

# Ask Me Philadelphia IN THE NEWS

## 'Ask Me Philadelphia'

Philadelphians aren't really as unfriendly to strangers as they're sometimes pictured as being, but they do have to be prodded at times to display the helpfulness that visitors to our city sometimes need. That's the idea behind Mt. Airy resident Luke Klein's "Ask Me, Philadelphia" campaign. For details see page 2.

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## *Grassroots campaign seeks to make Philly more visitor-friendly*

By CARISA D. BREWSTER  
Staff Writer

Even though Philadelphia is supposed to be the "City of Brotherly Love", if visitors don't meet with friendliness when they arrive here they can come away with a bad taste in their mouth about the city.

Mt. Airy resident Luke Klein wants to reduce the chance of that with the launch of "Ask Me Philadelphia", a grassroots effort whose goal is to improve the experience of visitors to the city.

While he feels that the city does a

good job of marketing itself, Klein says that effort can only go so far because it's an institutional effort that doesn't have the personal touch.

"It's [about] getting into the neighborhoods, connecting people with local businesses that they would not see," says Klein, the group's executive director.

Klein and his group have been handing out blue and yellow buttons with "Ask Me Philadelphia" written on them ("ask me" is in large letters) that they are encouraging Philadelphians to wear or display them to in-

vite tourists to ask them for recommendations or directions.

He says that they want to mobilize the city in being helpful.

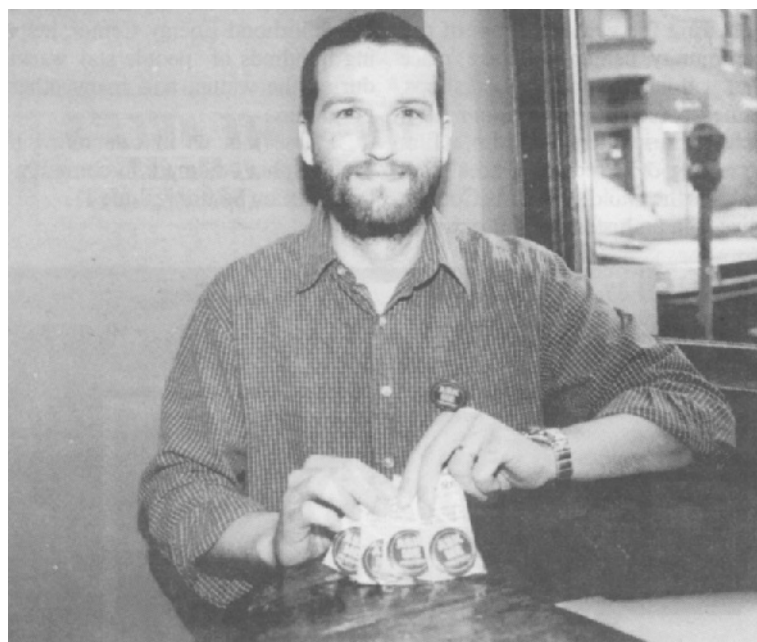
"At the very least, it's a friendly encounter," says Klein. "There is a myth that Philadelphia can be an unfriendly place. I think that on the whole, people are glad to extend themselves to tourists."

While Klein is a Northwest native, he has spent some time in other U.S. cities like Washington, D.C. and New York, as well as cities in countries like Ireland, France and Thailand.

"I've had great experiences in those cities and people are generally happy to be helpful," says Klein. They plan on making connections with small businesses, museums, the Greater Philadelphia Tourism Bureau, and the Independence Visitors Center, in addition to finding funding sources. Of course, more volunteers are always welcome.

"We're hoping to approach it in a way that keeps the main aim intact," says Klein. "A portion of our funding, in whatever form it will take, will support local charities assisting Philadelphians in need."

If no one has given you a button yet, go on their website, [www.askmephiladelphia.com](http://www.askmephiladelphia.com) to get one for free. For more information contact Klein at 215-844-0426.



Catherine Sayre

**Luke Klein shows some of the "Ask Me Philadelphia" buttons that he wants local residents to display.**