

WHERE'S HOMER?

Your star-studded, sneak-peek guide to a very special, very Philly *Simpsons* episode.

BY VICTOR FIORILLO

This month, Marge and Homer Simpson—America's most enduring (and most chinless) animated stars—will visit Philadelphia for the first time in *The Simpsons'* 36-year run, showering love on our city for the show's milestone 800th episode.

For this you can thank *Simpsons* co-executive producer Christine Nangle, the Penn grad and Oxford Circle native who conceived of and wrote the installment. She's been with the show—the longest-running scripted prime-time series ever—since 2019, prior to which she was, among other things, a writer for *Saturday Night Live*. These days, Nangle makes her home in Los Angeles, but “I'm 100 percent still a Philadelphian,” she says. “I wear it with pride on my sleeve.”

That's abundantly apparent in her *Simpsons* plot, which—mild spoiler alert—begins when Marge and Homer journey to the city so their dog, Santa's Little Helper, can participate in a (fictional) Philadelphia dog show. Once here, some local conspiracy theorists known as the H.O.A.G.I.E. Men (Historians of America's Great Inventors and Enlightened Men) convince them that the dog is actually a direct descendant of Ben Franklin's mutt, and that he holds secret abilities to find gold supposedly stashed by Franklin. (A penny saved?!) The two find themselves on a *National Treasure*-style adventure in search of that fortune, running into a host of icons along the way.

Not surprisingly, the Philadelphia gags come fast and furious—so here, ahead of the February 15th air date on Fox, Nangle offers up a preview of the people, places, and oh-so-Philly plot points you're going to want to watch for.

Boathouse Row

The conspiracy theorists row Homer down the Schuylkill while he slurps a water ice. (Cherry, obviously.)



Michael Vick Reparation Park

Fictitious ... and “the best dog park in the world,” says Nangle.

Wawa

Gotta Have a Wawa

One of the conspiracy theorists tries to sell Homer on the Ben Franklin theory while Homer is in—where else?—a Wawa bathroom.



Quinta Brunson

The *Abbott Elementary* creator/star voices a trainer charged with getting Santa's Little Helper in shape. Alas, she meets an untimely end, falling down a hole—d'oh!—but does manage a resounding “Go Birds!” on the way down.

The Rocky Statue

But not *only* Rocky ... this version of Philly also features a statue honoring the hanging side of beef from the meat locker. And Apollo Creed. And Mr. T. And more.

Whiz Wit

Cheesesteaks get a cameo, obviously, with appearances by Pat's, Geno's, and Dalessandro's—the last of which Nangle says was a rec from Questlove while she was writing the episode.

Hall & Oates

The dog show takes place at the Convention Hall, which is adjacent to the Oates Parking Lot. (Poor John, always the smaller spotlight.)



NANGLE



Dalessandro's
STEAKS
BEER-HOAGIES



Kevin Bacon

For Bacon's first *Simpsons* role, he plays a clerk at the fictional Hotel Philadelphia. (“He *nails* the Philly accent,” Nangle says.) Marge opts for the Fresh Prince Suite over the *Silver Linings Playbook* Suite.



Segway Tours

The family joins a Segway tour near the Philadelphia Art Museum, with a tour guide voiced by Questlove. (They eventually happen upon the Mummers Parade.)



The Betsy Ross House

Santa's Little Helper relieves himself on an antique fire hydrant, releasing an enzyme that unlocks a clue to the gold that leads the Simpsons to Betsy's house and a secret chamber holding the key from Ben Franklin's lightning experiment.



MATT GROENING

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