

AABRA Update!

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www.aabra.org

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Whispers of Fear, Hate & the Planned Takeover of North Philly



While *most* new residents in North Philly live in peace with their neighbors, AABRA has uncovered an insidious network of other newcomers who are anti-community soldiers in the campaign to replace the poor of North Philly with the upper-income. Curiously, they have been documenting their contempt for North Philadelphians – and plans for your home – even as they smile at you in public. Today, we invite you to crash their secret party.

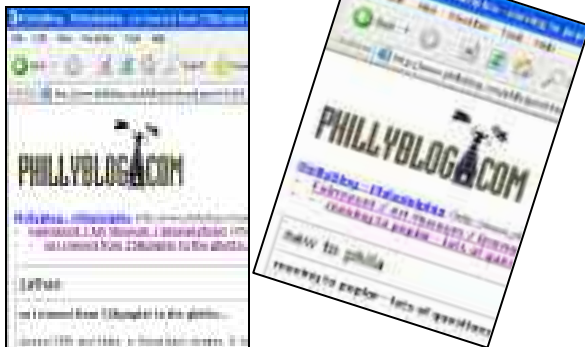
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AABRA has learned that a vocal, angry and activist contingent of new North Philly homeowners, speculators and renters, often based in Brewerytown, have been expressing their feelings about North Philly and North Philly's long-time residents on a website called www.phillyblog.com. AABRA believes that the hate messages on this site are unworthy of First Amendment protections and clearly prove our worst fears about the ongoing gentrification of our community. Therefore, we are compelled to notify the long-time residents of words that define and describe the undeclared war that is being taken to every corner of our community by (previously) unseen actors.

In this edition of *AABRA Update!*, we provide excerpts of the above highlighted themes (#1, #2, #7). In the next edition, we will cover the other topics. While there is subtlety in some of the quotations presented, taken as a whole, they paint a portrait of aggressors helping to divide a community by class and race. This division was precisely what AABRA warned would occur should major projects (Westrum, Pennrose, etc.) win approval and if the city continued to neglect its long-time residents.

"in the time i've been in my place (almost a year), i've seen the street completely change."
- new resident, code name "wysong"

Continued on page 3, please see Whispers of Takeover



Images of the website www.phillyblog.com, which hosts the excerpts captured below.

I. What They're Discussing

There are at least seven recurring themes in the newcomer entries, most are disturbing and some have racial subtexts:

1. Evidence of a planned takeover
2. Fear of long-time residents
3. How to manipulate long-time residents
4. Anti-black ideas through misrepresentation
5. General paranoia
6. White racial identity as common ground
7. Good character of *nearby* long-time residents

Youth Basketball a Success

The Get Money Entertainment Summer Classic completed its first season, with the Burgundy team defeating the Yellow team 2 games to 1 in the best-of-three Championship Series.

Rapper Gary "GLuv" James, founder and league commissioner said: "We set out to do something positive for the young people in the community, an alternative to the violence they see on TV every night. All eight teams and 64 players demonstrated that there is much more to Philadelphia's youth. They had a great time and all took home free T-shirts, medals and trophies. They made their parents proud and made a second year of the Summer Classic a certainty – God willing."

Continued on page 9, see GME Youth Basketball Classic

Renewing Community Strategy

AABRA's historical reliance on a multi-pronged strategy to ensure our presence and prosperity in Brewerytown and the rest of North Philly is more relevant than ever. We must defend our community, while growing it, always remembering a simple equation: *either we improve our community for ourselves and our families or others will improve it for themselves and their families.*

Along the way, we must keep in mind North Philly's long-standing tradition of racial and ethnic tolerance, so that our defense never manifests itself as an attack on another racial or ethnic group. ***Let us increase diversity, not displacement.***

What is Gentrification?

We begin by defining gentrification as the process by which a community becomes economically and socially overwhelmed by those financially better off than the long-time residents. As such, gentrification is an ostensibly economic phenomenon, not racial, though it can have strong racial overtones when those gentrifying a community are of a different race than the long-time residents. The impacts are that housing prices and the overall cost of living rise, ultimately either directly or indirectly leading to displacement. There are cultural/class changes that invariably force the dwindling number of long-time residents to seem out of place and unwelcome in a community they once dominated. The neighborhood improves physically and new businesses tend to appear, due to the influx of capital and a relaxation of any redlining that existed there, but the long-time residents experience little of that growth.

The immorality of gentrification stems from the fact that the long-time residents lose their community, while the newcomers get to settle into a newly refurbished, suddenly desirable part of town. The city benefits at some level, because the tax base increases. But, the civil strife, neighborhood instability and overall injustice of the transition create a less wholesome, spiritually barren city.

Our challenge in North Philadelphia, particularly Brewertown, is to ensure that gentrification never reaches a critical mass, that it withers on the vine, and that the long-time residents ultimately rejuvenate – and prosper in – their own community.

Fundamentals of the Strategy

AABRA's strategy for ensuring our continued presence here and spurring a renaissance that will benefit all residents has changed little over the past five years. Our successes include helping to educate and foster a sense of community in the long-neglected neighborhood of Brewertown, as well as slowing the pace of gentrification. We have further exposed Philly's urban policy as favoring *importing* a middle class, rather than growing one from among the decimated existing population.

However, we are re-examining our strategy so that we can give far more emphasis to the economic aspects. As well, we must address the impact of the most bigoted gentrifiers. In its current form, that strategy contains the elements below.

1. Education & Outreach: We must continue to inform residents and businesses about their right to remain in their own communities, as well as their responsibility and opportunities to improve them. We must inform the people of the value of their homes and help them to resist attempts to sell or to obtain predatory loans. We must encourage them to sell only when facing financial catastrophe, and never for pennies. We must arm them with the financial skills to refinance, purchase real estate, fund renovations, etc. We will continue utilizing newsletters, the web, media, regular community meetings.

2. Investment: Residents must purchase all available real estate, renovate when necessary and ensure that any profits

stay in the community. We must attract investment that will be supportive of the long-time residents (concepts similar to the full Songhai City plan). We must bring businesses back to our commercial strips, starting new businesses whenever possible. We must patronize African-American businesses and encourage all businesses to hire neighborhood youth.

3. Developer Opposition: We must oppose all new development that is harmful to long-time residents (e.g., benefits gentrification). We will work with developers attempting to create mixed-income projects, but will strongly oppose any attempts to create 100% market-rate developments.

4. Community Improvement: Ultimately, we must demonstrate that the faith of long-time residents in their community is well-placed: that jobs and career training are coming; crime is being addressed; economic futility is waning and a bright future for all of us is inevitable – ***provided we work together.*** To this end, we must create and/or support myriad community investment initiatives (see above); undertake community beautification projects; maintain great relationships with both the police and the youth likely to turn to crime; and, put out the clarion call for native sons and daughters to return home to rebuild their old neighborhoods.

5. Membership: We must continue to grow the membership of AABRA and host more fundraisers. Join AABRA today by calling 215-769-3333. Let's strategize for a better community for all of us.

We will be sharing and expanding these concepts in the months to come. Stay tuned!

A Better Online Source

www.allforthetaking.org

Are you looking for an online source committed to sharing information, analysis, and strategies to help long-time residents stay in their communities? The site is called *allforthetaking.org*, named for the acclaimed documentary exposing eminent domain abuse in Philadelphia. You can register for the site, find information, share news and stories, as well as make comments about other's posts. Visit there often and contribute. Make sure that the historical record in Philadelphia is NOT written by the power brokers!



At *allforthetaking.org*, pro-community, social justice themes abound. And, of course, the dialogue is thought-provoking, politically hard-hitting and a great participatory experience. Said one regular "I read the local papers and yawn. There's little of value there and nothing I can believe. When I want to know the truth about an important political topic, however, I go to *allforthetaking.org*."

Are the Bloggers Pawns?

by webmaster -- allforthetaking.org

It's worth underscoring that these phillyblog.com bloggers, hateful and ignorant as some of their comments may be, are really just individuals who fit neatly into the larger neo-liberal project of reclaiming the city for the upper-class. Whether or not they are actually members of this class or they're just paving the way for future upscale development, many of them have completely digested the ideology, and they can spit it out in perfect form. However, it's the powerful commitment by city government working at the behest of business interests to make these plans happen that is the real threat. The bloggers, whether they know it or not, would be far better served by a city where all residents have access to affordable housing, as opposed to one in which the poor are forced out. Please visit allforthetaking.org for a far more insightful and balanced view of gentrification issues in Philadelphia and nationally.

Whispers of Takeover (cont'd)

II. Disclaimers

First, we note that this article describes the effort to displace the long-time residents of North Philly *through the words of the very newcomers* perpetrating this offense. Unfortunately, our investigation of their subterfuge could not determine how representative of all newcomers their hostility is. We choose to leave the gauge of how widespread these ideas are to larger publications, with greater research capacities.

We do caution long-time residents, however, not to assume that all of their new neighbors harbor the kind of ignorance, fear and hatred we describe below. As many of these quotations inadvertently demonstrate, North Philadelphians are generous, trusting and peace-loving. Our innate fairness and decency should prevent us from judging all newcomers to be the kind of individuals that these quotes lay bare. We must continue to treat every newcomer with respect, even while realizing that some are secretly planning or awaiting our removal from our homes and the destruction of our community as we know it.

The reader is advised that the term "whitey" in the following seems to be used only by white newcomers. Please be warned that some readers might find other terms offensive, particularly the racial mocking by "**merkin**," who is a white male.

We provide a link (the location on the internet) where the full text of the excerpts can be found – so that the reader may judge the matter for him or herself. Each link is given in an endnote and applies to all excerpts following it, until a new link is provided. Finally, the race of a newcomer is noted only when relevant.

III. Quotes - Evidence of a planned takeover

The single most common discussion item, with the possible exception of irrational fears of crime, is how quickly North Philadelphia, particularly Brewerytown, will be gentrified.

"when the word on the street is - the government wants white people to move in... you know something is happening."
- new resident, white male, code name "gorilla"

There are open laments that the neighborhood still has too many African-Americans and too many of the poor. There are discussions about how to attract more whites and upper-income. Note the linkage between black/poor and white/wealth. Evoking race at every turn is an obsession. Almost never are there discussions of displacement, what will happen to the poor should gentrification accelerate, cultural losses, whether gentrification is morally acceptable. Most disturbing is the odds-making, planning, or belief in the inevitability of gentrification in North Philadelphia.

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**gorilla<sup>i</sup>:** right now [Brewerytown] is predominately black, there are a lot of home owners, despite the word on the street that the government wants white people to move in - if black residents stay it can be a nice mixed community.

**Editor's Comment:** Note that **gorilla** is a white male new arrival. He speaks of disturbing government repopulation policy matter-of-factly and in ways that indicate, at minimum, passive approval. Parsing the statement "**IF** black residents stay..." we note that **gorilla** has skillfully reversed the facts to make himself appear conciliatory, even generous. There is no "**IF**" about African-Americans *voluntarily* staying. The only "**IF**" is whether we will be forced to leave by the ravages of gentrification as other **gorillas** plan to move here and make their respective fortunes at the expense of long-time residents. This kind of contorted, placating, wishful thinking is a recurring theme among the newcomers.

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eldondreⁱⁱ: I'd recommend finding an undervalued neighborhood or at least a properly valued neighborhood. If you want risk, I think the area between girard-ridge-broad is a good one. don't know pricing.

merkin: as for [Brewerytown] being affordable. it is starting to sharply rise. the investor have bought up most of the properties in the area and payed of leans and put on new roofs and now the properties are 2 or 3 times what they where last year. people are starting to buy who are not investors, people like me who cant afford most of anything anywhere within a stones throw of CC. and i feel that this summer it will keep rising as more and more people slowly "invest" and fix up the area. this will not happen in a couple of years. NL was still a dump not too long ago and it was call the next hot area in the late 80's, 15 years it took.

gorilla: Dumpsters are a good sign for how quickly things are changing. I've seen a lot lately.

wysong: i live right in the w. college ave/26th and girard vicinity, pretty much at the three corners of fairmount, b'town, and sharswood (i'd like to start calling it girard college, but that's another thread). ... in the time i've been in my place (almost a year), i've seen the street completely change. one renovation is already complete and a row of 4 should be done by the summer. when they're done the "blight" on my block will be virtually eliminated. i'm seeing people enthusiastically moving in. around the corner on girard ave. there's 4 renovations going on. ... but as merkin said (i think), change won't happen over night and not everyone can deal w/ it. but it WILL happen.

"i am trying to buy the pha/rda homes next to mine"

- code name "fairmounterpolo"



dave: As far as making a good investment, you want to buy where and when nobody else wants to buy. I would second El's recommendation of the Ridge/Broad/Girard triangle as an area that will probably take off but still isn't getting much attention. I actually know a couple people who have bought there and I considered it before deciding on West Powelton. Another area worth looking into is Mantua/Parkside, which is immediately across the Girard Ave bridge from Brewerytown and, just from eyeballing realtor.com listings, appears to offer more bang for the buck than Brewerytown. Both those areas have huge potential because of their proximity to nice areas and Universities (Temple U and Penn/Drexel, respectively). Chances are that Brewerytown will take off before either of those areas, but it also wouldn't surprise me if it's been so overhyped and overpriced (at least the area north of Girard) that it ends up lagging behind both.

eldondre: ... those [strawberry mansion] houses require some dough to fix up. on the other hand, it offers excellent park access if the city can improve its park maintenance. BUT, it's one of the cities worst schools and neighborhoods once you get off 33rd by the park.

gorilla: What is interesting is... this conversation would not have happened last Feb. A lot has changed.

fairmounterpolo: where are there improvements in b-town.... on girard ave, as wysong already pointed out near her on 26th street. new office on corner of 30th and girard. new renovation on 30th +girard (south side) went for close to \$400k (mercy!) new home same block, north side-\$300K+-owner occupied. the bar at 30th and stiles has been open for 3 weeks. corner of 29th and stiles-3 story storefront and apartments being done. 1200 hundred block of 30th- 2 renos under way. 4 homes+ on 1400 corlies being done. 2+ homes being done 2900 block of thompson. 1400 block of 29th-4 active renos under way. plus according to a realtor that specializes in b-town-there are only 6 active listings right now-20+ props have been sold in last 4 weeks.

Editor's Comment: fairmounterpolo knows much more than a casual neighbor. From his numerous postings, he is a well-connected conservative activist, who has been speculating in African-American neighborhoods for years. Men who possess access to power, have financing and exhibit predatory instincts might be the most dangerous of the gentrifiers.

swinefeld: I'm all a twitter. ;-) I was asking because I drive through Brewerytown almost on a weekly basis trying to find signs of change. I thought I was either looking in the wrong places or B-town was being overly hyped up.

fairmounterpolo: funny story to pass on. having dinner last saturday night in south philly. councilman kenney walks in with his wife. second time i have seen him there in 2 months. my fiancee and i walk over to him, re-introduce ourselves to him, and then i talk about what i am doing about in b-town. how i am trying to buy the pha/rda homes next to mine, etc. he says, "call me. here are my numbers/email.etc. we do constituent service all the time." ... his executive aide called me on monday to get the addresses of what i am trying to get.

... whether i get the properties or not, it was amazing that he reached back. ... (and i can't even get MY OWN councilman-clarke-to return my phone calls....)

Editor's Comment: When was the last time you learned of a long-time resident who was helped by a councilperson to purchase RDA, PHA or city-owned properties?

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**mja<sup>iii</sup>:** I noticed that a building on the west side of Broad below Fairmount Ave. was being converted into condo's. 640 N. Broad. I then saw an ad in the paper for this same conversion project. ... Does this project really give a shot in the arm to the Divine Lorraine project, and in turn, turn N. Broad into the next hot fringe area?

**josef:** ... they also recently said they're going to do the same 'Avenue of the Arts' idea as on South Broad up there.

**niel:** I had heard something was up with the Met, but I'm delighted to hear things are actually happening. So many rumored projects never get off the ground.

**eldondre:** I was poking around behind lofts 640 this weekend. it's really nice back there. there's defly money flowing. hahnema got broad st renovations, the phx across the st got a complete face lift, Pafa expanded next door, Roman is now well lit (when I lived up there it was dark and a haven for bums), 511 N. Broad, the school district, Lofts 640, Temple.

**Editor's Comment:** There was no discussion of the historical significance of the Divine Lorraine hotel in this thread. The "project" would bring luxury condos to that former civil rights complex. Is this giddy aspiration for development *at any cost*, ignorance of national treasures, contempt for history?

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rapscallion^{iv}: I see all of the buzz that the two new places on the other side of Fairmount Avenue have generated and wish for something like that at this location [28th & Poplar – at the ERA Bar and Restaurant]. It's too soon for that now but hopefully it will happen as gentrification pushes out and outposts are established on the fringe. I think that it would have enormous impacts on the quality of life in this part

Editor's Comment: These people see the gentrification of our community as inevitable. Observe the use of the word "fringes," as though gentrifiers were in a frontier land. Perhaps they would do well to recognize that there are people on those "fringes" who are subsidizing the gentrifiers through ever-increasing real estate taxes, while so many of the gentrifiers have 10-years tax abatements.

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***"Girard Ave will need to be gentrified before people start crossing into BTown proper."***



*- code name "malloy"*

**sparco<sup>v</sup>:** I am a resident of Btown Square and know who lives here. There are more families here than what your statement implies... and more moving in as time goes on. Phase 1 construction in a gentrifying area is not exactly 'ideal' for a young family. This area will appeal to more families once Phase 2 begins.

**malloy:** My point stands....Girard Ave will need to be gentrified (by definition) before people start crossing into BTown proper. That is how this urban stuff typically works and I doubt BTown will be an exception. BTown is one of the most dangerous parts of the most dangerous big city in the US....lets not forget that. m: I hear you. I know of quite a few unreported murders in my old hood...they never made it to the news or paper. That said, you are more likeky to get clapped in BTown over Fishtown...

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"you probably don't want to live on Seybert"

- code name "raider.adam"

sandfury^{vi}: Hi all. I am interested in the 21st & Master area. Does anyone here live in that area and have any anecdotal info on what goes on in that 'hood? I am a single female and have some concern about safety, etc.

raider.adam: I live at 21st and Master. Have been for two years now and very involved with the community. I can let you know anything you would like. First piece ... you probably don't want to live on Seybert.

sandfury: Hi Adam. I am looking into buying a shell on the 2100 block of Master. I'd be doing alot of the renovating myself and likely living there alone for a bit, until I could find a roommate (or not).

raider.adam: Get in touch with me. (Email or PM me ... I can give you my phone number.) You can point out the shell you are going to work on and I can take you around the neighborhood and introduce you to some people. I will give you a heads up right now

Editor's Comment: Note how helpful gentrifiers are to each other. They clearly identify with each other – even when they know nothing else about each other.

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***"Lots more young white artsy-bike messenger types, often coming from or going to the North side of Girard"***

- code name "sandfury"

**brooklyncat**<sup>vii</sup>: I think 29th and Poplar is really fine in terms of safety (as much as anywhere), but it's still an "up and coming" area and doesn't look that pretty.

**sandfury:** I have seen a demographic shift in my immediate area over the last year. Lots more young white artsy-bike messenger types, often coming from or going to the North side of Girard. For this area, it's ugliness and the nuisance stuff means lower rent. You might be pleasantly surprised to see what the people are like here if you decide to call it home. And then you can laugh as you are able to buy your first house long before your friends as they have been throwing so much money at rent for so long.

**Ms. Ann Thorpe:** Just because you've been here a few years and potted some flowers doesn't mean you and other recent residents are necessarily a "betterment." There are generations that have preceded you in the neighborhood who have worked hard, raised good children, cleaned their fronts [without organizing a "cleaning day"], and looked out for each other.

"Up & coming" indeed. The contributions on this site consistently ignore the history of Fairmount & Brewerytown families. These neighborhoods were not discovered by the "Betterment Coalition."

**brooklyncat:** My apologies if "up and coming" sounded like an insult. I like the neighborhood very much and have been househunting there.

**Ms. Ann Thorpe:** the truth is there are plenty here who think they have discovered Fairmount & Brewerytown; like the young professional who was so upset with the older man on my street (who has lived there all his life) because he had the uncouth gall to sit out in his beach chair in the warm weather wearing an a-shirt. I guess he spoiled her "idea" of the perfect street.

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cafethoughts^{viii}: I've been musing about 29th & Master (Ricky's Jewel Box) and wondering whether y'all think it's a decent spot for a cafe - or whether those blocks to Girard and Brewerytown Square are just too long.

gorilla: 29th street has potential... while there are a lot of eating establishments on Girard. One that is differentiated will do well- whitey is venturing to girard on a regular basis now. if you have a dog your are fine.

gorilla^{ix}: when the word on the street is - the government wants white people to move in... you know something is happening.

earl1003: 10 years ago there was a pretty decent supermarket at 27th and girard, a shop-n-btag, the store closed and reopened twice, lack of whitey support was the reason, the area hasn't changed that much over the years, girard ave is a glass barrier that probably will never breach.

Editor's Comment: That market was unpleasant, poorly maintained, suffered from massive employee theft. It never had significant white support – even during its prosperous days. It closed because it was poorly run, not because there was a lack of white support.

IV. Quotes - Fear of long-time residents

"I won't be leaving home without my pepper spray."

- new resident, code name "sparco"

One of the most common discussion topics is the fear that newcomers have of the long-time residents. With such concerns, it seems reasonable to ask why they would choose to move here. That question, regrettably, is largely answered by the previous section: convenience, profit and the chance for profit.

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**sparco**<sup>x</sup>: I have decided to purchase one of the homes in Brewerytown Square. I don't know about how often it is "patrolled." Once more buildings go up there will be a gated entry way to the housing block/where the rear garages are. I can't say I'm thrilled about the area right now... I sure won't feel as safe as I would when I'm walking around Rittenhouse Sq. but I'm taking the chance. ... P.S. I won't be leaving home without my pepper spray.

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"i dont venture out for walks into the neighborhood at night."

- new resident, code name "stantheman"

noseknows^{xi}: I'm planning to commute to Center City for work and my understanding is that there are reliable bus options (that would add up to a 20-25 minute commute total). Does this sound accurate? Is this safe?

stantheman: i have lived in brewerytown square since march 2006. it is relatively safe during the day (i've never had any problems). i dont venture out for walks into the neighborhood at night.

rapscallion: Girard Avenue isn't safe at night. Basically, Brewerytown is a small and remote enclave with a lot of poverty surrounding it.

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***"Make friends with the police. All you have to do is wave and smile when they go by. This is common practice where I used to live."***

*- new resident, code name "tenzo"*

**New to phil<sup>xii</sup>:** I just signed a lease to move (with my husband and dog) to Poplar between 29th & 30th. ... Should I be concerned about walking alone at night - say from parking my car after work or from the bar up the street after happy hour?

**uma:** I have friends that live on 29th between Poplar and Girard and they love the area. I would suggest a can of mace, or calling someone, like your husband, when you are walking late at night.

**ydoindrunk:** ... dont go north of girard. that is unless you want to buy crack, pick up a hooker, or get your ass kicked...you will be living in a great neighborhood but you are on the edge if you know what i mean.

**tenzo:** ... Make friends with the police. All you have to do is wave and smile when they go by. This is common practice where I used to live. ... Now, they wave back, I know most of them by name and I chat with them every once and awhile.

**Editor's Comment:** What?

**keiko:** ok i really disapprove of this ...

i live above girard and it is people like you spreading the hate that helps keep it around.

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ironmike22^{xiii}: My real question is, could a kid at the age of say 22 make it in a "rough" city neighborhood if he was born and raised in the suburbs?

brooklyncat: Don't fool yourself that buying cheap in a rough neighborhood is a guaranteed road to riches though. The people in your neighborhood may not appreciate your activities or presence. There are stories of rehabbers being targeted for beatings or worse...not likely but possible. NY, like Philly, is experiencing an uptick in violent crime that may slow down or even reverse the ongoing gentrification of the city...and some neighborhoods may never appreciate for various reasons. I'm not saying I think this is likely, but it is possible.

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**ary<sup>xiv</sup>:** I absolutely love my neighborhood (fairmount) but cannot afford to buy a home in this neighborhood on a teacher's salary. I hear that brewerytown is the next up and coming neighborhood. I have been looking over there, particularly,

between Girard and Thompson (30th and 31st) and have been pretty discouraged. Can anybody out there shed some light ??? Of course, the Westrum homes are out of my range, also.

**zur:** It's not safe and will not be for some time. Period. Has potential but isn't safe.

**cheriev:** I second that, pull up the crime and security thread and you will see some recent things that have been going on there. It is still worlds apart from Fairmount. Hopefully that will change some day.

**swinefeld:** I guess I'll third that. B-town still has a long way to go before it become the next Northern Liberties or SWCC. If you're an urban pioneer and are willing to put up with blight and crime in the short term, you may be rewarded with a handsome return on your investment in the near future. I'm sure Wysong can shed more light on the subject.

***"other streets that haunt me are parts of stiles, 1300 and 1400 dover, areas of myrtlewood and hollywood"***

*- new resident, code name "merkin"*

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merkin: me and my girlfriend bought 3 properties on 27th street and jefferson for 110K. we rent a floor and one studio in an adjacent warehouse to a friend (male). ... we are not as set off by the crime around us as some people and personally if you cant deal with it here then you shouldn't live here. ... there are hot spots here and there are good blocks too. ... personally i don't like certain areas. one in particular is 29th street. but there are some really nice blocks near the development. on this side of 29th, taney street before the park and after master is a good healthy street. other streets that haunt me are parts of stiles, 1300 and 1400 dover, areas of myrtlewood and hollywood. ridge and cecil b. more is where we heard shootings happen last summer.

wysong: ... but would i raise kids in the heart of b'town, up merkin's way? - no. on my block? - yes.

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**niel<sup>xv</sup>:** We take our daughter up to Smith Playground (well, now Playhouse) in the East Park off 33rd St. in Strawberry Mansion. I don't have a problem with being in the park and along 33rd. If you wandered around too much in the neighborhoods you might attract the wrong sort of attention, but let's be fair, there are plenty of law-abiding people in the run-down neighborhoods too, they're not all going to come out and jump you.

**Editor's Comment:** There are hundreds of families living in these so-called "run-down," dangerous blocks. Is it neighborly to insult them? Is it wise? And, niel's message would have been less offensive to the community if he had described the law-breakers as the exception, instead of the rule."

**merkin:** when we first moved there we where gawked at but now people are getting used to white people. people wont bother you. the problem i think arrises when you make a deal of it and act like you are scared. if you walk with confidence you can walk almost anywhere. and on a bike you have no problems. it looks much worse then it looks.

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"I personally would probably not live north of Girard"

- new resident, code name "suzieq"

lexis518^{xvi}: I'll be attending Drexel in the fall as a graduate student and I am currently searching for apartments w/in the Art Museum and Brewerytown areas. I'm wondering if these areas are safe

suzieq: We live near 29th in Brewerytown and we are happy there. You will find the areas around 27th and Brown quite different from Girard Ave. and 29th St - Girard is termed by many here as a border between Fairmount and N. Philly. I personally would probably not live north of Girard (although its improving and many people do live there and feel it is not unsafe) ... There is a place for rent on our street, south of Girard and Poplar at 30th - let me know if you want details.

dukeboards^{xvii}: What's the deal with the kids at Eakins Oval in front of the Art Museum? They have handwritten signs about a basketball team or something but no adults anywhere. Any chance they're legitimate? If not, why aren't the cops chasing them away??

28thandpoplar: Are they black? They must be the same ones I saw IN THE FOUNTAIN!!

Editor's Comment: Once race is introduced into this discussion, the tone of the discussion becomes heated and hateful.

sparco: Never ever have I or will I give money to people panhandling like that! Basketball uniforms my a\$\$!

greenstdude: It's a scam. I can't believe the cops let them stand in the middle of the road doing this crap. Tell them to SCRAM!

thatguy: I was in my car jamming out to some tunes with windows closed. This kid, maybe 12 yrs old comes up and ... decides to start pounding on my window. I rolled down the window and yelled "GET THE **** OFF MY CAR!" and he refused to back off. I can't believe the attitude these little punks have. Take caution when near them, wouldn't be surprised if they are carrying weapons. Next time ... I'll be calling the cops.

Editor's Comment: How does "pounding on a window" equate to "getting on" a car? Wasn't he just knocking on a window to get the attention of a driver who was "jamming out"? Did he refuse to "back off" or was he stunned by the histrionics? Is *thatguy* just exaggerating, so that he can rationalize his hostility?

bernie25: these kids probably wont be able to graduate junior high. so i guess they are trying to learn a trade early on.

bubbasammyiii: Hey j-offs, let's not forget that they are kids. Given your username, 28thandPoplar has a lot of nerve asking, "were they black?" They're just kids. If they are "scamming" save your useless comments for their parents. Otherwise, how about offering some evidence that they are not fundraising for their uniforms? I wonder what you (again) j-offs would write if it were a bunch of white kids asking for the same. I have a hunch this thread wouldn't exist.

fleadog^{xviii}: I go by that corner when I drive up 29th, then hang a left onto Master to head down to B-town sq where i live. There are blighted streets of homes that look light war-torn Beirut, just a couple blocks away. I personally wouldnt feel

safe at night if I had to park only farther than a short distance off of 29th, which is actually a major thoroughfare street.

zur^{xix}: This was something I made [a map depicting where the "good" people live (the African-American neighborhoods) and the "bad" people live (the white neighborhoods)] for a new resident of Fairmount who didn't understand why the random crime will never stop. There's too many impoverished neighborhoods withing walking distance of Fairmount. and the wealth gap makes Fairmount's wealthy residents easy targets. ... Two thing will stop it. Gentrification of areas north to act as a buffer..(or kinda like pushing someone in front of you to take the blow)

Editor's Comment: Actually, the poor are far more likely to be victimized in every community of the city. Zur's statement is just another example of the hostility and incorrect data that racist sentiments generate.

"have the fake ipod explode with anthrax instead. That'll really teach them."

- code name "elasticpurejoy"

livrun^{xx}: [a female jogger recounts how she nearly had her ipod stolen by "a group of 6-8 african american kids between the ages of 8-14" while she jogged along Kelley Drive.]

raider.adam: Carry pepper spray on you. A shot of that in their eyes will definitely make them think twice about trying it again. ... Vigilantism within legal bounds is what we seem to have to resort to.

elasticpurejoy: Keep the real ipod tucked inside your shorts. Have a decoy ipod on the outside that is very visible. The decoy can have a dye pack like the ones used in bank robberies. When it is pulled off the strap it will detonate in 30 seconds. ... Start taking them out one at a time

raider.adam: Then have the fake ipod explode with anthrax instead. That'll really teach them.

unclecranky: Don't they sell personal Tazers? If so that would be great.....As the moron is doing the Ickey Shuffle in front of his friends with your iPod you could give him a blast with the Tazer.

Tenzo: Use of non-leathal force is illegal in Philly. You can't buy a tazer or stun gun.

Illiniwek: Well, make it a pistol then. And be lethal.

"I honestly was going to pick the scrawny kid up and stuff him in a garbage can"

- new resident, code name "fleadog"

FleaDog: I was jogging once earlier this summer and a group of ~5 young black teens were off to the side (not too far) throwing rocks :eek: at folks going by... As i approached, they did it to me ... I honestly was going to pick the scrawny kid up and stuff him in a garbage can he was standing next to so he could feel even more of what it's like to be a piece of sh** that he was acting like.. idiots... I hope they do it again... I'll be waiting to teach them a lesson.

Editor's Comment: Why are these gentrifiers talking about seriously injuring wayward children? This evokes the race-bating "super-predator" notions

applied to African-American youth in the 80's. Nowhere in the blogs are there discussions of violently harming white wayward youth.

~~~~~

**merkin**<sup>xxi</sup>: what is the bar at 29th and stiles?

**fairmounterpolo**: a male nurse renovated it. put some decent money into it. ... trying to make it a touch "upscale"-but it is just attracting the locals with their long white t-shirts and hooded sean jean parkas.

**merkin**: alright then, lace up those timbs, hoody up and venture north( or south for me).

~~~~~

sparco^{xxii}: ... if I need a stick of butter I won't be walking up to one of my XXXL white t-shirt wearing sippin' on a forty neighbors and actually, I prefer coral V-necks and a soy chai latte hold the whip cream.

merkin: oh yeah, peps gotta reprazent and pack for protection, glocks welcome [to a party he was planning].

Editor's Comment: Why resort to stereotypes? The obvious contempt for the young men in the neighborhood is regrettable and revealing.

~~~~~

*"Is it too late to put a fence up separating North Phila from civilized people."*

- code name "sideshowb"

**gorilla**<sup>xxiii</sup>: [Commenting on the shooting outside the New Pearl Theater during opening night] the solution is simple: let no black people into the movies.

**sideshowb**: Is it too late to put a fence up separating North Phila from civilized people. It is absolutly disgusting how the people of the part of the city & the city gov't just continue to let things "go".

**zur**: I was going to bet people in the first thread about how long until somebody gets shot. My over/under was a month... I woulda lost...

**kenfmt**: I am legitimately suprised anyone would go to Temple and any parents would let their kid live on campus there.

**Editor's Comment**: Could Klansmen have sounded more rabid, ill-informed and anti-African-American? (Note that there were later, ambiguous attempts by **gorilla** to discount his remarks as humor.)

## V. Quotes - Good Character of *Nearby Long-Time Residents*

In contrast to fearing their neighbors as a mass of unseen people, there is a parallel sense that immediate neighbors are extremely welcoming.

~~~~~

gorilla^{xxiv}: someone broke into a house of mine under construction... they ended up taking copper pipes. Crap like this happens all the time... on buildings under construction. Anyway they caught the outlaw after one of the nieghbors came forward and ID'd him.

~~~~~

**raider.adam**<sup>xxv</sup>: the 2100 block of Master is excellent block ... the people are pretty good and half the block is related to each other and have lived there for ranges from 10 - 40 years.

~~~~~

sandfury^{xxvi}: [29th & Girard] I find the people (even the wasted ones) to be friendly and not interested in harming anyone except perhaps themselves.

suzieq: I know many of the Poplar people on 29th and 30th and they're cool people, friendly etc.

VI. Quotes - A Glimpse of Things to Come?

The thread below captures one of the leading gentrifiers, *sparco*, demonstrating extraordinary and profound ignorance of the Black Cowboys. They were an important and unique part of Brewerytown for several decades – until the Redevelopment Authority, under the direction of Councilman Darrell Clarke and Mayor John Street, seized their stables through eminent domain, evicting them almost overnight. AABRA's plans for renovating the stables for humane and educational purposes were summarily rejected. Local politicians bowed to developers Westrum and Pennrose by destroying part of our culture so that developers would profit and their projects would gentrify Brewerytown.

"I used to see them all the time. They were quite a fixture there for years."

- code name "topcat"

Just as these bloggers know little about what preceded them and speak fondly of the same community of horses and cowboys that they would likely hold in contempt if they still resided across the street from the new Westrum homes, would future residents speak fondly of the once proud community of African-Americans and modest income families who once owned and rented virtually all of Brewerytown? Will we allow our removal and such false, self-serving remembrances of us to occur? Join AABRA today and strategize for a brighter future for all of us.

~~~~~

**sparco**<sup>xxvii</sup>: One late afternoon a few weeks ago I heard hooves clacking away, I look up and see 4 horses being ridden down 31st street! I was so surprised! The only horses I've seen in Philly ever are in OldCity. Now, the other night around 9pm I saw two horses being ridden up 31st just north of Girard and turned east on Jefferson... it was very peculiar to say the least.

**niel**: Those are the urban cowboys - sometimes referred to as the "black cowboys" - most likely. They did have stables on the land Westrum is now developing. I guess it was technically illegal - kind of like they were squatting - but they were a beloved fixture in the neighborhood for many years. I don't know where they relocated the stable to.

**Editor's Comment**: The stables were 100% legal, the Black Cowboys rented, not squatted.

**topcat**: I used to see them all the time. Sometimes twenty or more riding around Fairmount Park. They were quite a fixture there for years. I heard them refereed to as 'The Posse' or 'The Black Cowboys' Always tipped their hats as they rode by. They were kind of cool.



**niel:** I saw them this summer on Lemon Hill - well, one, at least, with some teenage kids riding with him. ... lots of kids came running over to take a look. It was pretty cool.

**dagmar:** Yeah, I would see them on Penna. Ave. alot when I lived there. That was another one of my favorite things. I thought it was pretty cool. I haven't seen them lately, tho'.

~~~~~

VII. Conclusion

AABRA has presented the above excerpts to inform its members and the greater North Philadelphia community that others have declared a kind of economic and cultural war on us. We must answer this call NOW. Please join AABRA by calling 215-769-3333!

Bingo in the Fall

In mid-fall (date to be announced shortly), AABRA CDC will resume its first-rate afternoon of bingo fundraisers every Saturday, from 3 PM to 6:30 PM, at 3117 Master St. Doors open at 1:30 PM. Proceeds benefit AABRA CDC's community rebuilding efforts. The biggest jackpot in memory in Brewerytown, \$1,060.00, was won on February 17, 2007. For more information on bingo, call 215-769-3333.



Bingo at Songhai City Cultural Center

GME Youth Basketball Classic (cont'd from page 1)

Teams from West Philadelphia and West Poplar joined six North Philadelphia teams in a dazzling exhibition of athletic talent and sportsmanship. AABRA recorded the games and is preparing a DVD of the action. An AABRA spokesperson recalled "What I will remember most is that these young people played with intensity and honor whether they were 20 points up or 20 points down. Their character was extraordinary."



Team photo of the "Burgundy" – in their Championship T-shirts

Sponsors

We would like to thank all of the sponsors for their generous contributions of time and/or money to make the inaugural Get Money Entertainment Summer Classic a tremendous success for the young people who participated, our communities and the city as a whole. This partnership allowed all participants to demonstrate that too much attention is being focused on youth violence and not enough on what extraordinary people our youth really are.

The full list of sponsors is: AABRA (2836 W. Girard Ave.), All Aboard Seafood (2825 W. Girard Ave.), Mellon Green Realty, Marc Baxter, Seals Construction, Derrick El, BAM Records, George Johnson, Lee's Sneakers (2735 W. Girard Ave.), Dave "Smiley" Porter, Gary "G Luv" James, Al Alston, Songhai City Cultural Center (3117 Master Street), Taz Freeman, Get Money Entertainment.

Team Photos

The remaining seven teams in the league, all of which performed with great skill, determination and discipline, are shown below in their team photos. (Note that Green did not take a photo and is represented by a photo taken in a game with Burgundy.

Orange



Dark Blue



Grey



Light Blue



Red



Yellow



Burgundy and Green



The Players

Teams/Players	MVP	Leading Scorers (pts)
(Light) Blue #8-Dave, 2-Niquon, 1-Amos, 7-John, 6-Brandon/Julian, 5-Melvin, 3-Hanif, 4-Devon	Amos	Hanif (15), Mello (12)
(Dark) Blue #7-Mark, 3-Jeannette/Leaky, 5-George, 6-Keem, 1-Malique, 4-Chris/Vance, 2-Michael, 8-Jon	Mark	Mark (17), John (12)
Burgundy #1-Fonta Porter, 6-Ameen Tanksley, 8-Nate Glover/Ress, 3-Zafir Williams, 2-Johnson Carrington, 5-Diquan Tanksley, 4-Hakeem, 7-Mike/Phil	Fonta	Zafir (26), Fonta (19)

Teams/Players	MVP	Leading Scorers (pts)
Green #2-Shawn, 1-Sean, 4-Llydale, 8-Andre/James, 3-Yahsir, 5-Aaron/Dev/Lawrence, 6-Josh/Amier, 7-Abdul/Jearl	Shawn	James (13), Abdul (10)
Grey 1-Najee, 5-Kareem, 6-Darrell/Braheim, 8-Wodi, 3-Anwar, 2-A.J., 7-Kurt, 4-Tyrese, Braheim, Keam	Kareem	Kareem (16), Darrell (15)
Orange #4-Jeremy Henderson, 7-Tayion, 1-Brandon, 6-Shadow, 3-P. McKennie, 5-T. Douglas, 2-A. McKennie/ Scooter/Raymond, 8-Shaikan Pitts	Shaikan	Shaikan (18), Jeremy (14)
Red #5-Wayne/Jay, 7-Jamil, 8-Duke/Demitrious, 3-Malik, 4-Mario, 2-Brandon, 6-Derrick/John, 1-Dante, 15-Muchie	Dante	Tay (21), Wayne (16)
Yellow 4-Booda, 3-Will, 7-Derrick, 6-Derell, 5-Mel, 2-Shizz, 8-Victor, 1-Hasaun	Melvin	Shizz (19), Victor (17)

Regular Season Team Standings

Each game of the regular season demonstrated athleticism and artistry. Below are the regular season final standings. Note that Burgundy was the only undefeated team.

Seed	Team	Wins-Losses
1	Burgundy	4-0
2	Yellow	3-1
3	Grey	3-1
4	Red	3-1
5	Light Blue	2-2
6	Dark Blue	1-3
7	Orange	0-4
8	Green	0-4

Playoffs – Brackets

	Saturday, 8/11/2007	Saturday, 8/11/2007	Sunday 8/12/2007
(1) Burgundy			
(8) Green			
(3) Grey			
(6) Dark Blue			
(2) Yellow			
(7) Orange			
(4) Red			
(5) Light Blue			

Burgundy

Grey

Yellow

Red

Burgundy 2 games - 1

Scenes

DVD's of the Summer Classic are available. Selected videos and photos are online at www.aabra.org/gmesc2007.

For additional information about Get Money Entertainment, AABRA or the other sponsors, please contact the AABRA office at 215-769-3333. AABRA offices are located at 2836 W. Girard Avenue.



Important Phone Numbers

Streets Department (cleaning, recycling, reporting illegal Dumping, traffic/street lights)	215-685-9010/6749
Report animal bites, strays	215-686-5560
Free child car seats (\$10 deposit)	215-685-7485
Free/low-cost health insurance	800-464-5437
Drug abuse & mental health help	888-545-2600
Help mentally ill relatives	800-950-6264
Mental health information packets	215-599-5176

Classifieds

Private Mailboxes. Keep nosy neighbors out of your business. \$10/mo 29 th /Girard. 215-236-7682	Apts. for Rent – Renovated 2BR - \$825, Studio/Effic, new kitchen - \$450, 29 th /Girard. 215-769-3333
Soul Food Catering. Mouth-watering fish, chicken, beef, greens & vegetarian dishes. Great prices, amazing food. Butter's Soul Food To Go! , 2821 W. Girard Avenue. 215-235-4724	
Color Copies. 49 cents special! B&W copies–10 cents! Restrictions apply. Limited time only. 2836 W. Girard Ave. 215-769-3333	

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Songhai Center Hosts Events

While several outstanding arts events have been hosted by the Songhai City Cultural Center (3117 Master Street) over the last year, including music, theater, spoken word, you can also rent the Center for weddings, birthdays, etc. Please call 215-769-3333 for details.

Endnotes – References for Lead Story

- ⁱ From: <http://www.phillyblog.com/philly/showthread.php?t=37941>. Starting date: 6/3/2007
Title: 1300 Block of N. 31st - Brewerytown Townhouses???
- ⁱⁱ From: <http://www.phillyblog.com/philly/showthread.php?t=15061>. Starting date: 2/13/2006
Title: Is Brewerytown really up and coming?
- ⁱⁱⁱ From: <http://www.phillyblog.com/philly/showthread.php?t=6413>. Starting date: 3/8/2007
Title: The beginnings of a N. Broad Renaissance?
- ^{iv} From: <http://www.phillyblog.com/philly/showthread.php?t=37657>. Starting date: 5/29/2007
Title: ERA bar makeover
- ^v From: <http://www.phillyblog.com/philly/showthread.php?t=38812>. Starting date: 6/17/2007
Title: cafe at 29/Master - would anybody go?
- ^{vi} From: <http://www.phillyblog.com/philly/showthread.php?t=39070>. Starting date: 6/22/2007
Title: Area near 20-21st & Master/Seybert
- ^{vii} From: <http://www.phillyblog.com/philly/showthread.php?t=40352>. Starting date: 7/15/2007
Title: 29th and poplar
- ^{viii} From: <http://www.phillyblog.com/philly/showthread.php?t=38812>. Starting date: 6/17/2007
Title: cafe at 29/Master - would anybody go?
- ^{ix} From: <http://www.phillyblog.com/philly/showthread.php?t=38812>. Starting date: 6/17/2007
Title: cafe at 29/Master - would anybody go?
- ^x From: <http://www.phillyblog.com/philly/showthread.php?t=12532&page=8>. Starting date: 11/15/2005
Title: brewerytown square
- ^{xi} From: <http://www.phillyblog.com/philly/showthread.php?t=37941>. Starting date: 6/3/2007
Title: 1300 Block of N. 31st - Brewerytown Townhouses???
- ^{xii} From: <http://www.phillyblog.com/philly/showthread.php?t=12214>. Starting date: 11/6/2005
Title: moving to poplar - lots of questions

- ^{xiii} From: <http://www.phillyblog.com/philly/showthread.php?t=31375>. Starting date: 2/10/2007
Title: Could a "suburbanite" make it in the city?
- ^{xiv} From: <http://www.phillyblog.com/philly/showthread.php?t=15061>. Starting date: 2/13/2006
Title: Is Brewerytown really up and coming?
- ^{xv} From: <http://www.phillyblog.com/philly/showthread.php?t=2906>. Starting date: 7/14/2004
Title: Safety just outside Fairmount Park?
- ^{xvi} From: <http://www.phillyblog.com/philly/showthread.php?t=40626>. Starting date: 7/19/2007
Title: Questions about Apts. around Art Museum and Brewerytown
- ^{xvii} From: <http://www.phillyblog.com/philly/showthread.php?t=38889>. Starting date: 6/19/2007
Title: Panhandling Kids?
- ^{xviii} From: <http://www.phillyblog.com/philly/showthread.php?t=38812>. Starting date: 6/17/2007
Title: cafe at 29/Master - would anybody go?
- ^{xix} From: <http://www.phillyblog.com/philly/showthread.php?t=32761>. Starting date: 3/7/2007
Title: Broke into my car
- ^{xx} From: <http://www.phillyblog.com/philly/showthread.php?t=23447>. Starting date: 9/1/2006
Title: almost robbed running along kelly drive
- ^{xxi} From: <http://www.phillyblog.com/philly/showthread.php?t=15061>. Starting date: 2/13/2006
Title: Is Brewerytown really up and coming?
- ^{xxii} From: <http://www.phillyblog.com/philly/showthread.php?t=26557>. Starting date: 11/2/2006
Title: Life in the Wild Westrum
- ^{xxiii} From: <http://www.phillyblog.com/philly/showthread.php?t=28145>. Starting date: 12/7/2006
Title: New Pearl Theatre - that didn't take long
- ^{xxiv} From: <http://www.phillyblog.com/philly/showthread.php?t=36443>. Starting date: 5/9/2007
Title: Scrap metal vandals caught by police at 31st and Jefferson
- ^{xxv} From: <http://www.phillyblog.com/philly/showthread.php?t=39070>. Starting date: 6/22/2007
Title: Area near 20-21st & Master/Seybert
- ^{xxvi} From: <http://www.phillyblog.com/philly/showthread.php?t=40352>. Starting date: 7/15/2007
Title: 29th and poplar
- ^{xxvii} From: <http://www.phillyblog.com/philly/showthread.php?t=21222>. Starting date: 07-19-2006
Title: Horse sightings in Brewerytown



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