

Around the Square

FRIENDS OF RITTENHOUSE SQUARE



STATE of the SQUARE

President's Message

First of all, the story of the lights in the Square had a happy ending. Although we feared that state and city budget cuts would mean that we could not install our popular holiday light display, members of the Friends and many others came through with an outpouring of support.



IBEW 98 and IATSE Local 8 hang the lights

Donations ranged from \$10 to \$5,000. Every contribution was critical to our success. We wish we could thank each contributor individually, but since that is not possible, please know that we express a heartfelt THANK YOU to all those who cared enough to keep our traditional light display going.

Philadelphia Inquirer architecture critic **Inga Saffron** wrote an article on the possibility of the park going dark over the holidays, galvanizing an outpouring of concern and a flood of donations. **Rittenhouse Row** rallied to our side, holding a fundraiser called The Ball for the Balls at **D'Angelo's Ristorante Italiano** after the November membership meeting, and sending out a flyer with the line "Don't let the park go dark." I must single out **John J. Dougherty** and the **IBEW 98** and **Michael Barnes** at **IATSE Local 8** for providing free labor to install and un-install the lights. All contributions went into a designated fund, strictly for the holiday lights project.

In other news, our work with **Biederman Redevelopment Ventures** continues. **Dan Biederman** has completed a six-month study of the Square and made recommendations which we are now evaluating. One result of his work? The giant tent used for the Ball is now available for others to rent for the three nights after our gala. This opens up a major source of new revenue for the Friends. We are discussing new event procedures for the Square, as well as big new revenue-generating events that can take place during annual closings of 18th Street. Other possibilities include a concession on the west side of the park, a lighting spectacular on Rittenhouse Square buildings, and a licensing deal.

We have a new partnership with the juried **Rittenhouse Square Fine Arts Show**, June 4 – 6 and September 17 – 19, 2010. 18th Street will be closed both Saturdays.

It's a busy and exciting time for this organization. Come make your voices heard at our next membership meeting, **May 12 at 6 PM at The Rittenhouse Hotel**.

Yours Truly,

Wendy Rosen, President

