Pittsburgh Artist Registry, brainstormed on funding, and started reaching out to the city.

We chose Oakley Street because it is a very visible, highly trafficked set of steps with solid risers. Neighbors and visitors regularly drive, bike, and walk by this set of stairs. You can see this set of stairs at the intersection of Josephine and 27th Streets. In 2013, the South Side Slopes Neighborhood Association painted the railings a vibrant blue.

The chosen artist, Laura Jean McLaughlin, is a Pittsburgh resident who has created many outdoor tile mosaic projects throughout Allegheny County. We loved her whimsical designs and her passion for working with community members. She also has a lot of experience creating outdoor mosaic tile art, so we are confident that the steps will look beautiful for many years. If you want to check out an example of her work, take a drive by the outside of the Whole Foods in East Liberty or visit her gallery, The Clay Penn, on Penn Avenue in Garfield.

In May and June, Laura Jean McLaughlin held community design workshops on the South Side in order to brainstorm and come up with a design that reflects the South Side Slopes. Between a fundraiser at the Acacia cocktail bar on the South Side and neighbor donations online and in person, we have raised almost all the funds needed for this project.

Special thanks to our passionate neighbors who have been dedicated to bringing this project to fruition including: Lissa Brennan, Candice Gonzalez, Adam Jette, Antoinette Palmieri, Peggy Sullivan, and everybody who has participated in the process or donated!

Currently, we are working with the city on a timeline to repair the Oakley Street Steps, and we are going ahead with conceptual approval from Art Commission. We hope to order the tile soon and start working on the actual mosaics. Stay tuned for information on upcoming artist-led workshops to learn how to create the mosaic tiles.

Neighbor Stories: Call for Submissions

As residents of the Slopes, we know that our best kept secrets are the incredible people we call our own. We would like to share the stories of our neighbors in our newsletter and are asking you for submissions for an upcoming publication.

Know a Slopes resident whose story needs to be shared? Contact us at newsletter@southsideslopes.org.

Working from Home in the Slopes

The South Side Slopes is a great place to live, but it's also a great place to work — especially if you happen to work from home.

I started working from home in 2006, when I still lived in Arlington, Virginia. Telecommuting is not for everyone: you have to be able to motivate yourself and manage your time well, and not everyone enjoys the solitude. But if you can master these things, working from home can allow you to be much more productive at your job.

I'm not alone in this. More and more Americans are working from home every year. Telecommuting rose 79 percent between 2005 and 2012, and now makes up 2.6 percent of the American work force, or 3.2 million workers, according to statistics from the American Community Survey. (*New York Times*, March 7, 2014).

So, what makes a neighborhood a good place to work from home, and why is our neighborhood ideal for it?

First, you need high-speed internet service. For most of us, working from home will require the ability to send and receive lots of email, access corporate websites, and otherwise move lots of data back and forth. When I first moved to the Slopes in January 2013, I only had one option for high-speed internet. These days, though, there are at least four high-speed internet providers in our neighborhood. I have found service to be reliable and prices to be reasonable, especially when compared to other places I've lived.

Second, you need a contingency plan for those rare days when your home internet fails. In the South Side, we are lucky to have a smattering of coffee shops and other establishments offering free wifi to customers. Living in the Slopes means you are never more than a few minutes from any of those places.



Ben, working at home in the Slopes

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The SSSNA Board would like to thank Jamin Bogi for more than two years of enthusiastic service on the Board. Jamin stepped down in April.

Working from home also requires a certain degree of peace and quiet. I spend half the day on conference calls; I can't have a cacophony in the background. The relative tranquility of the Slopes is a blessing in that sense.

Finally, working from home requires flexibility. You might spend 90% of your time in front of your computer, but that remaining 10% often involves racing out to see a client on short notice, or rushing to the office for an emergency meeting. From the Slopes, it's easy to get on the road in a hurry when I have to. Also, telecommuting often involves a certain degree of "on call" status. About once a week, I get a call from a client, or from my boss, imploring my attention to some vital matter - but it's 8 p.m. and I'm at Giant Eagle. Living in the Slopes means that when I am out grocery shopping, or having a beer with friends at Carson Street Deli, or at the bank, I am still only a few minutes from home —which means I'm only a few minutes away from the office.

The South Side Slopes offers the perfect mix of resources to the telecommuter: terrific internet availability, proximity (close to the Flats and downtown without being too close), flexibility, and peace and quiet. I would encourage anyone interested in working from home to try it in the Slopes. — *Ben Wilczynski*



STEP TREK 2015

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12 noon—4 p.m.

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South Side Park: Yesterday and Today

Elaine Young of Cobden Street was born in a house on Dion Alley and lived there until she was 6 years old. The house was located right in the middle of the present-day trail systems in South Side Park. According to Elaine, "it was a quiet, close-knit neighborhood, and I have great memories of growing up there."

In the 1950s and 60s, the City of Pittsburgh reportedly purchased and demolished the remaining few houses on Dion Way and surrounding streets to make way for development of the 65-acre sloped area into a neighborhood park (*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, date unknown). The article also mentioned that it was part of an effort by the City to "convert



This old map shows where many lots and streets were before the City tore down the structures to make way for the park. (See southsideslopes.org for more info)

unbuildable and uneconomical slopes into permanent open space for recreational purposes.

Fast forward to the early 2000s. The South Side Slopes Neighborhood Association (SSSNA) and the then South Side Local Development Corporation (SSLDC) continued the vision and began looking at the park through a modern lens. In 2003, they solicited ideas for South Side Park from the community. Through a \$10,000 grant, a detailed site plan was created. Using the plan as a guide, the SSSNA continued for the next several years to map out the existing features of the park such as trails, water features, etc. and put some of the planning into action by blazing trails, clearing out invasive weeds, getting law enforcement to patrol more frequently, and general clean up.

Although there is more work to be done, today South Side Park has a lot to offer residents. From the addition of Bandi Schaum Community Garden in the old ball field, to work by the Student Conservation Association (SCA) on trail and park improvements, to a recent \$15,000 grant from the Birmingham Foundation for engaging youth in the park through programming, the vision continues to evolve. Your ideas and passion are needed. Join us at the next SSSNA meeting on Tuesday, October 13 at St. Paul of the Cross Retreat Center to be part of the conversation.

Summer Picnic Recap: A Little Rain Couldn't Dampen the Party

Dark clouds and a threatening weather forecast did not stop the South Side Slopes from celebrating its annual summer picnic on Tuesday, July 14.

Friends and neighbors gathered at Quarry Field for music, drinks, and a delectable potluck spread. Kids splashed through puddles while grownups feasted, exchanging both compliments and recipes for favorite dishes. When the weather took a turn for the worse, old and new neighbors got closer than ever as they sought refuge under two pop-up tents. The fun lasted well into the evening making the 2015 Summer Picnic a wet-weather success.

Leftover burgers and buns were donated to the Brashear Association food pantry, which serves families who are food insecure living in the South Side Slopes community.



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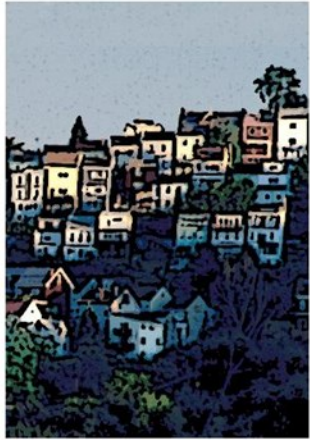
Donations are accepted through our website: southsideslopes.org (click on the PayPal link).

To donate with a check, please make it out to SSSNA, and mail it to: SSSNA, P.O. Box 4248, Pittsburgh, PA 15203.

Access our website with your smartphone using the QR code to the right.



South Side Slopes Neighborhood Association
P.O. Box 4248
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS—2015

Saturday, September 19 — South Side Block Party, 3-7p.m. [13th Street, off E. Carson]

Saturday, October 3 — StepTrek 11a.m. [21st Street, Entrance to South Side Park]

Tuesday, October 13 — General Meeting & Elections, 7p.m.

Tuesday, December 8 — Holiday Party

All general meetings are held at the St Paul of the Cross Monastery Retreat Center at 7PM. The address is: 148 Monastery Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15203. Parking is available.

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