

# The Frankford Gazette

Serving the Great Neighborhood of Frankford in Philadelphia, PA

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VOL. I, ISSUE III—FRIDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2011

## Something Sweet Has Come to Frankford

By Michelle Feldman, Frankford CDC

The Frankford CDC will be spotlighting a business each month in the Gazette. We are very excited about this series – and welcome suggestions for businesses to highlight! First up: Denby's Sweet Sensations at 4428 Frankford Ave.

If you haven't already heard, there's a new shop in town. Therice Denby opened her soul food and specialty cake business at 4428 Frankford Avenue this past May – and in those short few months she's taken the business corridor by storm with her affordable home cooking and southern hospitality.

Though Therice has only been in Frankford for the summer, she has been a cook, baker and entrepreneur for her entire life. She grew up surrounded by southern cooking, but is able to do so much more! Though her collard greens, corn bread, barbecued chicken and macaroni and



cheese are to die for, give her a little bit of notice and she'll whip up what you happen to be craving. Baked goods, however, are her specialty and passion. She can make a cake that looks like a pocket book or a car – or whatever your special occasion may require. In the last few weeks alone, Therice has not only made multiple wedding cakes, but fully catered the events as well.

Beyond her talent as a chef and baker, Therice Denby is a savvy businesswoman. Therice was one of three women to win the Enterprising

Woman Business Plan Competition hosted by National Penn Bank, and is all over the social networking world. Find her on facebook at

[www.facebook.com/Denbys.Sweet.Sensations](http://www.facebook.com/Denbys.Sweet.Sensations), or visit her website at [www.denbyssoulfood-bakery.com](http://www.denbyssoulfood-bakery.com) You can also just pick up the phone and give her a call at 215.613.5717.

All of this hard work and delicious food is already creating quite a buzz for Therice. She's even been attracting patrons from outside of Frankford. So head on over to Denbys Sweet Sensations Thursday through Saturday from 11:00a to 7:00p, and from 12:00n to 5:00p on Sunday, to try something different and delicious that won't break your wallet (and keep in mind that her hours may lengthen as the fall stretches in to spring!). We at the Frankford CDC guarantee you'll leave her shop wanting more.

## Those Friends Must be Made of Steel

By Bob Smiley

September 13, 2011 must be a record of some kind. I was standing on the corner of Frankford and Bustleton (SEPTA FTC) at 9AM waiting for Senator Casey and Mayor Nutter to open the farmers market officially (unofficially it has been open since late July). Then at 1Pm I was over at Frankford Friends to see Mayor Nutter and Councilwoman Sanchez speak at the construction kick off for the addition to Frankford Friends School. That is a lot of politics all in one day.

Historic is what I call it to see construction taking place in Frankford. The mayor noted that in his remarks. As I stood there listening to him and councilwoman Sanchez, I was thinking of how tough these Frankford Friends must be to think that they could buck the trend of abandonment and actually build something here in Frankford. It took vision, courage, and determination. As Penny Colgan-Davis, the principal, said, it also took some help.



Getting settled down at Frankford Friends

Mayor Nutter, State Representative Tony Payton, Councilwoman Maria Quinones-Sanchez all received thanks

Continued on the next page

## Those Friends Must be Made of Steel (cont'd.)

as well as several folks from the business community. Maria spoke not only as City Councilperson but also as the parent of a former student.

This school is a tremendous asset to the community. It is an institution that any community would want in its midst. We are lucky enough to have it and the school has renewed its commitment to Frankford by expanding



Mayor Nutter meets the students

HERE. They did not move to the suburbs or to a different part of the city. They are here to stay.

No community can attract new families without good schools. We are blessed to have Frankford Friends here. You can see a few pictures of what was a beautiful afternoon below. However, you can watch a video of the highlight of the proceedings. Don't miss it.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=jO\\_S2tnQ\\_\\_c](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jO_S2tnQ__c)

## Hope 4 Philly Report

By Irish Princess

We had a really nice time. We got there about (Hope4philly) 10:15 and they didn't start registering people until 11, we were third or fourth in line. They had probably close to a thousand school bags, all of my children received one. They had hot dogs, pizza rolls, and a whole lot of different pastries. Then they had boxes upon boxes of Herr's chips, every variety under the sun, and allowed people to take bags of each kind. My children grabbed up one bag of each kind available. They had a table of different over the counter medicines, and we were allowed to take three of whatever we needed off

of the table. Each family was given two bags of groceries. There were nurses there from major insurance companies doing health screenings. There was a table of clothing, shoes, and purses to go through. They had clowns, and bounce houses, and a raffle for the kids giving away games and bikes. There was free hair cuts, I got one for my son. It was really nice for the community and every volunteer there was extremely nice and professional.

After we left there we headed over to Grace Brethren Crossroads Church for the children's olympics program and their clothing drive, and I was

able to get more winter clothes for my kids.

Then we finished up the day at Overington where my daughter won first place in her age group for her chalk art design. It was a busy but fun Saturday. I am going to shoot an e-mail to Hope 4 Philly to thank them for the event they had, and to the pastor of the church organizing the event in the area. I saw him in action and he was truly amazing. Living in Frankford these events truly are a blessing for those of us who do not have the financial means to provide for our families the way we should be able to.

## About the Frankford Gazette

This is a print edition of some of the articles available online. Go to [www.frankfordgazette.com](http://www.frankfordgazette.com) to get full details.

**Editor:** Bob Smiley

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**Print Layout:** Tim Wisniewski

**Printing provided by:** State Rep. Tony Payton, Jr.

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# October Crime Prevention

By Captain Bachmayer, 15th Police District

The Captain and police officers of the 15th district would like to advise the readers of the Frankford Gazette that burglaries are up in the 15th district. We would like to take an opportunity to advise you of some simple “burglary prevention tips” to help you not become a victim.

- Lock your doors and windows. In most cases, burglars are getting into a home through open doors or windows.
- Make your house look occupied, even if its not.
- Get to know your neighbors and if you see any suspicious activity/persons call 911 and give a detailed description.
- If you are the victim of a burglary do not clean up, call 911 and be prepared to give police a detailed list of the items that were taken.



Any questions or concerns, contact the 15th district at 215-686-3150/51 or email police.co\_15@phila.gov

# Gazette Book Review

By Bob Smiley

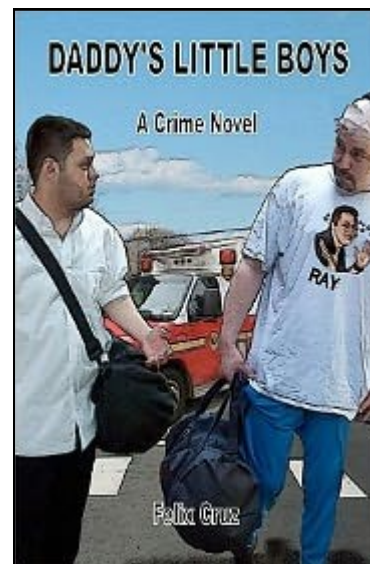
OK, you may wonder what possessed us to take on a book review. Well the story is that the author, Felix Cruz, is a local guy (no not Frankford but one of those neighborhoods to the North) and he contacted me a few months ago. We emailed back and forth. I do enjoy stories about Frankford. This story does in fact wander in and out and about the neighborhood so it fits right in to our mission here.

*Daddy's Little Boys* by Felix Cruz is a both funny and deadly. There is a lot going on and if you enjoy plots where you can't see what's coming around the next corner, then this story is for you. Two brothers, Paul and Eddie Flores find their father has died sud-

denly. They also find out more than they ever wanted to know about him. They are trapped into a hunt for missing money and that hunt brings them to a better understanding of their father and ultimately themselves.

The characters in the book are right out of the streets of Philadelphia covered in grit and a fair amount of profanity. There is no ethnic group untouched. The heroes are unlikely heroes at best. Felix has obviously traveled the streets of the city quite a bit.

When the boys over at the Frankford Film Office read this they are going to want to get it made.



You can get the book on Amazon and Barnes & Noble. I enjoyed the Kindle edition on the iPad.

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# The Terrifying Railroad Staple Machine Guns

By Peter Dawson

One of the centers of kid activity in Frankford in the 1960s was “The Lot,” the tract of ground between Rutland Street, Foulkrod Street, Castor Avenue and Harrison Street. Back then, a railroad track ran along the top of the embankment on the Castor Avenue side of “The Lot,” from a small bridge at the Castor Avenue / Harrison Street corner to a small bridge spanning Foulkrod Street between Castor and Rutland. In that era, small freight trains still used the track to carry goods in box cars down to what was left of industrial activity down in the Kensington and Allegheny area.

In the early 1960s, the tennis courts you see there today did not exist. Instead, along Harrison Street, there was just a large open field where we used to play touch or tackle football. Between the open field and the railroad embankment was the section known as “The Weeds,” the real center of our collective juvenile attention. The area called “The Weeds” was comprised of a vast, dense forest of the tallest, greenest-smelling ragweed you ever encountered, punctuated by chouchun trees, that invasive tropical looking species with woody stems from China, Ailanthus altissima, seen growing everywhere in urban areas these days, which we called “bow-and-arrow trees” because that is what we used to make out of them. We walked

trails and tunnels through the ragweed forest which took us to interesting piles of debris dumped in the weeds by contractors, and to the “forts” we dug into the ground and covered-over with contractor debris.

On the other side of “The Lot” was the large, neat organic garden of hardworking Old Man Schepis, and

down there and manufacture bows and arrows and build forts and set-off homemade explosives in holes (to insure that shrapnel shot upwards, not sideways). We weren’t very safe. But, we survived.

There was a lot of World War II army surplus in Philly in those days. Dennis and Daniel Grassi, who used to

live up on Large Street, would show up with an astonishing array of genuine surplus weaponry (all rendered inoperable before sale) – M-1 rifles, Browning Automatic Rifles with bipod legs to support the barrel, a bazooka, hand grenades and, on one occasion, a Thompson machine gun with the circular ammo container. Everyone wanted to hold the Thompson. Nowadays, someone carrying such items in public in our terrorism-sensitive society could not avoid arrest. Back then, the owners of such an “arsenal” were the envy of every kid in Frankford. We would show up at “The Lot” with our Army surplus weaponry, try to talk the Grassi boys into a trade for the day, and stage wars. A few of us would always reluctantly consent to being Nazis.

We loved climbing the embankment up to the railroad tracks. Before hang gliding became an American “thing,” we tried like the dickens to achieve flight from the top of that embankment, with homemade fixed wings and giant kites. One of us kids – one

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## City of Philadelphia MuralArtsProgram IMAGINING FRANKFORD

In collaboration with the Frankford community and muralist Cesar Viveros, the City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program is currently developing a series of murals along Frankford Avenue between Kensington Avenue and Bridge Street that will explore the past achievements, present developments, and promising future of Philadelphia’s Frankford area.

### HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED:

- Look out for meeting announcements
- Record on video and share your experiences of Frankford  
(contact us to sign up for this opportunity)
- Give us your feedback

**CONTACT Netanel Portier, Project Manager**  
[netanel@muralarts.org](mailto:netanel@muralarts.org) / 215-685-0725

[www.muralarts.org](http://www.muralarts.org)

beyond that “The Garages,” the complex of rented brick garages fronting on Rutland Street near Foulkrod, whose walls can be seen to be collapsing inward today.

We used to don our sneakers, and yell to our parents on Saturdays, “Mom! Dad! We’re going to go play at ‘The Lot!’” And then we would go

Continued on the next page

## The Terrifying Railroad Staple Machine Guns (cont'd.)

of the guys from St. Martin's School on Oxford Circle, I don't remember exactly who – broke his leg in one of the crash landings. We never achieved flight. But we were happy.

The biggest thrill of all was stupidity multiplied by a hundred – hiding in the weeds along the railroad tracks, as close as possible to the railroad trains thundering by a few feet away, without being seen.

The reason why getting close to the train without being seen was a big thing in those days had nothing at all

to do with the very real danger being run over by a freight train. It was because of a rumor going around among the kids that railroad trains along that freight line were manned with cruel "railroad police" armed with frightening "staple machine guns" that could shoot out staples in a machine-gun-like fashion at kids caught playing near the trains. The rumor was that railroad personnel had a kind of "license to staple," and would cover us with painful staples, legally, at the drop of a hat. Once I was over at Grassi's with Den and Dan and I heard Mrs. Grassi warn

her sons about the railroad police with their staple guns. Aghast, I thought, "So! It's true!"

When first one kid and then another courageously crawled into the weeds next to the tracks while a freight train passed, and then came back without being stapled, he was a hero for weeks. Finally I did it, and I repeated the story of my bravado to friends while some of them stared at me open-mouthed. And I guess that used-up my allotted 15 minutes of fame.

## Free Frankford Family Movie Night

By The Frankford CDC

State Representative Tony Payton, the Frankford CDC, Northeast EPIC Stakeholders, and Friends of Overington Park are hosting a free Frankford family movie night. Join us on Friday, October 21st, 7:00p, in Overington Park, as we watch Johnny Depp in Rango! We'll also be raffling off a free DVD player, and refreshments will be served!

- When: Friday, October 21st, 7:00 pm
- Where: Overington Park (4600 Leiper Street)
- Sponsored by: State Rep. Tony Payton, the Frankford CDC, Northeast EPIC Stakeholders, Sugar & Spice, WISE Potato Chips, Friends of Overington Park



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# Growing Up in Frankford Part 2

By Lyle (Corky) Larkin (continued from Sept 2011 issue)

Frankford Avenue was paved with cobblestones (So many streets were paved this way) at this time and was the main shopping area for the north-east portion of Philadelphia. Within a four block area you could do your grocery shopping, take care of your dry cleaning, buy a new pair of shoes or have the old ones repaired while you waited. One of the places was named, *Vitacolona's Shoe Repair*. These shoe repair stores had sit down booths about three feet high with red leather seats and each booth had a door. The idea was to give the customer a feeling of privacy while having their shoes off. The "Cobbler" would be sure to have magazines or a newspaper handy to keep you occupied while he repaired your shoes.

After getting your shoes repaired you could stop in one of the many soda fountains and get a banana split, chocolate nut sundae or root beer float. At one of the candy stores you could purchase some penny candies, Grade A Bars, Snowcaps, Maltballs, Licorice

Babies, Coconut Potatoes, Mary Janes, candy cigarettes, cinnamon potatoes, jaw breakers, pills on a strip or rock candy or perhaps just go down the long row of glass gallon jars that stood on their sides with shiny metal lids, and under the careful scrutiny of the shop owner, fill a bag with "penny candy".

You could go to any one of the many car dealers and purchase a Packard, Kaiser- Fraiser, Studabaker, Hudson, Henry J, Willys or a Nash. Where are these cars today and don't you wish you had kept yours? How about a beer for a nickel, a new suit at Krass Brothers or Edco Youth Center, or a dress at Charming Shoppe, fill your prescription at Antwissles Apothecary at Harrison St.

Perhaps it was time to get your hair cut at one of the many fine Barbers. All you had to do was look for one of those red and white candy striped poles out front and you knew you were at the right place. Inside, the first thing that hit you was the aroma of

"Bay Rum" cologne. These shops were always immaculate with their black and white checkered tile floors and big red leather special chairs. There was always one reserved for the kids at the end with a booster seat that had chrome handles to straddle the chair.

The barbers took not only great pride in their work but also in their uniforms. They wore white smocks, heavily starched and never the same one twice. When the kids finished having their hair cut they almost always got a Tootsie Pop as a reward for sitting still. Buy some flowers, have lunch, get new glasses, shoot pool, go to the movies or have a cut stitched up at Frankford Hospital. Lastly you could pay your respects to a departed friend on Harrison St., which somehow became the street of Funeral Parlors for this particular neighborhood.

Then there was always the old man with an organ grinder mounted on a pole, which acted as a stand for him to rest the organ on while he turned the hand crank that played the music. He

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walked up and down the avenue with a trained monkey riding on his shoulder. This cute little animal had a collar around his neck with a long chain attached. The monkey's outfit was a pair of red and black checkered pants, red vest, yellow silk shirt and black top-hat. The monkey would dance to the organ music while the old man turned the crank and when the music was over, the monkey would beg for coins from the crowd by walking around with its hand extended. As you put a coin in his hand, he would tip his hat and give the "Loot" to his owner.

To be continued...

# Meet Photography Studio Philadelphia Productions

By Jim Smiley

I haven't been quite able to catch up to anyone at Philadelphia Productions, a photography studio that's popped up under my very nose over in East Frankford, but that hasn't stopped me from doing some internet sleuthing to learn a few things of about this dynamic bunch. According to their blog, partners Colin Lenton, Steve Boyle and Nell Hoving got tired of working out of home offices and decided to pick up their own studio space, and apparently, they landed in Frankford.

I'm gathering from the photos on their website that they moved into the Old Mill, part of the Matt Papajohn complex on Tackawana Street which they say was on October 1st of last year and the likes of Philadelphia Magazine, they're no slouches.

In fact, Chris Wink, who's departure as a Frankford resident still wounds me to this day, brought the entire Technically Philly team to Frankford recently to have their professional photos done by Philadelphia Studio partner Colin Lenton.



Chris Wink being immortalized at the studio in East Frankford  
Photo courtesy of Colin M. Lenton

One of these days, I'm going to corner this crew and find out what on earth could have brought them to Frankford. Until then, keep taking those great shots guys!

Visit them at [www.philadelphiaproductions.com](http://www.philadelphiaproductions.com)

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***We've revamped the employment section of our website for both job seekers and employers! Check out [frankfordcdc.com/workforce](http://frankfordcdc.com/workforce), and contact us at 215-743-6580 with questions or to get in on the action!***

*Want to learn more about the Frankford CDC, or become involved? Give us a call at the number above!*

WWW.FRANKFORDGAZETTE.COM

# Coming Up in Frankford

- **West Frankford Town Watch Neighborhood Cleanup**  
Sat, October 8, 9am – 12pm | Old News Gleaner Site, 1700 Block of Margaret St  
This building has been empty for some time and has become a trash dump. Come out and join us to help clean up this lot.
- **15th PDAC Community Safety Day**  
Sat, October 8, 10am – 1pm | Mastery Charter School Smedley Elementary, 1790 Bridge St
- **Mastery Charter Smedley Elementary School PTA Flea Market**  
Sat, October 8, 10am – 2pm | Wissinoming Park  
Contact Kathy, 215-839-2333 to reserve space, rain date 10/15/2011
- **Frankford Second Saturday Festival**  
Sat, October 8, 12pm – 5pm | 4600 block of Frankford Avenue
- **Historical Society of Frankford Program**  
Tue, October 11, 7:30pm – 9:00pm | 1507 Orthodox St  
Colonial Cider Brewing Frankford's Revolution Cider, Jonathan Gradman, Brewmaster. The cider brewed in Colonial America – and today at Frankford's Revolution Cider – was the most widely consumed beverage with meals in America. Meet with the brew master and learn of the history and brewing of this historic alcoholic libation.
- **15th Police District PSA 2 Meeting**  
Thu, October 13, 7pm – 8pm | St. Timothy's, 3501 Levick Street  
Includes area of Frankford North of Bridge Street.
- **Imagining Frankford**  
Thu, October 13, 6:00pm – 7:30pm | Denby's Sweet Sensations, 4428 Frankford Avenue  
Master planning meeting for a new series of murals along Frankford Avenue
- **Northwood Civic Association Meeting**  
Tue, October 18, 7pm – 8pm | St. James Lutheran Church, at Castor Avenue and Pratt St
- **Movie Night at Overington Park**  
Fri, October 21, 7pm – 9pm | Overington Park, Leiper and Orthodox Sts.  
Hosted by FCDC, EPIC, Rep. Payton, & Friends of Overington Park. Please bring your blanket./lawn chairs and family out for a night of fun. The movie Ringo will be shown. Movie time is 8pm, refreshments will be provided.
- **Gun Buy Back**  
Sat, October 22, 10am – 2pm | St. Joachim Parish Hall, Griscom and Church Sts  
Sponsored by 15th Police District Advisory Council – \$50 Shop Rite gift card in exchange for your guns.
- **Frankford Haunted History Tour**  
Sat, October 22, 4pm – 6pm | Gather at the Historical Society of Frankford 1507 Orthodox Street  
Admission \$6. Adult refreshments before & after the tour. T-Shirts provided. Reservations: mfeldman.fcdc@gmail.com 215-743-6580. Parking available in Frankford Friends lot (Orthodox St). Tour Sites & Sponsors: Historical Society of Frankford, St. Marks Church, Frankford Friends School, South Jersey Ghost Research, and Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary War Route-PA
- **15th Police District PSA 1 Meeting**  
Wed, October 26, 7pm – 8pm | Aria Health, 2nd Floor Conference Room, 4900 Frankford Ave  
PSA 1 Progress, Concerns and Action Plans for Frankford South of Bridge Street.
- **Northeast Philadelphia EPIC Stakeholders Group**  
Thu, October 27, 5:30pm – 7:30pm | Aria Health, 2nd Floor Conference Room, 4900 Frankford Ave  
Addressing issues of truancy, domestic violence, child safety and substance abuse.
- **Annual Fall Festival and Halloween Event**  
Sat, October 29, 12pm – 3pm | Overington Park, Leiper and Orthodox Streets