



# THE HILLTONE

Hiltonia Association

P.O. Box 7291

Trenton, NJ 08628

VOLUME SIX, NUMBER TWO

JUNE 1987

## New Assessments Due in August

# The Revaluation Blues Begin

By BEA SCALA-FISCHLER  
President, Hiltonia Association

Property taxes are nobody's favorite subject, but we're paying attention to this unpleasantry because the matter will soon become a crucial issue throughout the city as a result of the impending revaluation of all properties that is expected to take effect Aug. 1, 1988.

And needless to say, it doesn't look like good news.

New assessments -- at 100 percent of market value as required by state law -- will be issued on all properties in August of this year. In our neighborhood, that will mean five- and six-fold increases in many cases.

Because people are anxious about the result of revaluation, the Trenton Council of Civic Associations asked outgoing City Business Administrator Bill Guhl and incoming City Business Administrator Rick Porth to report on what taxpayers can expect. They attended the May 5 meeting, and what they said was not encouraging.

First, a little background for the novices. One's individual property tax liability is determined by multiplying each \$100 in value (as reflected by the assessment) by a specified tax rate. The tax rate is established by dividing the assessed value of all taxable property by the amount the city must raise to meet its budgetary needs. The current tax rate is \$15.11.

Rick Porth and Bill Guhl used as examples "typical" houses in Hiltonia and Chambersburg to illustrate what we can expect to happen.

In Chambersburg, for example, a house currently valued at \$9,000 could expect to be revalued at \$61,000. At the current assessment and tax rate, the tax liability on that property is \$1,359.90. The administrators made an educated guess that the tax

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# Taxes...

Cont. from Page 1

rate following the revaluation would decrease to \$4.53. With a \$61,000 assessment, the 1988-89 taxes on that property could go to \$2,763.30 -- roughly double the current tax.

It can be argued that \$2,763.30 is not an outrageous property tax liability (north of the Mason-Dixon line) on any middle-class home. Also, it is argued that anyone who can pay between \$60,000 and \$70,000 for a house at current interest rates can expect to pay that amount in property taxes. So ultimately, the socio-economic complexion of that neighborhood is not expected to be negatively affected by those taxes. Further, there are those who feel that the Chambersburgers have not been paying their fair share for city services for many years, and that it is about time they shared the burden more equitably.

The Hiltonia example the administrators offered is as follows: A house currently valued at \$25,000 could be reassessed at \$150,000. At the current tax rate and assessment, the tax liability on that property is \$3,777.50, already a serious number. At the new assessment and estimated tax rate, the tax liability on that property could be \$6,795. Yes, \$6,795. In some circles, that number would be considered beyond serious -- going into critical.

Realtor Peter Doolan, whose firm does a majority of its business in the city, attended the meeting. He commented that people who have been buying homes recently in the western neighborhoods of Hiltonia, Hillcrest, Cadwalader Heights, Berkeley Square and Glen Afton are approaching their maximum ability to pay in order to qualify for mortgages at prevailing prices and interest rates. So it is not the wealthy who are buying in these neighborhoods, but rather people who see good values on nice houses in comparison with the housing stock in surrounding towns.

Doolan said those people who can pay between \$6,000 and \$8,000 in property taxes do not seek homes in the city. In that property tax bracket (or lower), homes in other parts of Mercer County offer far greater assessed, market and resale values, and the finest public school systems, libraries, community facilities and services. Besides, it just plain makes better economic sense to put the majority of one's home-buying money into equity, not taxes.

It's not difficult to imagine a situation such as the following hypothetical scenario happening in the near future. A homeowner in Cadwalader Heights, Berkeley Square or Hiltonia -- whose property is newly assessed at \$150,000 -- puts the house up for sale, asking \$150,000. Prospective buyers love the house and look into purchasing it. When they find out the taxes are \$6,795 (and inevitably rising) they are scared off.

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# Taxes...

Cont. from Page 2

The scenario repeats itself for six months and the homeowner is advised to drop the price to sell it. A valid question is: If the house will not sell for \$150,000, should it be assessed at that value?

There are no neat answers to any of this yet. But the administrators did provide one temporary glimmer of hope. They said the city will be requesting that the State Legislature suspend the effects of the revaluation -- as has been done for Newark, Atlantic City and Camden -- because to enact the reval would devastate many neighborhoods in the city.

Another possible course of action -- which, incidentally, is not necessarily constitutional -- would be to phase in the effects of the reval over a five-year period so that those who will benefit by it -- such as industrial and commercial property owners who are now overtaxed -- and those who will bear increased tax burdens will feel those benefits and liabilities in small doses over time.

To my mind, the most distressing part of this issue is that based on current state law dictating how local revenues can be raised, combined with the quantum leap in the past six months of property values in some of the better neighborhoods of the city -- including ours -- property owners could be in really thick soup. Because of the lack of any relationship between one's property tax liability and one's ability to pay, the situation could become acute. And because the city must abide by state law in raising revenues, it is to the state that any efforts to change the situation must be directed.

To this end, the TCCA has created a task force made up of Don Addison, president of the Hillcrest Civic Association, and myself to build a statewide coalition of urban property taxpayers to pressure the legislature to solve this pressing problem. We hope to have a coalition formed in a year.

We are aware that no legislator will address the issue during this, an election year. We are also aware that most legislators are elected from suburban districts. But as more suburban communities undergo the kind of growth and need for increased services we are now seeing take place in Hamilton, those localities will be affected by high taxes as well and the issue may gain more cachet.

In any event, we're going to try to impress upon the legislature that this is a problem that will not go away until the burden of raising local revenues is more equitably distributed across the state through tax reform.

We hope we can count on your help.

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# Keep Hilvista Green, Say Voters

At a general membership meeting on May 20, the more than 50 Hiltonians present voted unanimously to recommend to the city that the undeveloped land on the far side of Hilvista Boulevard remain just that -- undeveloped.

Thomas Ogren, director of Trenton's Department of Housing and Development, asked the association to put the issue on its agenda after Hiltonia residents Allan and Rita LaBel expressed an interest in buying the land from the city for the purpose of developing it.

At the Hiltonia general meeting, Allan LaBel explained that he had seen other developers inspecting the property. Because he is a resident of Hiltonia, Allan said, he would prefer to develop the property himself rather than leave it up to outsiders.

But a committee headed by Joan Anderson recommended that the association take a stand in favor of maintaining the land as open space, as it is already designated by the Delaware and Raritan Canal Commission.

All of the members present on May 20 supported that notion, and the city has been notified of our view on the matter. In view of that vote, most observers agree, the city is unlikely to sell the property to anyone.



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## A CALL FOR HELP

The Hiltonia Association is looking for any resident who would be willing to host a general meeting this fall. Executive board members will do all the work of providing food and chairs -- all you need do is supply the house.

If you're willing to help, please call Bea at 599-9520.

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## Pleased to Meetcha!

Warm weather is here and the For Sale and Sold signs are busting out all over. A fond farewell to those who are leaving us, and a hearty welcome to the newcomers. Here are just a few of them:

Rhonda and Bob Silver have moved into 1 Cadwalader with their 9-month-old son, Justin Paul.

Jo-Ann and Jim Oser are the new folks at 10 Buckingham. They bring with them Benjamin, who turned three in May.

Doug and Nancy Forer have purchased the house at 200 Cornwall. They have two sons, 8-year-old Leif and Taju, who will be 6 next month.

Dave and Jane Wilson have moved into 220 Renfrew with their 4-year-old son, Stephen. The Wilsons, by the way, bought their home from the Bittermans, who are carrying out the tradition of moving within the neighborhood. You'll find Mike, Linda and son Adam at home at 123 Renfrew.

If you're a neighborhood newcomer who hasn't been visited yet by our Welcome Wagon committee chair Jean Harbach, give her a call at 392-6380 and she'll be sure you're properly welcomed.

## Classified

FOR SALE: Girls Schwinn Race bike, 28 inch. 10 years old but hardly used. \$50. Call 695-0314, evenings.

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KRISTIN OF HILTONIA, home from college for summer, will clean your house weekly, once or once in a while. References available. Call 393-2885.



These are the members of the 1987 Hiltonia Executive Board:

Bea Scala-Fischler (Pres.)	599-9520
Cindy Helmke (1st VP)	989-1297
Ann Self (2nd VP)	695-2334
Cindy Helmke (2nd. VP)	989-1297
Dianne Wilkins (Rec. Sec)	396-1657
Denise Mortimer (Corr. Sec)	393-9705
Bill Harbach (Treas.)	392-6380
Cindy Helmke (Civic)	989-1297
Linda Reid (Membership)	394-2314
Jean Harbach (Wel. Wagon)	392-6380
Brann Wry (Refresh.)	695-4372
Ellen Wry (Security)	695-4372
Betty Walton (Security)	393-3663
Alison Cumming (Hilltone)	394-7754
Joan Anderson (Wor. Proj.)	393-3416
Kent Ashworth (Wor. Proj.)	394-7754
Pat Flores (Historian)	695-3141
Bill Anderson (Spec. Proj.)	392-8802
John Vogler (Spec. Proj.)	393-5632
Ann Self (TCCA)	695-2334
Cindy Helmke (TCCA)	989-1297

# We Are The Hiltonia Association...

## Cadwalader Dr.

- 9 Cobb, Nat  
Cobb, Alva
- 13 Paci, Robert  
Paci, Cathy
- 121 Olsen, Jane  
Olsen, Allan
- 127 Fischler, Michael  
Scala-Fischler, Bea
- 201 Lewis, Dwight  
Lewis, Sandy
- 205 Davidson, Laurie  
Gardner, Donnie

## Kensington Ave.

- 1 LaPlaca, Anthony  
LaPlaca, Fran
- 6 Kutch, Eugene  
Kutch, Jacqueline
- 7 Harbach, Bill  
Harbach, Jean
- 8 Leventhal, Robert  
Leventhal, Fern
- 11 Blackburn, Lemuel  
Blackburn, Audrey
- 107 Schmitt, Gail  
Schmitt, Mark
- 112 Billy, Chris  
Billy, Holly
- 117 Caton, Philip  
Caton, Lisa
- 119 Gartmann, Hans  
Gartmann, Selma
- 120 Miterko, Robert  
Miterko, Jane
- 202 Helmke, Cynthia  
Cohen, Ronald
- 206 Ferrell, James  
Brown, Thomas
- 209 Butterfield, Scott  
Butterfield, Sheree
- 210 Barr, Eabe  
Barr, Harry
- 215 McLaughlin, Arthur  
McLaughlin, Helen

## Glenwood Ave.

- 40 Mitchell, Tina

## Buckingham Ave.

- 2 Mitchell, Lillian
- 6 Oser, Joann
- 7 Kushner, Myrna  
Kushner, Levi
- 10 Jessel, Janet  
Ogden, Evelyn
- 11 Carabelli, Carol  
Carabelli, Anthony
- 16 LaPlaca, Joe  
LaPlaca, Mary
- 104 Conlon, Michael  
Conlon, Katherine
- 107 Vogler, John  
Vogler, Marion
- 119 Lehman, Andrea  
Rowan, Andrew
- 121 Wry, Brann  
Wry, Ellen
- 125 McCormack, Raymond  
McCormack, Mary Ann
- 128 Doyle, Patrick  
Doyle, Janet
- 201 McLeod, Alan  
McLeod, Marion
- 203 Holland, Arthur  
Holland, Betty
- 204 Guhl, Bill  
Guhl, Michelle
- 205 Byrd, Isaac  
Byrd, Kalia
- 210 Cooper, Albert  
Cooper, Katherine
- 212 Armstrong, Peter  
Small, Henrietta

## Hilvista Blvd.

- 10 Self, George  
Self, Ann
- 24 Schragger, Mary Ellen  
Schragger, Steve
- 32 Aversano, Gerald  
Aversano, Susan
- 38 Zink, Homer  
Zink, Jon

Renfrew Ave.	207	Palmer, Glenn	103	Stark, Natalie
		Palmer, Sue		Stark, Amel
3 Rigney, James	220	Bitterman, Michael	131	Veracso, Ren
Rigney, Carole		Bitterman, Linda	217	Stern, Harvey
7 Livingstone, Barbara	221	Wade, Frank		Stern, Norma
Samsel, Ruth		Wade, Mary		
8 Jablons, Rea	226	Maynard, David		
9 Dovidio, Joseph		Maynard, Nancy		
10 Carney, Rita				Stuyvesant Ave.
115 Friedland, Ruth			1403	Fartleroad, Grace
Friedland, Stanley			1429	McCarthy, Thomas
119 Walton, Betty	Cornwall Ave.		1490	Mortimer, Denise
122 Flores, Pat	16	Emge, David	1509	Wilkins, Diane
201 Connolly, Peggy		Emge, Mary	1511	Priest, Joseph
205 Ashworth, Kent	129	Lybarger, Connie	1525	Young, Sharon
Cumming Alison		Lybarger, Lee		Young, William

## ...Won't You Join Us?

Membership dues are based on a calendar year and are \$7.50 per adult (over 18 years old). Please fill in the form below and include with your payment. Return to:

LINDA REID, Membership Chairman  
212 Renfrew  
Trenton, New Jersey, 08618

Family Name \_\_\_\_\_

First Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Date Moved in to Hiltonia \_\_\_\_\_

children (under 18)

First Name

Birthdate

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Are you on the Crime Watch?  YES  NO

Do you wish to be on the Crime Watch?  YES  NO

Committee Interests:

Civic  Publicity  Membership  Welcome/Hospitality

Worthy Projects  Children's Activities  Block Party/Social

1987

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# Hats Off to All Our Graduates

Here are just a few of our neighborhood grads this summer. Congratulations to them and to all the rest we didn't hear about!

Colin Mitchell of Renfrew has graduated from the Hun School and will be attending the University of Delaware. His sister, Jennifer, graduated from the fourth grade at Princeton Day School and will be entering the upper school next year.

Tom Vogler, son of John and Marion of Buckingham, has graduated from the Holy Ghost Preparatory School in Bensalem, Pa., and will be attending Mount Saint Mary's College in Emmitsburg, Md., next fall.

Robert J. Paci Jr., son of Robert and Catherine of Cadwalader, graduated with academic distinction from the Lawrenceville School on June 6. He will leave in September for England, where he will study at Winchester College on an English-Speaking Union International Schoolboy Fellowship. The following September, he will attend Williams College in Williamstown, Mass. He attended Kilmer School for six years and Blessed Sacrament for one before beginning Lawrenceville in grade 8.

Three Hiltonians completed the eighth grade at Blessed Sacrament this month. Congratulations to Beth Walton of Renfrew, Randi Kyte of Cadwalader and Allison Jedynak of Stuyvesant.



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Happy summer birthdays to the following Hiltonia children:

In June, Samuel Ashworth(3), Adam Bitterman(9), Jennifer McHugh(6), Rachel Noble(3), and Toni Stellitano(8).

In July, Michael Paci(15), Horace Cobb(10), Randi Kyte(14), Eileen Conlon(4), Tom Vogler(18), Jeremy Knobel(3), Steven Flores(16), Stephanie Schragger(16), Allison Jedynak(14), Kelly Jedynak(6), Nicole Priest(12), Elizabeth Frontiero(6), Rachel Marie Frontiero(2), and Taju Forer(6).

And in August, Sean O'Connor(18), Amy Kyte(11), Seamus Doyle(9), Kathleen Doyle(9), Tabin Johnson(4), William Frontiero(10), and Beth Walton(14).

Finally, apologies to Jennifer Mitchell of Renfrew, whose age was incorrectly listed in the last Hiltone. Jennifer was 10 in January.

(To list your child's birthday in the Hiltone, call Alison Cumming at 394-7754.)

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# A Gift of Trees & Time

The Hiltonia Association's partnership with the Joyce Kilmer School got off to a good start this spring when our \$100 donation helped to purchase seven trees for an Arbor Day celebration on April 24.

President Bea Scala-Fischler attended the ceremony, at which the school gratefully received our gift of three sugar maples, two honey locusts and two flowering crab apple trees. The trees were provided with the additional support of \$30 from the Kilmer parent-teacher group.

Under the direction of the association's Worthy Projects Committee co-chairman, Kent Ashworth, a series of career awareness talks were given to Kilmer fifth-graders. School Principal Edna Pratico and Sue Palmer of Renfrew, a guidance counselor at Kilmer, worked with Kent to arrange five talks by Hiltonians.

In addition to Kent, who spoke about his days as a reporter covering the U.S. Supreme Court, the students also heard from Ron Cohen of Glenwood, an electrical engineer; Sandy Lewis of Cadwalader, an artist; Trenton Mayor Arthur Holland, who lives on Buckingham, and Caroline Johnson of Cornwall, a dancer and choreographer.

Further 1987-88 school year presentations, variations on the theme begun this year, will be under discussion this summer as association members continue person-to-person contributions to the neighborhood school. Your contribution of your time can be arranged for next fall by calling Kent Ashworth at 394-7754.

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## Hiltonia Business Directory form

Business Name \_\_\_\_\_

Business Address \_\_\_\_\_ Business Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Services \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_ RETURN TO  
205 Renfrew

If you'd like to include your business in the next Hiltonia Business Directory, please fill out the form.

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Another very successful Heritage Days festival enlivened downtown Trenton on June 6 and 7. And, as usual, Hiltonians played a major role in keeping the crowds happy by staffing the beer stands -- four of them this year. Bill Anderson, the association's special projects chairman, reports that some 80 Hiltonia "draftees" dished the suds this year, with the association treasury pocketing \$650 for the effort. Thanks to all who helped. See you next year.



The association's 10th annual Easter Egg Hunt went off without a hitch last April 11, thanks to volunteers Dwight and Sandy Lewis of Cadwalader, who organized the event.



Some 35 young Hiltonians attended the hunt, held as always at the homes of the Schraggers and the Schroths of Hilvista. Easter Bunny Nicole Priest obligingly posed for Polaroid snapshots with all of the children despite the unseasonably warm conditions which left her -- quite literally -- a little hot under the collar. The association donated its leftover candy to the Womanspace shelter for battered women and their children.

The next children's event is traditionally the Halloween party. If you can help organize that one, please call Bea Scala-Fischler or any of the board members.

Car vandalism continues to be the main crime issue in the neighborhood these days, with car windows smashed on nearly every street at one time or another. A few cars have been stolen, apparently by joyriders, and a few of the vandalized cars have had property stolen from them. But for the most part, according to Crime Watch committee chairs Ellen Wry and Betty Walton, the damage to the cars appears to be pure vandalism.



To help protect your cars, KEEP THEM OFF THE STREET if at all possible. Well-lighted yards will help, too, and Trenton police are recommending you install a fuel cutoff switch (about \$20) under the dash so that if your car is stolen, the thieves won't get far.

The Crime Watch Network has been working lately, and if your name appears on one of our "trees," you should have received a few calls in recent weeks. If you're not part of our calling network and would like to be, call Ellen at 695-4372 or Betty at 393-3663.

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# Park Days Planned All Summer

Hiltonia's love-hate affair with Cadwalader Park is continuing unabated this summer as residents try to enjoy its beauty while putting up with some of the headaches that come with it.

The city's decision to close many of the park's entrances and exits to cars has faced mixed reviews -- the move has apparently cut down on the aimless "cruising" that used to go on there, but Hiltonians closest to the park have been inconvenienced by added traffic and parked cars on Cadwalader and Hilvista.

The Friends of Cadwalader Park have adopted a wait-and-see attitude about the closings, in the hope that stepped-up police enforcement will pay off in a more peaceful park.

On a lighter note, the city has designated the last Sunday of each month this summer as a Park Day. The park will be closed to all motor vehicles on those days and residents are encouraged to walk down and enjoy the beauty of the park as its creator, Frederick Law Olmsted, intended.

Many Hiltonians participated in marathon softball and volleyball games in the gully fields on the first Park Day -- in May -- and there were pony rides for the children as well.

Board member Jean Harbach (392-6380) is organizing Hiltonia's participation in Park Day for the rest of the summer. If you'd like to play softball or get involved in some other way, give her a call.

At the very least, come on down and enjoy the many gifts Cadwalader Park has to offer.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We would like to extend a sincere thank you to all the Heritage Days Beer Pumpers for all the time so willingly given in support of this year's Heritage Days Festival. An extra-special thank you goes to those who extended their tour of duty when we were short-handed. More than 200 hours were provided by Hiltonia residents, both members and nonmembers of the association. Revenues of roughly \$19,000 were collected by Central Trenton, Inc., from the sale of 151 barrels of beer and 10 barrels of birch beer. After expenses, including \$650 to the Hiltonia Association, this money will be used to defray the costs of the weekend. Thank you again and we look forward to working with you again next year.

Bea Scala-Fischler, President, Hiltonia Association

Bill Anderson, John Vogler, Special Projects Committee

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**HILTONIA...**

*Trenton's Premiere Address*

## **Tee Shirts!**

Proud of your neighborhood? Want to brag a little?

Let the world know when you wear a Hiltonia T-shirt, available now from the Hiltonia Association.

The shirts -- emblazoned with the design you see above -- are bright yellow, made of 50 percent cotton and 50 percent polyester, and a real steal at just five bucks each.

Large and extra-large sizes are available now, and orders are being taken for kids' sizes.

To get your shirt, call Bea Scala-Fischler, 127 Cadwalader, at 599-9520.