

# Things That Matter To People Who Matter

**phillyhistory.org, Sufjan Stevens, Deep Fried Pickles, Christmas Music**

*Published: December 13, 2006*

**phillyhistory.org**



Following closely behind my passions in baseball, golf, and sports in general is my interest in history. My latest discovery in that regard is the photographs in the easy-to-search, map-driven database on [phillyhistory.org](#). Black-and-white scenes from the Italian Market with debris and moving streetcars are reminiscent of *The Godfather* and views of the city's skyline in decades past make me wonder if there isn't something to the Curse of Billy Penn. Oh, and if you think there's nothing interesting around the sports complex now, take a look at Broad and Pattison circa 1925.

—**Tom Goyne**  
blogger, [ballssticksstuff.com](#)

## Sufjan Stevens

This time of year, I always get desperate for some holiday tunes that I won't hear recycled some 23 times on the radio. So, luckily this year, a friend mentioned Sufjan Stevens to me. His *Songs For Christmas* is a five-disc set of folk/acoustic/alternative fare that alternates between mellow, sacred, nostalgic and whimsical — the perfect soundtrack to my kind of holiday season. Some tunes are classics ("Jingle Bells"), others more traditional ("The First Noel"), and plenty are original ("Did I Make You Cry on Christmas Day? Well, You Deserved It!"). Check it out, unless you don't mind hearing Josh Groban sing "O Holy Night" for the 23rd time.

—**Marc Kessler**  
actor, 42nd Street, Walnut Street Theatre; co-creator, Altar Boyz

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## Deep-Fried Pickles

I want to kiss whoever invented the deep-fried pickle. This magical recipe has dazzled my mouth just in time for the season. Move over, turkey legs and mashed potatoes, here comes a sweet 'n' sour treat to complement any holiday dish. Turn your friends and family on to the new "battered" King of Philadelphia. Crack open a jar of sour dills, slice into quarter-inch-thick spears (lengthwise), lightly coat with all-purpose flour, cornmeal, a pinch of salt, cayenne and a couple tablespoons of brine. Fry until golden brown. Smother them with your love. Dip into everything. Also goes great with a night of drunkenednessness.

—*Bunnylicious*  
DJ



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## Christmas music

For years, I mocked or ignored holiday music. Most of it pertains to Christmas, which I've never celebrated, and the Hanukkah songs we knew were obscure for a reason. But as I'm about to celebrate my first Christmas with some soon-to-be-family, and record a Christmas EP with friends, I see now that I was just jealous of their hilariously terrible music. "Do They Know It's Christmas" aside, though, the best holiday songs echo the best country songs: They're personal, often depressing, representations of life, complicated by all of the family and money problems that the holidays tend to magnify. Returning to the standards makes sense, as tradition and as a way to keep your sanity through all the sugar and stress.

—*Beth Warshaw*  
Line producer, WXPN; director, Girls Rock Philly

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