

Village Voices



CURTAIN CALL: Ray Didinger, left, and Tommy McDonald, third from right, join cast of *Tommy and Me*.

Sportswriter Ray Didinger Turns Playwright

By John T. Gillespie

Philadelphia Eagles analyst and talk show host Ray Didinger is about to add a new act – literally -- to a storied career.

The Hall of Fame sportswriter and Village member has written a one-act play, *Tommy and Me*, about his boyhood hero, Eagles wide receiver Tommy McDonald, who helped lead the team to a national championship in 1960. The play, produced by Theatre Exile, opens a two-week run in August at the Fringe Arts Theatre on Columbus Boulevard.

“This is all about a boy and his hero,” says Didinger, who used to visit Eagles training camp with his father—those days in Hershey— and carry McDonald’s helmet -- unbeknownst at the time to McDonald.

Some 40 years later, Didinger helped lobby fellow sportswriters to elect McDonald to the Football Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio.

While McDonald with 494 career catches and 84 touchdowns was headed in that direction, Didinger knew a strong advocate would help. So he made sure there was a loud cheering section with testimonials from legends like Don Shula, Chuck Bednarik, Tom Landry and others. When McDonald, in gratitude, selected Didinger to “present” him for induction, Didinger was overwhelmed and felt his boyhood worship required.

“Life had come full cycle,” he says.

Tommy and Me was picked for production following a successful reading at Plays and Players in Center City last May. Joe Canuso, the director, is the Founding Artistic Director of Theatre Exile and director of such stalwarts as *Who’s Afraid* (continued on page 3)

Happy—and Safe—Computing

By Tom Smith

Keep your computer safe!

Yes, it is sometimes a wicked world—especially in the computer realm. Two quick tips to help safeguard your computing:

If you spend time on the internet (e-mail can be part of that), **use an anti-virus or security program**. Examples: Norton, Kaspersky, and AVG. They’re not free, but worth it, minimizing potential aggravation, which can lead to serious consequences (viruses and other computer maladies).

Even with security software, you may sometimes get a pop-up screen telling you that there might be a problem of some kind, and directing you to call Microsoft or some other group. Microsoft DOES NOT send messages like that; generally such messages are spoofs—attempts to get you do something that might compromise your machine.

DO NOT respond to such warnings.

Members—if you get one and aren’t sure what to do, call the Village phone, and Tom Smith or Hank Harrison will get back to you.



**KEEP THE
BUGS AT
BAY!**


▲ USE ANTI-VIRUS SOFTWARE

▲ IGNORE SUSPICIOUS POP-UPS

Welcome New Members!

- ▶ Wanda Bailey-Green
- ▶ Joan Callan
- ▶ Lloyd Mitchell
- ▶ Cathy Nemeth
- ▶ Joanne Petrone
- ▶ Kathy Petrone
- ▶ Barbara Phillips
- ▶ Deborah Thorp
- ▶ Gene & Mary Ann Veneziale

NOTE: Contact information is included in the 2016 Member Handbook & Directory. Members who join after Feb. 2016 will be listed in the online Membership Directory in the members-only part of eastfallsvillage.org.

 For help on how to log in to the members-only part of the website, see pages 9-10 in your copy of the 2016 Member Handbook & Directory.

Village Voices is a publication of East Falls Village (EFV), a program of East Falls Community Council. No portion of this newsletter may be copied or reprinted without the permission of East Falls Village. All East Falls Village programs and activities, including Village Voices, are created, developed and executed by Village Member Volunteers.

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Philadelphia University and Rivage Site Top Zoning Agenda

By William Epstein

President, East Falls Community Council

Two projects, which will have major impact on East Falls, top the current agenda of the East Falls Community Council's Zoning Committee.

Philadelphia University's plan for a Special Institutional Zone would allow the University to construct eight new buildings identified in its plan with no further approval from the community.

A proposal by developer David Grasso envisions a 200-apartment riverfront building with ground-floor commercial space on the former Rivage Ballroom site, Ridge Ave. and Calumet St.

The Zoning Committee of the East Falls Community Council, chaired by Todd Baylson, has considered both proposals at public meetings. They will be the subject of further discussions.

The University responded to community concerns about its earlier 30-year plan. That plan called for a parking garage on Henry Ave. and more than 20 new buildings, including ones on the girls' softball field at Henry Ave. and School House Lane and on the Warden Drive "sledding hill."

The University returned to the community late in 2015 with a plan that eliminates the parking garage and the buildings on the softball field and sledding hill.

Some in the community see the plan as responsible and necessary for the University to remain successful. They point out that

the City Zoning Code would restrict the University from any additional building beyond the plan without community consent, and they urge approval.

Others want the University to identify open spaces and commit to not build on them in perpetuity. They want the Zoning Committee to withhold approving the plan until the University agrees.

At press time, the Committee is waiting for a response to a series of questions and concerns it has submitted to the University.

David Grasso's proposal – on a long-abandoned Kelly Drive parcel that serves as a dismal gateway to East Falls – provides 200 parking spaces and new traffic lanes on Ridge Ave and Calumet St. leading to the East Falls Bridge.

The Zoning Committee is awaiting final plans. Some in the community see the project as a creative, attractive addition to the East Falls riverfront. Others object to the number of apartment units, density and footprint of the proposed building and its height.

I expect that the upcoming discussions on both projects will be productive and respectful. Watch the Zoning tab at www.eastfallscommunity.org for the news, agenda and location for upcoming General Membership meetings (second Monday of each month) and Zoning Committee meetings (third Wednesday.)



EVF Members On the Go!

Kathi and Rick DiMenna ride the El Tour de Tucson for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. The 100-mile ride took them nine hours. Former US Congresswoman Gabby Giffords and her husband, Mark Kelly, joined the Tour for 40 miles. This fall the DiMennas are off to Provence on a self-guided week-long bike tour which starts and ends in Avignon.

Didinger

(continued from page 1)

of Virginia Woolf and Glengarry Glen Ross. *Tommy and Me* takes the audience from the Eagle's training facility in Hershey to the induction ceremonies in Canton, from a boy's unspoken hero worship to his hero's gradual awakening to the one-sided relationship.

From sports writer, to talk show host, to football analyst, to playwright, Didinger hardly needs another act in life. His achievements long ago earned him a spot in *Who's Who*. Since then the list has only grown:

- ▶ Football Hall of Fame, Writers' Honor Roll
- ▶ Six- time Emmy award winner as writer and producer with NFL Films
- ▶ Author of 11 books including three best sellers: *The New Eagles Encyclopedia*, *One Last Read*, and *The Ultimate Book of Sports Movies*
- ▶ Temple University's Communications Hall of Fame
- ▶ Five- time Pennsylvania Sports Writer of the Year
- ▶ Dick McCann Award for distinguished reporting on pro football

Tommy and Me speaks to Didinger's lifelong attachment to football which he calls a "great teacher of teamwork." The football-as-life metaphor captures the character-building aspects of a sport under increasing scrutiny for its violent hits and head injuries. Youth football and Pop Warner participation are down 15 percent.

Didinger says the NFL and youth leagues are doing everything possible to improve equipment and rules to protect the head. Ironically, he says, the evolution of the helmet from the old leather kind to the high impact, padded, face mask version has increased a player's sense of invincibility. The NFL has responded by restricting hits with the head. "Human missiles are out," says Didinger. "It's a contact sport. We have to be smart about minimizing the risks."

Didinger is a host on 94WIP all-sports talk radio and appears on Comcast SportsNet TV as the primary analyst on Eagles Pre-Game and Post-Game Live. He and his wife, Maria Gallagher, former food and restaurant critic for *Philadelphia Magazine*, live on Midvale Avenue. The couple moved to East Falls in 1987 and joined the Village a year ago.

Don't Miss!

From the Bleachers
to the Press Box

MY LIFE IN PHILADELPHIA SPORTS

Ray Didinger
Monday, April 18, 6:30pm
Falls Presbyterian Church

Coming In April...

Help Mifflin Students Use Their School Library

By Susan Smith

Like most Philadelphia public schools, the Mifflin School has been without a librarian for a number of years. The Civic Engagement team of East Falls Village will be working to get the library in order and to staff it one day a week so the students can come to borrow books and hear a story. Plans are to have a team of two or three volunteers to help for a two-hour shift one day a week.

INTERESTED IN HELPING?



Look for more details in the
Weekly Update or email
info@eastfallsvillage.org.

Team co-chairs Susan Smith and Linda Saltford will hold an Open House in the School Library for prospective volunteers.

EFV members have been reading to small groups of K-3rd graders at Mifflin for over a year. Vice-principal Michelle Shaw-Carpenter says the children are very excited about the Wednesday morning readings. They don't get much opportunity to be read to, or to show off their reading skills, she says. "They love it!"

Village Celebrates 5 Years

The official launch party of East Falls Village was held on June 11, 2011.

On **Saturday, June 4, 2016**, we will celebrate our 5th Anniversary with a party in the Kanbar Center of Philadelphia University.

Hold the date – and look for an invitation in May!



Cutting the cake at the 2011 launch party: Frankie Jueds; Charlie Day; Chris McGill of East River Bank; Lydia Hernandez Velez, Deputy Managing Director for Aging; and State Sen. Vincent A. Hughes. Senator Hughes was instrumental in obtaining a grant for the establishment of East Falls Village.



Winnie Fessenbecker, one of the Village readers, donned a special hat to read on March 2, Dr. Seuss's birthday, celebrated as Read Across America Day.

READING CORNER

On My Own

By Diane Rehm / review by John T. Gillespie

On My Own Diane Rehm



From the latest battlefield in the culture wars comes NPR radio host Diane Rehm's outspoken defense of assisted suicide.

Ever since her husband, John Rehm, starved himself to death in December 2015 following a long battle with Parkinson's, she has taken up the cause, now approved in six states, of the right to die.

It was a choice denied her husband. "I rage at a system that would not allow John to be helped toward his own death," she writes in *On My Own*, a memoir about widowhood and tribute to John. "Why should it be that only a few states allow aid in dying with help from a trained physician willing to offer the ultimate gift?"

Her conviction stands in contrast to her doubts as she faces life alone – doubts about handling daily chores, cooking, paying the bills, sickness, when to retire, and myriad other decisions.

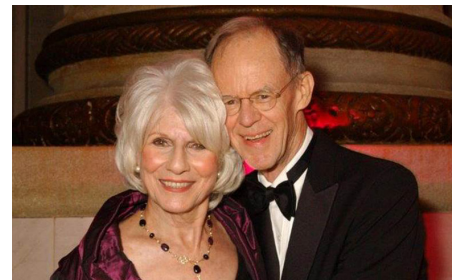
Rehm rejects the notion of redemptive human suffering. "The idea of suffering as being noble does not persuade me that extending life for the sake of someone else's religious beliefs or philosophy is fair or even reasonable. Let each of us make our own decisions."

At times this quick-read reminiscence (162 pages) slips into saccharine reflections on Rehm's marriage -- the seemingly endless idylls just walking, talking to, and appreciating each other; the deferential mention of her husband's

many talents, including cooking; the wrenching night she moved to her husband's side of the bed after he entered a care facility and after more than 50 years of marriage.

But Rehm also pulls no punches describing the downsides of her marriage, her husband's "sometimes emotionally abusive" silent treatment for days on end for which he apologizes on his deathbed.

Proponents of assisted suicide will find in *On My Own* affirmation while opponents will find it an attack on life itself, which, they believe, must be protected from conception to natural death.



Diane and John Rehm. John died June 23 after deliberately refusing all food and drink for 9 days when his Parkinson's become so bad he could not bear to live any longer.



East Falls Village

P.O. Box 12672
Philadelphia, PA 19129

Deliver to:



EFV Events

KEY

REG = Registration
Required or Recommended

\$ = Fee Required
in Advance

EastFallsVillage.org
Click on Calendar of Events

267-444-4507

TO
REGISTER

Post on your refrigerator! PLEASE NOTE This is a partial listing. Details may change. For more information, check EastFallsVillage.org or consult the EFV Weekly Update, emailed to members on Tuesdays.

Wednesday

April 6

12:15 pm

Lunch of the Month: Falls Taproom

3749 Midvale Ave.

Meet at Falls Library to carpool at 12:15 or meet at Taproom at 12:30.

Enjoy some interesting dishes and maybe one of their 80+beer choices. **REG Recommended**

Thursday

April 14

9:30 am

Destination Walk: Coffee, & Conversation on Philadelphia Schools

Meet at Falls Library at 9:30 am to walk to Chestnut Hill Coffee Co., Falls Center, 3300 Henry Ave. or meet at Coffee Co. at 10 am.

Fred Vincent, retired educator, will lead a discussion on Philly schools.

Monday

April 18

6:30 pm

From the Bleachers to the Press Box: My Life in Philadelphia Sports - Ray Didingier

East Falls Presbyterian Church, Vaux St. & Midvale Ave.

Sportswriter (and EFV member) reminisces. **REG Recommended**

Tuesday

April 19

1:45 pm

Historic RittenhouseTown

Wissahickon Ave. between Lincoln Drive & Walnut Lane

Meet at the Falls Library at 1:45 to carpool.

Guided tour of this once-bustling industrial village, the site of America's first paper mill (1690). Requires walking on uneven ground, 5 exterior steps without a railing, and a 3-step spiral staircase. \$10 fee, payable at RittenhouseTown. **REG Recommended**

Wednesday

April 27

9:30 am

A Geology Walk in the Wissahickon with Sarah West

Carpool from the Falls Library at 9:30 or meet at Cedars House (intersection of Forbidden Drive & Northwestern Ave. at 10 am.

Walk and learn with Sarah West, expert on the history and geology of the Wissahickon. Followed by an optional lunch. **REG Required**

Thursday

April 28

2 pm - 4:15 pm

Wills & Estate Planning

KenCrest Services, Midvale Ave & McMichael St.

Bonnie Ostrofsky, Esq. will give an overview of current law and what we need to know and do to put our affairs in order. She will also provide a packet of handouts. **For Village members only. REG Required**

Thursday Morning Walks & Stop at a Local Café.

All are welcome to join us for some exercise, good company, and a snack. For same-day information, call 215-817-9430.

Every Thurs 9:30 am

Meet at the Falls Library Garden



Wednesdays

10 am - noon

READ TO ME!

Reading Aloud at Mifflin School, Conrad St. & Midvale Ave.

Sign up online or call to read on one or more of these dates:

April 6

May 11

June 1

Read with three or four small groups over each session. Books are provided.

REG Recommended

Programs not listed here, such as bridge, memoir-writing, hands-on help with smartphones or tablets, are for members only and are scheduled month-by-month.

(over for more programs)



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snack. For same-day
information, call
215-817-9430.

Every Thurs 9:30 am

*Meet at the Falls
Library Garden*



Thursday
June 23
9:30 am

Special Destination “Walk:” Japanese House, Fairmount Park

*Meet at 9:30 am at Falls
Library to carpool.*

Traditional Japanese
values are represented
by the melding of history
and culture at Shofuso
Japanese House and
Garden, a traditional-
style Japanese house and
garden that reflects the
history of Japanese
culture in Philadelphia.

Tuesdays

**May 3 -
June 28**
10 am - 11 am

Wednesday

May 4
11:30 am

Friday

May 13
11:30 am

Wednesday

May 18
9:45 am

Thursday

May 26
9:30 am

Wednesday

June 15
11:30 am

Tuesday

June 28
11:30 am

Stretch & Tone with a Yoga Twist

East Falls Presbyterian Church, Vaux St. & Midvale Ave.

The cost for the 9-week series is \$100 for EFV members and \$120 for non-Village members, paid in advance. Members may register and pay online with a credit card under the May 3 entry on the Calendar of Events. Make checks payable to EFCC and send to EFCC, PO Box 12672, Philadelphia, PA 19129. **REG Required \$**

Lunch in the ‘Hood: Coffee House Too Café

501 Fairmount Ave.

Meet at Falls Library at 11:30 am to carpool or at the restaurant at 12.
Over lunch, Fred Vincent will discuss Northern Liberties and lead an optional tour afterwards. **REG Recommended**

Lunch of the Month: Trolley Car Café

South Ferry Road off Kelly Drive

Meet at Falls Library at 11:30 am to carpool or at the restaurant at 11:45 am. Weather permitting, we'll sit on the covered patio.

REG Recommended

Eastern State Penitentiary

Meet at the Library at 9:45 to carpool.

Audio tour of America's most historic prison - \$12, payable at the door.
Optional lunch afterward.

Special Destination “Walk” – Chanticleer Garden

Meet at 9:30 am at Falls Library to carpool or meet at Chanticleer,
786 Church Road in Wayne at 10 am.

\$10 fee, paid at the door. Optional lunch to follow.

Lunch of the Month: Adobe Café

4550 Mitchell St., Roxborough

Meet at Falls Library to carpool or meet at the restaurant at 11:45.
Enjoy Mexican food, with many vegetarian choices, at this longtime
Roxborough favorite. **REG Recommended**

Picnic Lunch at Strawberry Mansion

Meet at the library at 11:30 am to carpool.

See the calendar for more information. **REG Recommended**

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(over for more programs)