The Blue Horizon is to boxing what Valley Forge is to nation building. Both are historic venues, battlefields' battlefields, where blood was spilled for a noble cause. The noble cause in Valley Forge was democracy. The noble cause in the Blue Horizon is the fights.

The legendary Blue Horizon is located at Broad and Girard in the heart of scenic North Philadelphia. Surrounded by gas stations, fast food joints and abandoned buildings, the Blue Horizon has had more ups and downs than a palooka fighting four-rounders. But the Blue Horizon has been a fight game mainstay for many years, and it's still standing and looks better than ever.

The structure that houses the Blue Horizon was originally three row houses built at the close of the Civil War. It was designed as public accommodation for married couples, something genteel for Philly's petit bourgeoisie. Times change and the building became a lodge for the Fraternal Order of Moose. A small ballroom was added. It had a stage. It had a balcony. It could seat fourteen hundred.

After a century of tea dances and secret handshakes and revival meetings, the sweet science kicked open the doors of the Blue Horizon in 1961. Over the years local fighters named Bernard Hopkins, Bennie Briscoe, Willie Monroe, Jeff Chandler, Matthew Saad Muhammad, George Benton, Charles Brewer and Cyclone Hart, the cream of a very rich crop of Philly fighters, squared off against pugs at The Blue like Marvelous Marvin Hagler and Antonio Tarver.

These days Don Elbaum is putting on shows at the Blue Horizon and it's a good thing that he is.

The first match was a welterweight four-rounder featuring Philadelphia's own Gary Drayton (4-10-1 4 KOs), wearing red trunks with white trim and fighting out of the red corner, versus Orlando Lewis (2-0 2 KOs), from Vineland, NJ, fighting out of the blue corner and wearing black trimmed with green camouflage. At the opening bell the men came out cautiously. They circled each other, felt each other out, traded jabs and kept moving. Lewis landed a solid body shot. Drayton landed a combination and danced away. Lewis caught Drayton with a blow to the head and Drayton hit the deck. He got to his feet, but Lewis landed and Drayton went down again. The ref waved it off at 2:11. A first round TKO for Lewis.

Bout number two was a four-round clash between heavyweights. Mike Dietrich (2-0 2 KOs) from Baltimore met Jermaine Livingston (1-1 1 KO) from nearby Trenton, NJ. Dietrich, in the red corner, is a southpaw in tiptop shape. Livingston, in the blue corner, is a flabby righty. The bell sounded and both men came out swinging. Livingston landed first, but Dietrich landed solid, so Livingston beat a retreat. A straight Dietrich left caught Livingston on the ropes and down he went. The referee called it at 2:43 of round one.

Two Philadelphia fighters got it on in the third fight. Welterweight prospect Steve Chambers

Upshur (8-1-1 1 KO), in black trunks, met Darrell Crenshaw (1-1), wearing blue trimmed with black, in a four-round war. Crenshaw peppered Upshur's face with combinations in the first, but when Upshur landed he landed solid. A close 10-9 round for Upshur. Crenshaw took over the second, landing more punches and the cleaner shots. Upshur played possum on the ropes. Crenshaw went possum hunting and won the round 10-9. Both men slowed in round three, but Upshur was the busier of the two. The fourth and final round was all Upshur. The scores were 40-36, 40-36 and 39-37. Steve Chambers Upshur by unanimous decision.

Fight four was between junior middleweights. Darren "Quiet Storm" Fallen (7-2-1 4 KOs), the hometown lefty from Philly, met Larry "The Gladiator" Brothers (5-3-2 4 KOs), from the nation's capital, in a six-round contest. Fallen's punches had plenty of snap in the first. Brothers could not get past his jab. Round to Fallen. Fallen landed an accidental low blow in round two, but controlled the action. By virtue of his ring generalship and effective aggression, he owned the rest of the fight. The Quiet Storm by unanimous decision.

The next fight was a eight-round cruiserweight bout spotlighting Emanuel Nwodo (14-3 11 KOs), aka Charm City Assassin, in blue trunks and fighting out of the blue corner, from Baltimore by way of Nigeria. His opponent was Imamu Mayfield (24-6-2 18 KOs), in the red corner and wearing black trunks, from New Brunswick, NJ. Nwodo has a punch which is a gift of the Gods and he landed hard and he landed early. Mayfield went down seconds into the fight. He struggled to his feet and beat the count, giving Nwodo another opportunity to put him down again. That was it. The ref called a halt to the action at 1:24 of the first round. The Charm City Assassin by technical knockout.

The final fight of the night was a ten-round slugfest between heavyweights Fast Eddie Chambers (21-0 12 KOs), wearing black trunks and representing the City of Brotherly Love, versus Louis Monaco (13-29-4 6 KOs), wearing black trimmed with gold and hailing all the way from Denver, Colorado. Chambers can box and punch. Fast Eddie has fast hands. But he is not in shape and has stamina problems. Monaco has fought everyone during his decade-long career - Vitali Klitschko, Lamon Brewster, Jeremy Williams, Monte Barrett, Fres Oquendo, Kirk Johnson, Michael Dokes, Trevor Berbick and Buster Douglas - and went on the attack at the opening bell. Monaco hits hard, but he punches wide, has balance problems, and looks like a shot fighter.

Chambers busted up Monaco over ten lopsided rounds. Monaco is tough, tougher than tough, tougher than any man needs or ought to be. He is all heart, all nerve, all raw bleeding courage, a man whose lot in life is pain, followed by pain, followed by more pain. Two of the judges scored the fight 100-90. The third judge saw it 98-92. Fast Eddie Chambers moves onto bigger and better things. Louis Monaco moves onto his next fight.

Last week's fight card at The Blue had a little something for everyone. There were first round kayos. There were boxing clinics. There were sweet scientists and pugs. Before leaving the coolest building in America hosting the fights, I asked Don Elbaum how it feels putting on shows at the Blue Horizon.

"Every single seat is a ringside seat. That's the feel you get here. You're on top of everything.

And I cannot believe the calls I get about coming and fighting at the Blue Horizon. I've gotten calls from managers and promoters in Europe - 'We'd like our kid to come fight at The Blue. We'll work out the deal with the money' - just to say they fought at the Blue Horizon. It's the most legendary fight arena in the world today. What's it feel like putting on shows here? Hey, it's a thrill. It's an honor. It's fantastic. It's like unreal," Elbaum said. "When Louis Monaco came in and I met him in the hotel, he says, 'You know something? I fought all over. Boy,' he says, 'I never thought I'd get a shot to fight here.'"