

# Newsletter

FITLER SQUARE IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION, INC.



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**Fitler Square  
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400 South Croskey Street  
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### Spring Fair donations

Have any books you're looking to unload?  
Have any household items you just don't need anymore?  
Kids all grown up and you want to get rid of some toys and kid's clothes?

We are accepting donations for the Book Booth, White Elephant Booth and Child's Booth.

Feel free to drop off your items any time between Thursday evening and noon on Saturday.

Become a fan of Friends of Fitler Square

400 South Croskey Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19146  
[www.fitlersquare.org](http://www.fitlersquare.org)



Have a favorite baked item you'd like to share? Drop off your goodies any time on Friday and Saturday. The more, the better!

### The Evolution of the Fitler Square Fair "Bake Booth"

In the beginning layer cakes prevailed, big and beautiful with fluffy frostings and colorful decorations, confident they would arrive at Mother's Day dinners. Sheet cakes followed, always with something to say for the occasion. Ever popular cookies, thumbprints with sparkling jellies, ginger and molasses... all popular delights during the 60s and 70s.

Then along came the frugal 80s, when cakes were cut, half and quarter portions in demand, finally the 'slice' - a chance to sample a variety along with oatmeal, chocolate chip, shortbread and sugar cookies. The occasional pie. Where have all the pies gone?

Taste ever changing, years passed into the 90s. Bundt cakes with cinnamon streusel, tube cakes full of apples, peaches or berries. Then appeared the hearty loaf cakes; pumpkin, zucchini, cranberry and the reappearance of a past treat - the standard 50s jelly roll dusted with powdered sugar, brownies with

and without nuts, frosted and not frosted. Everyone welcomed fruit and nut bars plain or dressed with whipped toppings.

2000 arrived with an abundance of muffins large and small, plain or dotted with nuts, dried cranberries, raisins or whatever the baker desired. The ever happy cupcakes returned with colorful tops lined up, just the right size for tiny hands.

As the years marched on, the Bake Booth is now a Treat Booth. The aroma of popcorn fills the air, lemon sticks, especially good on a hot day, are enjoyed by young and young at heart. Fudge appears on occasion, as do pretzel sticks coated with chocolate then dipped in every color of the rainbow 'jimmies,' and yes - donuts!

What's special at the Bake/Treat Booth this year? Join the fun, stop by and find out. Can any kid at heart resist these goodies? C'mon try at least one!

The mission of FSIA is to preserve, protect and beautify Fitler Square and we work in partnership with Philadelphia Department of Parks and Recreation.

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## Message from our President

Dear Friends and Neighbors:

*In starting to write this letter I asked myself, what makes a **great** city neighborhood? Is it the location, the cleanliness, the shops and restaurants, the churches and schools, the parks? These are all important factors, but what I think really makes a valued neighborhood are the neighbors themselves. They are the pulse of any area. Fitler Square is so wonderful because of the people who live here, with the heart of it being our charming little park which is bursting with positive energy this time of year from people and plants alike. Your support has been the backbone of the exciting improvements FSIA has been able to make in the park, transforming the fountain, improving the lighting (see article by Derek Freres), and the fabulous new benches (don't miss the ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Fair). And we have exciting plans for the future.*

*I would be remiss while mentioning our neighbors and people who have made Fitler Square so perfect if I did not acknowledge our District Councilman Kenyatta Johnson, a dedicated public servant who believes everyone in his district deserves his attention. He is responsible for the funding for the new benches, and he and his staff are always helpful. I must thank Deputy Mayor Mike DiBerardinis and First Deputy Commissioner Mark Focht, whose tireless efforts have made an important difference in City government's perspective and funding of our small squares and parks.*

*Lastly, I thank my fellow Board members who volunteer their time and who work hard to lovingly tend to Fitler Square.*

*Please make sure to attend our 53rd Annual Spring Fair, which is always Friday and Saturday of Mother's Day weekend, May 9th and 10th. I understand it's a busy time in the City and many activities are competing for your time and money, but it is our only yearly fundraiser. Of course, with neighbors like ours I am confident everyone will take the time to come over to the park for our Fair, a small-time event in a big-city neighborhood.*

Warmest regards

Judy Romano Zimering

## Flowers that Bloom in the Spring...

By Amanda Cooperman

As spring bounces in and trees are budding, flowers blooming, did you ever wonder how many gardeners it takes to make FS park so beautiful season in and season out - 10, 20?

You may be surprised to learn that all that joyous charm is the result of the artistic styling of one gardener... Maureen Chambley. You may not be surprised to learn that it takes tremendous dedication, hard work, analytical thought and two very "green" thumbs.

I gleaned all that when, with great curiosity, I interviewed our gardener and simply asked, "How do you make it all work?" With great modesty she advised me of what she does for our park.

According to Ms. Chambley, and I quote, in part, Fitler Square has a significant tree canopy, particularly on the East side. In shady conditions flowers play a subordinate role. Leaf shape, color, and texture are used to create interest and



visual tension. Plant choices are determined by soil, sun, water requirements, and hardiness. She chooses plants to fit the site conditions which means sometimes having to reject favorites that will, unfortunately, most likely fail.

The park is in a particular gardening zone which is based on the average minimum temperature. Most plants tolerate a certain range and when choosing non-native plants (like hosta), Ms. Chambley must keep year long temperatures in mind. She must be aware of all necessary relevant conditions because pushing the cultural envelope could result in temperamental plants requiring almost ceaseless attention. These plants will stick around long enough to make us love them, then disappear. And that is sad for everyone! Therefore, as much as possible, she uses natives or cultivars of native plants. They require the least care once established. Also Ms. Chambley believes strongly that if plants are provided the conditions they need to thrive, chemical pesticides are unnecessary. Weeds are pulled rather than poisoned and all



fertilizers are watered after application. Chemicals are also broad spectrum, meaning that the good bugs go down with the bad. Which in turn affects the bird population. Happy healthy plants are very successful at fighting off pests and disease but when trouble happens beneficial insects are far more effective at restoring order. And they do it for free! As she says, "nature is a very clever girl".

Ms. Chambley researched and for summer plantings borrowed from British Garden Designer Gertrude Jekyll, the idea to have warm colored flowers at the entrances transitioning to cooler as you move into the park. Most of the perennials were planted last fall and will be debuting this summer. Last fall she planted 2,076 spring bulbs to flower very early thru mid-season (spring) and relocated about 200 existing bulbs which flower mid to late season. There is also a plan to plant more bulbs. I can't wait to see the color explosion!

Ms. Chambley considers herself to be a "low-tech kind of gardener"; I think her modesty prevents her from stating the truth - that she is a caring, hard working, thoughtful, diligent and tremendously talented individual. All of us in the area have benefitted from her expertise. And, we are grateful.





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Sincerely,

*Lora H.*

**Another delightful nearby park...Julian Abele Park**

By Cliff Eyler

Like Fitter Square, Julian Abele Park is named after a prominent Philadelphian. Julian Abele (1881-1950) was the chief designer in the prominent Philadelphia architectural firm of Horace Trumbauer. For his undergraduate studies he attended what is now Cheyney University, and went on to become the first black graduate of the University of Pennsylvania's Department of Architecture. The Philadelphia Museum of Art is among the iconic buildings for which he was most likely the primary designer, as well as much of the Duke University campus. Julian Abele lived in South Philadelphia at several addresses in the vicinity of what is now Julian Abele Park.

Julian Abele Park became the first new Philadelphia public park in over a decade when it was opened in 2008. Located at the corner of 22nd and Carpenter streets, for the first few years the park was a needed, but very basic, green space in the neighborhood. Similar to the Fitter Square Improvement Association, the Friends of Julian Abele Park Organization was created to initiate, oversee and improve the space. They have worked to promote the park, adding, in 2011, a Philadelphia Mural Arts Program mural. Designed by muralist Michael Webb, it features Julian Abele and

several of his buildings. Also in 2011, the Friends of Julian Abele Park was awarded a Pennsylvania Horticultural Society grant to landscape the space. The grand reopening in 2013 revealed a completely transformed park. The space has comfortable benches, artful paved walkways, is planted with red horse-chestnut and flowering cherry trees, shrubs, and a groundcover of succulents. The gateway to the park, funded by a grant from the Southwest Center City Run, is a gate designed by Chris Wheeler, a local metalwork designer/craftsman. The Duke University Chapel Tower, designed by Julian Abele, was the inspiration for the design of both the gate and the enclosing fence. Over the last few years the Square has hosted a farmers' market, many neighborhood events, and the summer Jazz at Julian concert series.

Several restaurants, bars and coffee shops are convenient to Julian Abele Park. If you happen to be in the area visiting one of those, stop by and enjoy a few moments in this delightful space.



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**Visit Awbury Arboretum**

By Pat Henningsen

For the past several years, a crew from Awbury Arboretum Landscaping has been mowing the lawns in Fitter Square. The landscaping division generates revenue to support the non-profit Awbury Arboretum. The fifty-five acre Arboretum in the historic Germantown section of Philadelphia boasts a gracious mansion, open meadows, ponds, woods and lawns. The landscaping division of Awbury is committed to supporting the Arboretum and its mission of preserving and interpreting Awbury's delightful Francis Cope House and landscape. The Arboretum welcomes visitors from dawn to dusk, 365 days a year. Admission is FREE. FSIA is pleased to support their mission while getting great service having our lawns mowed regularly by a knowledgeable and experienced crew. This is a win-win situation.



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**New LED lights installed in Fittler Square**

By Derek Freres

As part of our recent capital improvements to Fittler Square, the Fittler Square Improvement Association funded via neighbor donations lighting improvements to the Square. In most need of updating were the old Metal Halide driven post lights that cast a very bright unpleasant institutional hue across an otherwise beautiful Square. The bright white high lumen output from our ten posts produced shadows that hid nighttime visitors walking or sitting on different sides of the Square. The old lights were also a constant maintenance burden with bulbs burning out every month of the year and aging interior mechanisms in need of frequent tinkering. Every time a bulb burned out a bucket truck would have to come, disassemble the top of the fixture, replace the bulbs, and re-assemble the fixture - a time consuming, inefficient, and costly process.

In March 2014 all Metal Halide post lights in Fittler Square were converted to LED fixtures. The exterior posts and luminaries remained the same keeping the "historic feel" of the Square but the inside lighting mechanisms were retro-fitted with an LED diode deflector made by Global Tech LED, a Florida based company. The new lights produce a warmer color output, at 2700 Kelvin, much more like an outdoor living room than a factory as the previous Metal Halides implied. Although the lumen output is slightly higher than the previous lights (that is, brighter) the warmer color temperature makes the Square "feel" much more welcoming and one can now clearly see faces of those on opposite sides of the Square during even the darkest of nights.

Whereas the Metal Halide bulbs previously used are similar to household incandescent bulbs and cannot be aimed toward a particular location - light is cast in a sphere around these types of bulbs - the LED diodes used in the Square's conversion can be precisely deflected to a specific part of the Square or simply pointed downward. This means the retro-fit LED fixtures are "Dark Sky Compliant," with all light aimed toward the ground illuminating the Square but keeping unnecessary light from flooding the sky and windows of surrounding homes.

An unquestionable improvement in light quality is augmented by several other benefits of the conversion including a reduction in power usage by 75%, a 10 year "no-touch" no-maintenance manufacturer guarantee, and fewer raw materials consumed over the fixtures' lifetimes. Rather than making and replacing metal Halide bulbs several times per year the raw materials used to produce the LEDs are only made once every 15 - 20 years per retro-fit. In other words, while each fixture would have required 40 Metal Halide bulbs assuming a 20 year lifetime (or 400 bulbs for the Square as a whole) each fixture now will only require 1 LED Diode (or 20 for the Square as a whole) over the same time period.



Based on hour burn time ratings we expect the LEDs to light Fittler Square, our outside living room, for approximately the next 20 years without any required human intervention all while using much less power than their predecessors. We hope you enjoy the new lights and know this is one of many improvements your donations have funded and will continue to fund.



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*\* 2014 Dues paid to date.  
If you have any changes or corrections,  
please email them to fsia1962@gmail.com.*

## Become a FSIA Friend or Renew your Membership Today!

Annual membership dues and other individual donations fund major improvements to and the maintenance of Fidler Square.

Your membership dues and donations support all of these efforts. We could not realize our mission to improve and maintain our charming Fidler Square without your support.

Please become a member today!

### Membership Levels:

Fountain	\$500
Bear	\$300
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Turtle	\$100
Family	\$50
Individual	\$35

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**Thank you for your support!**