

The Broad Street Journal

Volume 5, Issue 4

April 17, 2007

Banana Blessings

By Rachel Horning



Rachel and Larry at The Meal

They begin to congregate around 3:15 p.m. every Monday in front of the Free Library on 20th and Vine Street. Some are clean and well-dressed while others omit a not-so-pleasant odor and look as if their clothes haven't been changed for days. Some greet me with a toothless grin and a, "Hello beautiful lady, how are you today?" while others just gaze suspiciously in my direction as I walk to the center of their circle, joining the other white folks.

They are the homeless community of our very own Philadelphia. The reason they come together is to get fed, for free. Adam Bruckner, ex-player and now assistant coach of the Philadelphia Kixx, began this ministry called "Restart" five years ago. His vision was to not only to feed the hungry, but to bless them through prayer and by giving them a second chance. He began by making peanut butter and jelly sandwiches in the trunk of his car. Although PB&J's are still served each week, there have been some minor changes.

It has gone from one volunteer to ten or more people offering a

helping hand and from just a handful of homeless people to about 200. The members that make up the group of volunteers range from a college girl from Lancaster County, to homeless men on their way to finding a place of residence, to a young woman from California who felt a calling to the inner-city.

Other significant changes involve the food. The menu has expanded from just PB&J's to beef and pasta, hot dogs, baked beans, expired Tastykakes, and my personal favorite, banana juice.

I am not giving you the full experience of The Meal (the name the volunteers have given to this Monday gathering) unless I tell you about my beloved banana juice. Yes, it's a juice made from bananas. Yes, it is sticky, potent and has suspect brown flakes floating throughout. But it's my station, my job and my offering to these people. It's the kind of banana juice that only a mother could love.

Each week I get a few of the same comments from the people on the receiving end of this beverage: "You got any rum to go with this?", or "Banana juice?! What the *hell* is banana juice?", and the one that keeps me humble, "You know what I call this, girl? Banana blessings."



If I glance a hundred yards past the crowd waiting for some banana blessings, I can see another line of people wait-

(Continued on page 2)

A Night With PhillyCarShare

By Erin Schubert

When the windows are down, music is blasting and the neon colors of the city are whizzing by, it can seem like there's no better place to be than riding in a car. So when you're a student in Philadelphia and you don't *have* a car, there's an alternative for your vehicle-loving heart - PhillyCarShare.

The PhillyCarShare program is a non-profit program that rents out hybrid cars to Philadelphians for an hourly rate. There's a high likelihood that you've seen these hybrids from the PhillyCarShare program on the streets. They usually have a white emblem on the side with an environmentally-conscious driver behind the wheel.

After seeing these hybrids around the city last semester, my curiosity grew about the program and I decided to see if it was really as good, and as easy, as it sounded.

So I signed up. I got the Basic Freedom plan (which is FREE) and it took a few days to get a package in the mail with all the information I needed and a cool-looking key fob that unlocks the vehicles.

Then I went online to the website (www.phillycarshare.com) and perused some of the cars I could choose from. They have everything from Mini Coopers to Volkswagens to Honda Ele-

(Continued on Page 2)



Erin Schubert and Lindsey Bingaman outside of Trader Joes. Photo taken by Jessica Lebo.



A VW beetle convertible from PhillyCarShare. Photo courtesy of phillycarshare.com

(Banana Blessings Cont.)

ing. At the front of the line stands Adam, often yelling something to the effect of: “Don’t even try to add a zero to this or use the money to sign up for a dating service like your buddy did last week. The paper trail will catch up to you and you *will* get caught.”

This warning is in reference to the checks he hands out to anyone there with any form of identification. The checks are issued by the government and can only be used to pay for a birth certificate or a state identification card, which are two things needed to get a job. This service could be considered more important than the service of the food, taking into account that over 100 people wait in that line each week.

Going to this meal has made me a part of a community I didn’t even know existed. The people I thought *I* was serving actually desire a relationship with me, a seemingly-snobby and pretentious white girl from the suburbs. Take Rosey for example. He’s a bitter 20-something whose main goal is to make people angry, but last week I got him to smile. Or Calvin, who sells white T-shirts and ankle socks on Oxford Ave. who eats lunch with me on Tuesdays at Wendy’s. Larry collects the trash after each meal and tells me every week that I am moving up on his rating chart. I think I hold the number two spot right now. So in retrospect, it looks like the banana blessings are actually for me.

(PhillyCarShare Cont.)



Lindsey, Jessica and Erin in rented car.

ments. It’s about \$5.90/hour to rent a car and so I decided to opt for a shorter amount of time and scheduled the reservation for an hour and 15 minutes. My trip total was \$11.32 (which includes gas and insurance) and I paid online with my debit card before I even left.

I grabbed some friends and we ventured out to the subway and took the Broad Street Line to City Hall. Then we walked over to the Midtown Parking Garage at the Union League on the 1400 block of Sansom amidst some heavy rain.

We walked into the parking garage and I spotted a young guy getting out of a silver BMW and I recognized the vehicle from the website, that was our car. I used my key fob to unlock the doors after he left and one of the parking attendants showed me how to start the engine. Then we were off. I wondered if the whole trip would be that easy.

We traveled down Walnut Street to Trader Joes and did a little grocery shopping then piled back into the Beamer with our grocery bags and cruised back to the parking garage. After that, we walked a block back to the Walnut-Locust subway stop and headed home.

All in all, despite the rainy weather, the trip and the PhillyCarShare program was incredibly easy and efficient. It’s definitely something I’ll use in the future.

*A great option with the program is the overnight deal. You only get charged for two hours if you take the car after-hours (which usually starts around 10 p.m. or 11 p.m.) and bring it back to its’ designated spot by 8 a.m.

IN THE KNOW

Not everyone has time to read the newspaper or even scan through headlines. So we took the best and most relevant stories from the last week-ish and gave you an easy reference guide to staying up to date.

The Green Teasing of America

A drink to save our souls.

Words By Jacob Weisberg

www.slate.com

In China and Japan, green tea is a hot drink usually served in a small ceramic cup. But to American commercial culture, green tea is yoga in a bottle—or in a can, candy bar, candle, lotion, soap, perfume, pill, or extract. Described as soothing and gentle, it sits paradoxically at the red-hot intersection of New Age health mania and industrial chemistry.

A Letter to Progressive Christians in the USA

By Will Braun

Geez Magazine

www.geezmagazine.org

Will Braun sends a message to Americans from the snowy Canadian prairie. In the article, he explains why he just doesn’t understand how progressive Christians – with whom he generally agrees – have become so caught up in the machinations of super-power.

Is Staying Together the New Breaking Up?

by Molly Thomas

www.kitchensinkmag.com

Our generation, privy to the woes of the divorce generation and benefactors of the feminist and gay rights movements, has found itself at liberty to shed ideals of traditional marriage, or at least very seriously question its merits. With relationships no longer clearly defined as courting, dating, engaged, married, or divorced, we’ve realized a certain autonomy that has changed the way we look at potential partners, and how we construct and inhabit relationships.

Events

The Killers
 April 27, 2007 @ 8 p.m.
 Tweeter Center in Camden, NJ



Ryan Montbleau
 Sat. April 21st
 9 p.m. at the
 World Café Live



Center City Gallery Night
 April 20th, 2007
 Admission, food and
 drink on the house.
 The art is off the
 wall. Events go from 5-8 pm.

THE CULTURAL DIVIDE

April

Philadelphia Film Festival
 Now-April 19th, 07
 www.phillyfests.com

Blue Man Group
 April 19th, 2007
 7:30 p.m.
 @ the
 Wachovia Center



Warm weather ushers in a whole new Philadelphia. One that is free of heavy jackets, watery sidewalks and grey skies. The warm weather also brings to life a ton of new activities. Check 'em out!

John Legend and Corinne Bailey Rae
 April 26th @ 8p.m.
 Tower Theatre
 69th and Ludlow Streets

Philadelphia Orchestra
 April 19th @ 8 p.m.
 Kimmel Center
 Verizon Hall
 Tickets go for \$10-\$88

Phillies vs. Marlins
 April 27th @ 7:05 p.m. *College Night*
 Get this free hat! —————>



Cherry Blossom Festival in Philly April 9th—22nd

Like free press? Like the New York Times but don't want to pay for it? Well, lucky for you, the New York Times Select has just started a Complimentary University Subscription for college students. All you need is



an .edu email address and a few minutes to register online!

Comments or suggestions for the BSJ?

Contact Erin Schubert at
 es1255@messiah.edu



MCPC put World Café Live and The Electric Factory to shame at the last Coffee House/Open Mic Night held in the QDR.

Photos to the right:
Top Rachel Mcegahey and Bottom Karen Garven

