

submit design proposals for bicycle racks, and received many. Those proposals have been narrowed down, selected, and it's expected these racks should be installed later this summer.

- *Is the City considering using GPS technology, especially in transit, to improve operations?* Ms. Cutler replied

that, through TIGER grant money, the City is implementing Transit Prioritization for Traffic Signals, wherein SEPTA buses/trolleys would get preference when traversing the City.

- Several members of the audience asked about what can be done to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety. Many

CCRA members walk to their daily destinations in town, and expressed concerns about conflicts with bicycles. Ms. Cutler conceded that, while some bicyclists in the City do not follow current traffic laws (as is the case with motorists and pedestrians), their increased presence has been proven nonetheless to improve safety on the roads.

Out & About

Getting There From the Square

By Bonnie Eisenfeld

I had always wanted to see Fallingwater, a dramatic residence designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and built out over a waterfall in Western Pennsylvania, but as of last year I had not managed to get there, and had no idea how or when I would. So I was surprised and delighted to get a notice from the tour company Excursions From the Square about an upcoming three-day trip to Fallingwater and Pittsburgh, departing from Rittenhouse Square.

Excursions From the Square, owned and operated by Center City resident Ellen Kay Coleman, has been taking groups on a variety of cultural tours by bus and by air for



Ellen Kay Coleman of Excursions from the Square

22 years. Over that time, Coleman and Excursions have developed an excellent reputation for quality trips lasting from one to 12 days, with destinations in the U.S., Canada and Europe. Their focus includes visual and performing arts, as well as scenic and historic sites.

Once registered for one of Coleman's motor-coach trips, all a traveler need do is pack a bag and show up at the southwest corner of Rittenhouse Square at the appointed time. On the morning of my trip, I was immediately impressed with the large, comfortable motor coach and the congenial and helpful driver. When Coleman arrived, I found her to be considerate, pleasant and enthusiastic. Inside the bus, to my delight, I found an insulated container stocked with bottled water, and a carton of muffins.

For our group of about 20 people we had a bus that accommodated many more, so there was ample room to spread out. Pennsylvania is a wide state, and the trip was long, but Coleman packs a lot into her itineraries. The first day, we visited the Flight 93 National Memorial in Shanksville, the Johnstown Flood Memorial, and the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh. Beautiful accommodations were provided in Pittsburgh at the Omni William Penn Hotel. The next day, our group enjoyed a daylong bus tour of the city, including stops at the Frick Art & Historical Center and the Carnegie Museums of Art and Natural History.

At last, on the third day we were on our way to see Fallingwater, in the rain. We stopped at a visitors' center, from which a tour guide escorted small groups into the house and presented interesting highlights. We learned of Wright's philosophy of design and how well the occupants actually liked living there. For example, Wright did not believe in window screens, insisted that the house be decorated with furniture he designed, and was not perturbed by leaking roofs.

Kentuck Knob, another residence designed by Wright, was our last stop. On the trip home, Coleman showed a film by Ken Burns about the architect.

Travelers report being pleased with the small and congenial groups, knowledgeable guides, and Coleman's professionalism, experience, and attention to individual needs. Satisfied customers from a variety of trips had the following comments:

"Although I have traveled to Paris many times, I saw it with a fresh perspective."

Coleman's "connection to Texan historians who joined us was priceless. We saw and learned so much."

Coleman "has never disappointed me. She is a knowledgeable leader and a pleasure to be with."

"She is unflappable and resourceful in dealing with the unexpected."

Upcoming summer trips feature performing arts festivals – The Canadian Theatre Festivals in Stratford and Niagara-on-the-Lake, July 8-15; the Bard Music Festival, August 8-10; and the Marlboro Music Festival, August 14-18. In the fall, a trip to the Midwest, "Art and Leaves in the Heartland," October 20-27, features the acclaimed Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, Ark., as well as art and history museums in St. Louis, Kansas City and Independence, Mo.

Excursions From the Square has offered day trips to New York City, Baltimore, and Washington, DC. Trips of longer duration have included Paris, Montreal, Quebec City, Ottawa, Savannah and Charleston, Boston, Chicago, New Orleans, Asheville, Charlottesville, Los Angeles, Florida, New England, Texas, and the Hudson River Valley. Among Coleman's offerings, one can find both old favorites and new destinations. Excursions From the Square picks up travelers at Rittenhouse Square, the Art Museum area, and City Line Avenue. <http://www.squaretrips.com/>