



Mount Airy Independent

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Electric Bikes Hit Mt. Airy's Streets

By PATRICK COBBS
Staff Writer

Mt. Airy resident Mike Carlson walked through the corner entrance and onto the bamboo floor at 550 West Carpenter Lane on Thursday, October 1, with a broad smile on his face. He met Afshin Kaighobady, wrench in hand, and a cheerful Marie Dilsizian, and the pair welcomed him to Mt. Airy's newest eco-business.

But it wasn't until he got a good look at the sleek new technology resting on that showroom floor that his eyes really popped. Carlson has some gray in his beard but you still might have thought: kid in a candy store.

Think again. This was more like kid in a new bike shop, only all these bikes run on batteries.

"Well, Mt. Airy is the place to sell them, I think," Carlson said to Kaighobady, owner of the newly opened Philly Electric Wheels. "I think Mt. Airy has enough people in the area that might be interested."

Mt. Airyites do seem well-trained on the ethics of low carbon impact modality. Ever since Kaighobady decided to open the business the most frequent question from his neighbors has been, "If I go downhill will it regenerate?" he said. Thank you, Prius.

But, no, most of the twenty or so models featured at the store do not regenerate on

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"Bodies" littered the ground at Cliveden of the National Trust on Saturday, October 3 during the annual re-enactment of 1777's Battle of Germantown. Redcoats battled Continentals to a draw in fierce fighting on the grounds 232 years ago, a turning point in the battle which initially saw the Americans driving the British before them. The weather threatened on Saturday but the noon and 3 p.m. battle re-enactments – and the Revolutionary Germantown Festival of which they were a part – were graced with clear skies. Photo by Sue Ann Rybak.

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Needs Grow, Stocks Shrink at City Food Banks

By PATRICK COBBS
Staff Writer

It was chilly in Vernon Park on the morning of September 30. People talked about it. Fall was here, and colder weather was coming. But the 150 arrivals that morning brought more than heavy coats. They needed their own bags, at least, or rolling tote carts, because they were there to put food on the table in the way increasing numbers of Philadelphians must do – through free giveaways of donated food.

Germantown residents Annie Foster, 78, and Rene Horton, 81, were among the crowd. They are regulars at the Wednesday Veterans United Free Food Program in the park. Both women said they would not be able to eat adequately if not for these weekly bulk giveaways.

"I'm glad they're here," said Foster. "I do come in and it helps a lot. I do appreciate this kind of thing."

By this time of year most emergency food reserves experience a cyclical low across the country – a combination of the end-of-summer growing season and a summer of feeding children who typically get free meals at school the rest of the year, according to William Clark, executive director of Philabundance, which provides the fresh food to Veterans United.

But it's worse this year. Thanks to the recession, high rates of unemployment, and the long delay in passing the state budget, area food agencies are particularly strapped. According to SHARE, which supplies emergency food cupboards across the city, most of those facilities are seeing a 30 to 60 percent increase in first-time

clients this fall.

The numbers at Vernon Park supported this trend. It was a publicized event meant to highlight the close of Hunger Action Month with a loud call for more food donations, but so many people showed up in need of food that Veterans United, which has run the Vernon Park food giveaway for the last five years, was taken completely by surprise.

"Don't leave! Stay here!" shouted volunteer Margaret Robinson to the crowd that stretched down one of the park's long walkways. "We don't have enough food for 150 people. We're going to get some more food."

If the situation wasn't so dire, it might have seemed almost scripted. At the other end of the podium, officials from State Representatives John Myers' (D, 201st) and Rosita Youngblood's (D, 198th) offices attended the event in place of their bosses who were called away for emergency work on the long delayed budget – a major factor holding up money to Philadelphia's food distribution agencies.

The system in the city is made up of a network of agencies including Philabundance, which handles fresh food, and SHARE, which handles storable food, and a number of other programs such as shelter and soup kitchen assistance through the Office of Supportive Housing, the Food Stamp program, the Women, Infant, Children or WIC program, summer feeding programs, free school lunches, and the Farmers Market Nutrition Program for Seniors.

Philabundance does not receive state funding, and SHARE is funded primarily with federal dollars, but when fully state-funded pro-

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