



The Bulletin

A Publication of the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

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Volume 36, No. 8 Covering Bloomfield, Friendship, Garfield, East Liberty and Lawrenceville since 1975 August 2011

Paula Martinac/The Bulletin



Laura McLaughlin, co-owner of Awesome Books on Penn Avenue, has successfully adopted feral cats from Garfield's alleyways. Learn more about the wild cats of Garfield and the people who help them on page 7.

NEW BUSINESSES COMING TO VACANT STOREFRONTS

by Joe Reuben
The Bulletin

With as much vacant space as still remains on Penn Avenue adjoining the Garfield, Bloomfield and Friendship neighborhoods, good news about filling it is always welcome.

Jason DeMarchi completed the purchase of a building at 5001 Penn Avenue, and his plans are to move his tattoo parlor on Liberty Avenue to Penn as soon as the necessary renovations are done. He and his wife, Mel Drew, worked with Fidelity Bank in Bloomfield to secure the financing for their project.

Entrepreneur Margaret Kerr is working with a second partner to open

CommuniTEA in a first-floor space at 5139 Penn. Her plans include offering a shared workspace setting for smaller entrepreneurs who, for a monthly fee, can enjoy the use of fax, phone, photocopy, printing, and Internet services. Her vision is also to have a public space in front for passersby to enjoy a cup of hot tea on a winter afternoon. Rich Engel, the Mainstreets Program coordinator for Penn Avenue, has been assisting her in securing financing for her plans through Allegheny Valley Bank.

Renovations are underway to a former tavern space at 5106 Penn. The Mister Roboto Project has signed a multi-year lease and hopes to occupy

See **STOREFRONTS**, page 2

ALDI Still Set for Baum Boulevard

by Paula Martinac
The Bulletin

No matter the rumors, and despite the fact that the former Day auto dealership building on Baum Boulevard is still just sitting dormant, ALDI remains committed to building a discount supermarket on the site, according to the developer.

The Bulletin has confirmed with developer John Odell of Warner Pacific Properties in Michigan, which owns the property and will rent to ALDI, that the plans for the store are unchanged and moving forward.

As reported in *The Bulletin* last December, ALDI expected to start construction this past spring, with an opening in fall 2011. The construction delay, Odell said, stems from a maternity leave taken by ALDI's Director

of Real Estate, Christina Morascyzk. She returned to her position in April 2011, and has been playing catch-up to get the Baum Boulevard project back on track. "She's very excited about the project and moving full steam ahead," Odell said. "The delay in timing isn't due to ALDI's lack of interest."

Odell estimated that construction could start this September. Because of the delay, some construction bids must be redone, and the actual start date will depend on how quickly that bid process goes. He said ALDI now hopes to open the store in the first quarter of 2012. The latest the store would open would be in the second quarter, or spring 2012.

"There have been no changes to the plans," Odell asserted. As reported

See **ALDI**, page 11



HERE COMES THE BRIDE...

Mural artist Ashley Hodder begins restoring "The Bride on Penn Avenue." The project will take 60 to 90 days to complete. To contribute toward the restoration of this landmark, call Rick Swartz at the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation at 412-441-6950 x11.

Paula Martinac/The Bulletin

The final deadline for all articles, ads, and Bulletin Board items for the September 2011 issue is **MONDAY, August 15, 2011**. Placement is first-come, first-served. For more information: 412-441-6915.

Till the Cow Comes Home...

By Staff
The Bulletin

A Penn Avenue art fixture has been stolen. For five years, a wooden cow has serenely watched over the neighborhood from its post behind the fence of 5108 Penn Avenue. Bill Cornell, president of the BGC's board of directors and owner of the cow, says he thinks the artwork was taken the night of July 14. Everything else on his porch and in the yard remained untouched.

Cornell bought the cow cut-out 28 years ago in Vermont from artist Woody Jackson. Relatively unknown at the time, Jackson later made a name for himself by creating the trademark for a little ice cream outfit known as

Ben & Jerry.

Cornell's cow took a hiatus from its Penn Avenue perch for restoration in June 2008, a story covered in *The Bulletin*. Precipitation and wind, hallmarks of Pittsburgh weather, had deteriorated its finish. In the three years since her restoration, she stood proudly at attention, a favorite among avenue regulars, and Cornell saw no reason to tie her to the fence.

Now, he says, "I just want it back." If the cow is gone for good, Cornell says his plans are to contact Jackson to see if he can commission a replacement. "This one, I'll tie up." ♦

If you have any information about the stolen cow, please contact The Bulletin at 412-441-6915.



Paula Martinac

STOREFRONTS, from page 1

the space by early fall as the home for its artistic and cultural programs. A smaller, second-floor space could be available for lease later in the year, if the developer, Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation, can muster the funds to make some critical improvements. Dollar Bank, the Regional Development Funding Corp., and the Urban Redevelopment Authority are providing financing to the project.

Friendship Development Associates has signed a lease with a proprietor of what will be a Mexican-themed restaurant, Verde Mexican Kitchen & Cantina, to open in the Glass Lofts building at the corner of Penn and N. Fairmount. There is a substantial amount of build-out to be done by the tenant before the restaurant can occupy the space. Verde's principal, Jeff Catalina, says he hopes to open by the end of October. Following on the heels of Salt of the Earth's debut last year at 5523 Penn, Verde could give this section

of Penn a stronger presence on the regional restaurant scene.

With the pending move this fall of the Neighborhood Academy to its newly constructed campus in Stanton Heights, over 20,000 square feet has opened up for lease at the Champion Commons office building at 5231 Penn. UPMC has made known its intentions to move in several mental health programs that currently operate out of the Drake Building in Bloomfield, provided the city approves the change in use. More than 100 employees staffing those programs would transfer to the new site. A public hearing before the Zoning Board of Adjustment is scheduled for Thursday, August 11, at 9:10 a.m.

Community groups in Lawrenceville, Bloomfield, and Garfield-Friendship want to explore the notion of creating business improvement districts (or BIDs) along Butler Street, Liberty Avenue, and Penn Avenue. A BID

Calling All Volunteers!



Garfield Map Project

Please submit your pictures and stories about your favorite places in Garfield! Garfield Community Action Team (GCAT) is starting an exciting new project to map out both the historic and the new, exciting places to see in Garfield. We welcome you to submit your favorite place in the neighborhood, and let us know why this needs to be included in the project. All ideas are welcome! We will use these locations to map out walking routes of interest in the neighborhood. They will also help preserve and record the rich history and new innovation in the neighborhood. In your submission, please include the location, a new and old picture (if possible), the reason why this part of the neighborhood is important to you, and your contact information. There are many ways to submit: online at <http://gcatpgh.wufoo.com/forms/garfield-map-project/>; by mail: Bloomfield Garfield Corporation, Attn: Kathryn Vargas, 5149 Penn Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15224; or phone: 412-441-6950 x 17. Share your story in any

Clean Streets Team Monthly Clean-Up

Take some time this month to give back to the neighborhood and help us keep the streets clean on Saturday, August 27, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. The group meets in front of Edge Studio, 5411 Penn Avenue. Gloves, bags, and refreshments are provided for all volunteers.

Garfield Community Action Team (GCAT)

Want to be part of planning and organizing community projects? Please join us for our upcoming planning meeting scheduled for Wednesday, August 24, at 6 p.m. at the Bloomfield Garfield Community Activity Center, 113 North Pacific Avenue.

Healcrest Urban Farm

Interested in helping to create a healthy, sustainable community? There are many opportunities to volunteer with Healcrest Urban Farm, located in the heart of Garfield with a mission to provide youths with "green" education opportunities and to make healthy fresh produce available to the community. If you are interested, please visit the farm's website to sign up as a volunteer: <http://healcrest.com>. Volunteer opportunities are flexible, so do not hesitate to sign up.

If you have a volunteer need for the month of September, or have any questions about what is currently listed, please contact Kathryn Vargas at kathrynv@bloomfield-garfield.org, or 412-441-6950 x 17 by August 15 to have it added to next month's listing.

would ostensibly give property owners a more direct role in maintaining and promoting the districts to attract future investment, as well as retain existing businesses. The concept has been successful in Oakland and Downtown Pittsburgh in creating more wel-

coming environments for those who visit or work there. Each group is forming an exploratory committee of property owners from its area to look at the costs and benefits of a BID in its community. ♦

“Love Your Block” Grant to Benefit Hillcrest Street

by Kathryn Vargas
Bloomfield-Garfield Corp.

The Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation and the Garfield Community Action Team (GCAT) applied for the first round of “Love Your Block” grants, an initiative of the Mayor’s Office ServPGH program. ServPGH encompasses a number of initiatives aimed at increasing civic participation in the city.

The grant gives the organization a \$500 gift card to Home Depot that can be used to make improvements to a specific block in the neighborhood. The \$500 gift card will be utilized to make resident-led improvements to Hillcrest Street from Pittsburgh Fort Pitt ALA to the corner of North Aiken.

Hillcrest Street was chosen for the grant because it is a street that many youths utilize on a daily basis in order to get to Fort Pitt ALA or to

football or cheerleading practice at the Garfield Gators’ home field. After surveying the block, the team decided there were many ways that it could be improved to make it a safer route for children. The grant will be used to remove sidewalk obstructions, create youth-friendly play spaces, and respond to other needs of residents on the block. We hope to rally together the community, the school, and the local sports teams to make block improvements that support the community’s young people.

The BGC and GCAT intend to work very closely with residents on this initiative. All of the planned improvements will take place in the fall. If you are interested in this project and would like to be part of the planning process, please contact Kathryn Vargas at the BGC at 412-441-6950 x17 or email kathrynv@bloomfield-garfield.org. ♦

LIQUOR LICENSE ROUND-UP

By Staff
Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

There’s been a spate of recent activity with state-issued liquor licenses along Penn Avenue. Here is the latest update:

K-2 Convenience Store – 4900 Penn Avenue

Zeeshan Ahmed has a license application pending with the PA Liquor Control Board to open a beer distributorship next to his convenience store. Ahmed was to have entered into an agreement with Freddie Croce of inter*ARCHITECTURE, to conduct a preliminary feasibility study assessing how the existing site could be reconfigured to accommodate the new business. At a community meeting on May 31, Ahmed agreed to attend a second community meeting in six to eight weeks, when the design drawings would be near completion.

However, as of press time, Croce told *The Bulletin* that he had not yet entered into an agreement with Croce. Staff at the Specialty Group, a liquor license brokerage, informed Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation on July 18th that transfer of the license to K-2 had not been approved. BGC

did contact Mr. Ahmed subsequently, and he confirmed that he had not entered into an agreement with Croce, and that he was aware the license has not been approved. He also informed the BGC that he is still moving ahead with his expansion plans, but provided no further details.

Envy Night Club – 4923 Penn Avenue

BGC was informed by the PA Liquor Control Enforcement bureau that Envy has officially closed its doors, and the liquor license was returned on July 11 to the Liquor Control Board in Harrisburg for safekeeping. The owner of the premises, Dr. Olakunle Taiwo, reportedly told the LCB that he has no further plans to operate a licensed establishment at Envy’s address. The BGC was directed to contact the Specialty Group, a broker who handles the transfer of licenses. A representative of that firm informed the BGC that they are looking for a new tenant for the premises who may elect to purchase the license from Taiwo. If they do not locate another tenant, Specialty will seek to sell the license outright to another party.

See **LIQUOR**, page 8

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The Bulletin is published by the
Bloomfield-Garfield Corp. to:

- serve the incorporated territory of the BGC and surrounding communities
- report on activities and ideas affecting those communities
- offer an opportunity to express opinions and exchange ideas

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Editorial and Advertising Offices:

5149 Penn Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15224
Phone: 412-441-6915
Fax: 412-441-6956
Email: Bulletin@bloomfield-garfield.org

Editor: Paula Martinac

Advertising: Martin Pochapin

Intern: Caitlin Cleary

Proofreading: Caitlin Cleary
Rick Swartz

Bookkeeper: Mary Anne Stevanus

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The Bloomfield-Garfield
Corporation holds its monthly
board meeting on the second
Monday of each month at 5321
Penn Avenue, starting at 7 p.m.
These meetings are open to the
public.

East Liberty Brews Up New Businesses

by Margaret Graham

East Liberty Development, Inc.

Want to pick up a cup of coffee on your next trip to East Liberty? Or maybe pick up beans to brew on your own at home? Two new businesses along Penn Avenue make that a possibility.

Kazanda's Café at 5943 Penn Avenue sells coffee, tea, smoothies and – the shop's biggest attraction – sandwiches. The walls are also adorned with art for sale. Each month, a different Haitian artist will be featured.

The shop sells direct-trade coffee, purchasing beans from a farm in Haiti owned by proprietor Kazanda Tamo's father. Though business was slow in the first month, hosting a grand opening celebration at the beginning of July proved to be a turning point.

Now, "I see people coming back from the event," said Ms. Tamo. "There are new faces as well."

To capitalize on that success, Kazanda's Café will host events on the second Saturday of every month, featuring musicians and, of course, the shop's drinks and sandwiches. Ms. Tamo also plans to expand her menu in the coming months. Look for an additional soup option, more smoothies and a vegetarian sandwich to make their menu debuts.

Kazanda's is located right next to Laptop Etc., a computer sales and

repair shop owned by Ms. Tamo's husband, Alain. The café also offers free wi-fi.

Up the street from Kazanda's is Zeke's Coffee, a small-batch roaster. Located at 6012 Penn Avenue, Zeke's is just a stone's throw from Kazanda's, but the shops have different purposes.

Patrons looking for a quick coffee fix can purchase a cup, hot or iced, but no "high end" drinks will be sold at Zeke's, said owner Chris Rhodes.

Zeke's was founded in Baltimore by Mr. Rhodes' uncle in 2005. Last summer, Mr. Rhodes began selling

coffee at the East Liberty Farmer's Market. From there, Rhodes began working on the current location.


Zeke's offers 26 different coffees that will cycle in and out of the shop. Rhodes said there will always be a featured brew as well as a decaf option. Both of these new coffee hotspots offer plenty of choices for a quick fix or a leisurely brew. ♦

Kazanda's hours are Monday-Friday 8 a.m.-7 p.m. and Saturdays 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Zeke's hours run Monday-Friday 6-8 a.m. They are also open Wednesdays and Thursdays 5-7 p.m.



Margaret Graham/ELDI

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WIRELESS NEIGHBORHOODS = NEIGHBORHOOD LEARNING ALLIANCE

by Kathryn Vargas

Neighborhood Learning Alliance

Since 2003, Wireless Neighborhoods, an East Liberty-based nonprofit, has worked to better education and employment prospects for inner-city youths. Last month, Wireless adopted a new name to better match its identity: the organization is now Neighborhood Learning Alliance (NLA).

The name "Wireless Neighborhoods" reflected the roots of the organization's early efforts to bring broadband services to low-income neighborhoods. However, its mission has evolved to focus on professionalizing afterschool program services and supporting initiatives that improve the academic outcomes of the city's most vulnerable youth. Board and staff members agree the new name better describes the organization's mission and vision and gives a clearer picture of the important work being done by the organization and its partners.

David Serbin, board president of NLA, says he is excited about this change. "Our new name will build more energy around the work we are

trying to do," Serbin says. "It puts us in a better position to be a leader in the city's efforts to create high-quality afterschool programming." Currently, NLA provides professional trainings, administration, and program support for more than 12 Pittsburgh area afterschool programs.

In addition to afterschool assistance, NLA also supports a number of other exciting projects. The organization houses a mentoring program; supports a Pathways to Health Career Curriculum and a Pathways to Education Careers Program; is supporting three Pittsburgh Public Schools Summer Dreamer Academy Camps; is forming a Graduation

Champions campaign initiative; and, with its partners, is opening four community computer labs this fall.

Of course, none of this work is done by NLA alone. It relies heavily on strategic partnerships with other nonprofit organizations to drive agendas. "The most important part of our work is the strong community partners that drive these efforts," reflects Serbin. "We are truly fortunate to be part of an effective and robust nonprofit community." ♦



Fire on N. Fairmount Claims Home of Young Communal Group



Morgan Smith

COLIN ALBRIGHT AND CARINA KOOIMAN COMFORT EACH OTHER AFTER THE FIRE.

by Paula Martinac

The Bulletin

A fire in Garfield may have cost a group of six 20-somethings their home, but they have not lost their hope. "We've been inundated with tons of support," said Colin Albright, owner of 230 North Fairmount, who lived in the six-bedroom house with his wife, Carina Kooiman, and four housemates, Dylan and Kyle Rooke,

Morgan Smith and Chris Matrozza, until a raging fire on July 15 forced them out. Four of them are now living together temporarily in another location, contemplating their future.

The six, several of whom Albright said are artists and "serious gardeners," had formed "an intentional community" on Fairmount — a communal living arrangement in which they shared meals, held group meetings once a week, and "supported each

See FIRE, page 12

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Above Trader Joe's, one block from Target

ROGUE PRUNER VANDALIZING NEIGHBORHOOD TREES

by Caitlin Lenahan
Tree Pittsburgh

Pruning is extremely important for trees, especially when trees are young and their branching structure can be dramatically changed. With that in mind, technique is everything: Pruning trees incorrectly can cause them irreversible harm and even death. Evidence of a "rogue pruner" has been found throughout Friendship, Garfield and Bloomfield, leaving incorrectly pruned branches piled up on the sidewalk. They most recently "pruned" the newly planted trees

on South Aiken. These particular trees were planted with federal stimulus funds just last year, and were to be maintained by the contractor this summer and next; they are still under warranty. Because of this vandalism, the warranties will be voided by the contractor. If these trees do not survive, we will be unable to replant them and will have lost not only the street trees, but a few thousand dollars.

Tree Pittsburgh welcomes anyone interested in pruning to join us for Tree Tender Courses and Pruning Workshops. The organization works with small groups of residents to prune young trees


properly and give them a good, strong branch structure early in their lives. More information about proper tree care and pruning is available at www.treepittsburgh.org.

Street trees are publicly owned city property and a permit is required to prune them. Tree Pittsburgh has a permit and would love to prune with you. ♦



EXAMPLE OF INDISCRIMINATE
"PRUNING" OF NEIGHBORHOOD
TREES.

Courtesy Tree Pittsburgh



Back to School... Already!

It's hard to believe that in a few weeks school will begin again. Before sending your children off, stop and read the following tips.

Young Students

Pedestrian injuries are the second leading cause of unintentional death among children ages 5 to 14. So make sure that children:

- Look left, right then left again before crossing the street.
- Always try to cross a street when a crossing guard is present.
- Cross in front of the bus only after the driver signals it's okay.

High School Students


Statistics show that teen drivers are four times more likely to be involved in fatal crashes than more experienced drivers. If your children drive to school:

- Teach them, as well as, all passengers to buckle-up.
- Remind them to obey the speed limits
- Enforce no-drinking-and-driving rules.

College Students

The number one crime on college campuses is theft. One-out-of-every 10 college students will be robbed while away at school.

- Remind students to always lock dormitory doors.
- Tell students not to keep large amounts of money in their rooms.
- Have students mark personal property with identifiable marks.



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Parole Center Opens on Baum Boulevard

by Margaret Graham
East Liberty Development, Inc.

A new neighbor has moved to Baum Boulevard in East Liberty – the Day Reporting Center for parolees.

The center is one of two in the Allegheny County Courts system. Probation officers from throughout the county refer parolees to the center for programs like anger management or meetings for Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous. Parolees may also receive referrals to complete community service projects, integrating them into the community.

While some members of the community may have reservations about the office's presence in the neighborhood, those who work with parolees every day see it as an asset for the area.

"It's an important part of keeping the community safe," said center supervisor Dante Works. "Our presence gives a sense of security to the east side of the city."

The office's hours run from 12 to 8 p.m. The space is family-oriented, comfortable and an all-around nice facility, Mr. Works said.

The parolees referred to the Baum office are already in the eastern part of Allegheny County, according to Mr. Works. Those who are referred can sometimes walk to the office, making it easier on them. The center can act as a positive resource tool for the parolees to become productive citizens of the community, he said.

Prior to the opening on Baum on May 4, the parole office (minus the expanded services offered now) was located above the Sharp Edge on the corner of Friendship Avenue and North St. Clair Street.

In addition to the court-mandated services, clients can also receive help with job searches, GED tutoring, mock interviews and dress-for-success programs. The center also has 12 computers that users can access for free to search and apply for jobs, or create a resume. In the first month after opening, 322 people received one or more services from the center, and 11 had on-site interviews for jobs.

"Probation is the next step to rehabilitation," said Mr. Works. "This is giving parolees a second chance to be productive in the community." ♦

WILD CATS CALL GARFIELD HOME

by Caitlin Cleary
The Bulletin

Walking by 5111 Penn Avenue, pedestrians are likely to spot Mojo the cat lounging in the window. Before he ruled the roost at Awesome Books, Mojo lived the life of many feral cats in the area, looking for shelter, eating out of trash cans, and defending himself against other animals. Now the only wild thing about him is his lion's-maned haircut. "Feral cats adapt especially well when they are young," says Awesome Books co-owner Laura McLaughlin. "Mojo is very gentle now. No one would ever guess he came to me from the street."

A cat becomes feral when it has, to some degree, reverted back to a wild state. According to the Humane Society, feral cats are often the offspring of abandoned or once-domestic cats and live with little to no direct human contact. They rely on humans to provide food in dumpsters and trash cans but remain skittish around people.

McLaughlin took in all of her cats,

including a new kitten, after they had been abandoned by owners. "I would never buy a cat because it perpetuates the problem of abandonment," she says, "especially because there are so many cats on the street in need of a good home." She explains that she has never had an issue with any of her cats acting aggressively toward a person.

McLaughlin describes Mojo as "very docile around children." However, the same cannot be said for his behavior around dogs. Feral cats have to fend for themselves in the urban jungle, which often results in lifelong grudges. McLaughlin says she thinks Mojo was attacked by a dog at some point, because he once pinned a neighbor's pug to the ground. "I've never seen a dog so surprised!" she laughs.

Once she takes in a cat, McLaughlin says the first order of business is to bring it to a vet. In her case, she consults The Big Easy Animal Hospital in Lawrenceville. Run by Dr. Aileen Ruiz, this hospital offers a range of care, including dis-

counted spaying/neutering services. (See related story, page 8.)

Dr. Ruiz says she believes that spaying and neutering are "extremely important because they stabilize the wild cat population and reduce it over time." She advises those interested in adopting a feral cat to waste no time in visiting a veterinarian. All cats, especially undomesticated ones, should get checked for diseases like feline leukemia and for parasites. Dr. Ruiz's office participates in a popular initiative, Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR). This program urges those with concerns about the feral cat population to trap cats, take them to neutering clinics, and then return them to the wild. Many veterinary practices and animal-rights organizations offer to spay/neuter cats at a fraction of the original price.

The local Animal Rescue League, located at 6620 Hamilton Avenue in Larimer, participates in the TNR program by offering two "spay days" each month. Jennifer McCarthy-Lovell of Loysen + Kreuthmeier Architects took in two alley cats and had them checked out by ARL veterinarians. Ray and Charlie are two black cats that first lived on the street, then in the bathroom of McCarthy-Lovell's office, and now consider the entire office home.

"Ray's not your typical lap cat, but she really has come around," McCarthy-Lovell asserts. "She used to sit in the back corner and hiss at anyone that walked by." McCarthy-Lovell used a unique approach for advice on caring for Ray and Charlie:



Paula Martinac/The Bulletin

A FERAL CAT ROAMS GEM WAY.

She watched tutorial videos available on YouTube. She says these videos taught her how to feed the cats canned food and to exercise extreme patience. McCarthy-Lovell wants to spread the message. "I believe in taking in these cats when they're young, but TNR is a great option when they're too old."

The Bulletin recently received a letter from an anonymous resident concerned about the number of feral cats in Gem Way. The letter contained articles about the resources available throughout Pittsburgh to help control and minimize the feral cat population. One volunteer-run organization is Homeless Cat Management Team, which offers "fast-track clinics" to spay/neuter animals in a timely manner. More information is available at homeless-cat.org.

Dr. Ruiz reminds those who empathize with the plight of stray animals, "Not all feral cats can be socialized, but with love and patience, your efforts may be worthwhile." ♦

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Vet Brings a Bit of New Orleans to Lawrenceville

by Caitlin Cleary
The Bulletin

Dogs, cats, and pocket pets can rest a bit easier knowing that The Big Easy Animal Hospital in Lawrenceville can fulfill most, if not all, of their medical needs. Dr. Aileen Ruiz opened The Big Easy at 5328 Butler Street on July 5, 2010, and it has only grown since. She says she attributes the success of her practice to “referrals and word of mouth.”

Originally hailing from Miami, Dr. Ruiz settled in New Orleans and then migrated north to Pittsburgh after Hurricane Katrina struck. “I couldn’t go back to Miami because there was no power there,” she says. “I came to Pittsburgh with my dogs, diploma, backpack, and cat.”

Before opening The Big Easy, Ruiz went back to New Orleans with The Humane Society to participate in an animal rescue project alongside military personnel and “some of the best veterinarians in the country.” Photos of the heroic rescue mission line the hospital’s walls.

Dr. Ruiz says her passion for helping animals began when she brought home stray animals as a child. “I couldn’t say veterinarian, so I told everyone I wanted to be a ‘veteran’

when I grew up!” she recalls. She went on to earn a bachelor’s degree from Florida International University and a Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine from Ross University in the West Indies.

Dr. Ruiz says she wants her practice to supply more services than the typical veterinarian’s office. The range of services offered by The Big Easy spans wellness and preventive care, urgent care, surgeries, dental cleaning, micro-chipping, and much more.

This practice takes compassion a step further by offering quarterly clinics that provide low-cost spay/neuter and rabies treatments for dogs and cats.

The animal hospital carries out its mission in a comfortable, compassionate environment. Clients get a welcoming greeting from the receptionist, Mayra Gomez, who is also Dr. Ruiz’s mother. The Big Easy has strived to create a “family atmosphere” with warm wood paneling and a coffee-maker available to clients.

The Big Easy celebrated its first year anniversary on July 12, 2011. Dr.



DR. AILEEN RUIZ JUST CELEBRATED THE FIRST YEAR OF HER LAWRENCEVILLE VETERINARY PRACTICE.

Paula Martinac/The Bulletin

Ruiz reflects on her time thus far, “If you provide superior service to your clients/patients, the business results will come.”

Although the practice enjoyed success in its first year, Ruiz says she hopes to expand the practice in years to come. “Maybe one day I can split The Big Easy in two,” she says, “half in Pittsburgh and half in New Orleans.” In fact, she says that she has fallen in love with Lawrenceville: “It’s a lot like uptown New Orleans, full of trendy, young professionals.” ♦

LIQUOR, from page 3

Verde Mexican Kitchen & Cantina –
5491 Penn Avenue

Jeff and Erin Catalina have signed a lease with Friendship Development Associates, Inc. to open Verde Mexican Kitchen & Cantina, a brand-new restaurant and tequila bar, at 5491 Penn Avenue. The Catalinas’ company has applied for the transfer of a liquor license to that location, which they intend to open by the end of October. The BGC plans to schedule an informational meeting in August with the Catalinas, so that residents or businesses situated within 500 feet of the premises can learn more about their plans. Issues related to hours of operation and parking, and whether patrons will be permitted to drink without buying food, are typical subjects for discussion. *The Bulletin* will cover the meeting and give a full report in its September issue.

Other News

In the September edition, *The Bulletin* will also be reporting on plans for a change in the use of the commercial premises at 300 South Pacific Avenue. The building is now home to the Brian & Cooper Food Mart. ♦

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A GARDEN – AND A COMMUNITY – GROWS IN GARFIELD

by Kathryn Vargas
Bloomfield-Garfield Corp.

Over the last month, the corner of Dearborn and North Pacific has undergone an amazing transformation from an easily forgettable corner to one of the most impressive displays of landscaping in the neighborhood. In that short time, the Nguyen family, who own 116 N. Pacific Avenue but live at #112, have worked tirelessly on creating a neighborhood oasis that has proved to be a well-deserved showcase for this month.

The garden is more than just a residential flower and vegetable plot; this is a garden with a mission to promote community, environmental living, and beauty in the neighborhood. Kim Hoa and Thong Nguyen have lived in Garfield for more than 20 years and have been planning to create this garden for years. Over time, they have collected materials with hopes that one day they would find the perfect space. When Sharon Williams, the tenant at 116 N. Pacific, agreed to let the family utilize the side yard, the Nguyen family went to work.

The majority of the materials used to create the garden are recycled. The bricks for the walkway came from a demolished chimney, and the wood for the planting boxes are scrap pieces. Nam Nguyen finds materials being thrown away and collects them for reuse. Many of these items determined the outcome of the garden. Thong Nguyen stated, “We did not have a plan when we started. We just built on piece by piece until we felt it looked finished.” The design is a perfectly symmetrical layout, making it hard to believe it was pieced together based on the available supplies.

The family used all of its resources to make this garden possible. When asked what was their favorite part of constructing the garden, the Nguyen family was in agreement: “Everyone worked together and we worked together well. The garden belongs to all of us.” It truly was a family affair, with each local relative playing a part in the design, planting and construction of the space.

Furthermore, the Nguyen family is not keeping this garden to itself. The family literally shares the fruits of its labor with the community. “We share



Kathryn Vargas/BGC

THE GARDEN ARCHITECTS INCLUDE, FROM LEFT, NAM NGUYEN, SUOI KHUU, THONG NGUYEN, KIM HOA NGUYEN, AND (NOT PICTURED) FAMILY FRIEND CLARENCE WILLIAMS.

what we grow with our neighbors; it is too much food for just us,” explained Kim Hoa. “We also like to invite people over so that they can also enjoy the garden and we get to know our neighbors.”

Thong reflected, “Our neighbors across the street never used to come outside and sit on their porch. Since we have built this garden, they are out every morning, enjoying the view of

the garden.” This new community gem is one that many people passing by take time to enjoy. Photos don’t do the garden justice; you have to stroll by to enjoy the tranquil and well-designed space. It is likely that Kim Hoa and Thong will invite you in and share their story – and some herbs or lettuce, too. ♦



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ASSEMBLE FOSTERS COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

by Caitlin Cleary
The Bulletin

After four years in Los Angeles, Nina Barbuto recently returned to her native Pittsburgh to bring a vibrant community space to 5125 Penn Avenue. From the sidewalk, Assemble, an arts and technology space she founded last spring, may seem like a typical art gallery, but inside it conveys so much more.

"We don't exactly *sell* art," clarifies Barbuto. "We act as a venue for people creating and displaying new media or experimental art." Indeed, this space invites creativity. From the faint smell of new paint to worn hardwood floors to LED "butterflies" hanging from the ceiling, Assemble gets visitors' creative juices flowing.

Barbuto's passions for art and community are referenced in Assemble's vision, which asks people to "engage their intrigue through hands-on activities about arts and technology." This vision also aims to foster "physical and nonphysical connections," described by Barbuto as the invisible "web of networks" that defines connections to one another.

One of Assemble's first installations visually demonstrated the importance of collaboration to its mission. In April, "trees" made of tree limbs held up the canopy outside of Assemble's space. Created by Will Schlough, whose installation was featured inside, the "trees" supported the canopy as Assemble supported the artist's work. Barbuto says she hopes to hold a "canopy contest" in the future, which would involve residents voting on new ideas for the canopy. "It would be a great way to involve the neighborhood more," she says.

Inspired by a similar venue in



A YOUNG PARTICIPANT IN ASSEMBLE'S "COLORIZE THE URBAN LANDSCAPE."

L.A., Barbuto stresses that she wanted Assemble to welcome children. "Working with the kids," she asserts, "that's my favorite part of this." One can see various remnants from past kid-targeted workshops throughout the space. With everything from the simple (paper bags for creating one-of-a-kind hand puppets) to the complicated (a floor-to-ceiling Plunko board, a toy for all ages with motion-sensing light-up ramps and metallic balls), Assemble welcomes children of all ages. Well, maybe not all ages. "Kids do need to be able to tell the difference between a piece of candy and an LED," Barbuto explains. "So kids three and up are totally welcome."

One of Assemble's most recent events, "Colorize the Urban Landscape," took place during the July Unblurred. Throughout the

See **ASSEMBLE**, page 16

Mainstreets Memo

by Rich Engel
Mainstreets Manager

A belated "welcome to the avenue" is due to Ben Saks. Back in March 2011, he purchased the former Thomas Merton Center at 5125 Penn. In addition to making his residence on the avenue, Saks has also created space on the building's first floor, which he rents to Assemble artspace (see article, left).

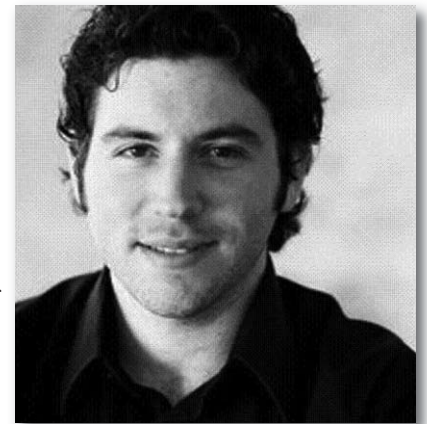
Since moving from Cleveland to Pittsburgh to attend Carnegie Mellon University, Saks has been quite an inspiration to those around him. In 2006, he was shot in the hand while assisting a police officer struggling to subdue a suspected drug dealer. The suspect grabbed the officer's gun during the struggle and shot Saks, who received 30 stitches and personal thanks from then-Pittsburgh police Chief Dominic J. Costa and Mayor Bob O'Connor, and later a bronze medal and a \$4,000 grant from the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission.

Also while a student, Saks was project manager and lead deck hand for the renowned Solar Decathlon Zero Energy House in 2007, which travelled to the National Mall in Washington, D.C. to compete for a national prize. His undergraduate degree was granted in 2008 by the Department of Architecture.

Following college, Saks worked for a year for WETdesign in Los Angeles, then did a stint selling architectural products. He is a woodworker, making furniture and musi-

cal instruments, a photographer and a maker of small and ultralight aircraft. This unusual hobby led Saks and his friend Phil Kibbe of Cleveland to make "FLOAT," a documentary film about indoor, free-flight duration aircraft.

Saks is currently working full-time as a producer for "FLOAT." He's traveled around the world to shoot on location. Though not yet complete, even the film's promotional trailer has gotten noticed by the Tribeca Film Festival and a



BEN SAKS, THE NEW OWNER OF 5125 PENN, IS A PITTSBURGH HERO.

reviewer for the *Boston Globe*, who recently wrote, "The goal isn't to fly, but to float: to prolong the wonder, essentially, of flying. I suspect they're the kind of planes Alexander Calder would have made, if he'd been into making airplanes."

The third floor of 5125 Penn is still being renovated, and Assemble is still in its early stages, yet Saks has already done great things with the building, with more to come. ♦

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BGC Summer Jobs Program Forges Ahead Despite Budget Cuts

by Caitlin Cleary
The Bulletin

The Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation has had another successful run in its partnership with the City of Pittsburgh Summer Youth Employment Program (PSYEP). This city-funded program allows young people ages 14 to 21 to apply for summer jobs through the BGC, which then matches them to employers. The program provides participants with internships and a paycheck, giving them work experience and preparing them for future careers.

Mike Baltzer, a program coordinator for the summer program, believes that it “provides experience and allows for professional development.” The program runs from mid-June to mid-August. The first steps involve kids coming in to apply and filling out paperwork. “This is their introduction to the world of paperwork,” Baltzer states. The BGC then finds employers and matches applicants based on their interests.

Participants prepare for real-world situations during the first weeks. They learn how to complete important documents, get work permits, create résumés, and conduct themselves professionally during an interview. Throughout the process, BGC acts as a “buffer” or safety net for participants venturing out into new territory. It assesses the actual development of participants from the beginning to the end of the program. Program coordinators look to foster good communication skills, particularly in mock interviews.

The next phase of the program

sends participants to six-week jobs at their new worksites. Armed with free bus passes, they go off to one of the wide number of available employers. This summer, the BGC matched participants with Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, Schenley Heights Community Development, the Kingsley Center, GNC Headquarters, Martin Luther King Jr. Mural Project, and Prism Stained Glass, among others.

Baltzer states that these positions do not involve “grunt work.” “We place kids in administrative positions so they can acquire applicable skills for the future,” he notes.

Last summer, about 160 participants completed the program. Some students whose schedules permitted it kept working after the program officially ended. Unfortunately, recent budget cuts have led to less funding for this program. Only about 40 students are involved in 2011. “That's what happens when budgets get cut,” Baltzer states. “Usually the people hurt most by it need it the most.”

With that said, the program powers on. Even with a smaller staff, the same amount of work gets completed and every participant receives adequate assistance. After the summer program has ended, 17- to 21-year-olds can apply to be part of the BGC's Youth Employment Program, which runs year-round and provides workshops, training and job placement. “Kids need these programs,” says Baltzer. “There are many steps involved from being a person with a birth certificate and Social Security card to becoming an actual employee.” ♦

EMPLOYMENT CENTER WELCOMES NEW WORKFORCE DEVELOPER



Paula Martinez/The Bulletin

JAMIE CLEARFIELD COMES TO THE ENEC AFTER YEARS IN BOSTON AND AFRICA.

by Caitlin Cleary
The Bulletin

The Eastside Neighborhood Employment Center (ENEC) recently welcomed Jamie Clearfield as its new Workforce Developer. After receiving her education in Boston and Africa, the Wilkes-Barre, Pa., native moved back to her home state to take the ENEC position in early June.

As a college student at Boston University, Clearfield participated in what she calls an “unusual undergraduate program.” This very small interdisciplinary program combined the disciplines of education, social issues, ethnic issues, and urban affairs into one major. After her first course in urban affairs, she says she realized, “This is everything.” She asserts that

growing up in a small city instilled in her a strong interest in community.

Clearfield says that her desire to “empower other communities” led her to spend her junior year in Kenya. Later, after receiving her master's degree in International Educational Development from Boston University, she returned to Africa. This time she provided HIV education in Tanzania and gave small business workshops in rural Uganda.

Clearfield has plenty of experience in community organizing both in the United States and overseas. Her new position involves working with clients to prepare and place them with gainful employment. She says that she looks forward to “not just focusing on employment but education and access to technology.” ♦

ALDI, from page 1

last December, ALDI will be renovating the existing structure, which used to be a car dealership. Indoor parking will be on the second and third floors, with the entrance on Roup Avenue. Paul Smith Architects, a local firm, is in charge of the transformation.

Plans also remain unchanged for the adjacent building, which once housed National Record Mart offices, and will be renovated as an office building.

Odell said that the site across Baum,

which used to be Day's outdoor lot and which Warner Pacific also owns, has had serious interest from several retailers. The tentative plans are for new construction “built right up to the sidewalk and consistent with the urban context,” said Odell, but the tenants have still not been determined. “The positive thing about the delay [with ALDI] is that more of the pieces may come together by the time ALDI opens.” ♦

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DESIGN FIRM SETTLES ON PENN AVENUE

by Caitlin Cleary
The Bulletin

Most plans for post-college business ventures remain just that – plans that never come to fruition. The founders of Plumb Media transformed their vision into reality with the opening of their offices at 5131 Penn Avenue. Business partners Matt Mullett and Nik Stoltzfus brought their brain-child to life in 2004. Since then, it has blossomed into a firm focused on website development and print design.

The firm now has two more employees in addition to founders Nik and Matt. Dagan Bontrager started as an intern and can now call himself a full-time employee. Kate Stoltzfus, who is married to Nik, came on a year ago as project manager to oversee general operations and act as client liaison. Only a year in and she already says that she “loves it here.”

“Moving here is its own reward for us,” says Nik. After housing Plumb Media in a rented apartment building, then at Union Project in Highland

Park, a building purchase seemed like the next logical step for the business. Renovations of the new home/office space began in February 2011 and have dramatically improved its inner and outer appearance. With the help of a contractor, everything – floors, ceilings, and walls – has been completely restored.

In the future, Plumb will operate on the entire first floor. What once served as a dining room will become a training room in which the firm will offer workshops for the non-technologically inclined. Nik and Kate plan on instructing “business owners, area residents, anyone really.” The entire second floor will be rented as an apartment, and Nik and Kate will occupy the third floor. Both future apartments are undergoing extensive renovations, and their layouts have been altered to more properly utilize natural light and space.

One of Plumb's main values, Nik says, is to deliver precise service on time to every client equally. A plumb bob, the firm's inspiration and namesake, was used to measure perfectly straight lines before more advanced tools became available. Plumb's web-



Paula Martinac/The Bulletin

KATE AND NIK STOLTZFUS WORK FROM THEIR RENOVATED FIRST-FLOOR SPACE AT 5131 PENN.

site asserts that it also “serves as a throwback” to a pre-digital technology era, “when you had to shake your client's hand and be accountable for your work.”

Nik and Kate say they share an enthusiasm for their new home on Penn Avenue. They recount a story in which they bribed friends to help

paint the first floor office with the promise of food from some of the corridor's signature restaurants. Comparing the new location to their previous venues, Nik says, “The energy on this main street shows us we didn't realize what we were missing.” ♦

FIRE, from page 5

other to achieve our goals.” The primary values of this community, Albright said, are “simplicity of living, and taking what's abandoned and forgotten and renewing it.”

Their intention was to renovate the dilapidated Victorian, which Albright noted was “surprisingly solid and in good shape” when he bought it as a foreclosure in 2010, although it had become “a personal landfill” from past owners and needed a lot of cosmetic work. Because of the poor condition and age of the house – some hardware on the pocket doors is stamped “1893” – Albright had been unable to secure homeowners' insurance, although he tried 10 to 15 different agencies.

Following up on the goal of renovating their residence, Albright recently quit his job as a bike messenger to devote himself to working on the house. And then came the fire, which started on the back porch and spread quickly to the third floor. (See photo on page 5.) Fortunately, the one housemate who was present at the time got out safe-

ly, along with his two dogs. The house cat was missing for a day, “but then she popped out unharmed,” Albright said.

Through the generosity of friends and family, “our immediate needs have been filled,” Albright explained. “We're all OK. And we have more clothes now than we did before.”

The group has started a blog to keep interested neighborhood residents apprised of their progress toward possibly rebuilding the house. “We might need help down the road,” he said. “Professional services and advice. People can follow our situation.” He said he is not sure if they will try to rebuild, because “financially it doesn't make the best sense. But there's a strong symbolic value for us in rebuilding, even if it's a longer, harder process.”

Community members can visit the group's blog at www.ruinrenew.com for updates. “We're all on Facebook, too,” Albright said, “and we're open to new friends.” ♦

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Presidential Visits to the East End Span the Ages

by James Wudarczyk

Lawrenceville Historical Society

On June 24, President Barack Obama came to Carnegie Mellon University's National Robotic Engineering Center in Lawrenceville. He addressed 150 invited guests on his plan to unveil the Advanced Manufacturing Partnership that would direct \$500 million in public money to new technologies. The president said he believes that a consortium of business leaders, academics and government officials will jump-start the economy and restore America's position as a manufacturing leader in the world economy. Apparently, the president chose the Robotics Center because of its excellent reputation in developing robotics and software for the military, agriculture, mining and other industries.

Obama's visit was a relatively sedate affair as the presidential motorcade crossed the Bloomfield Bridge and shot down 40th Street, where the

Laughlin Steel, Thomas Laughlin, Jr. There the president changed from a straw hat into a frock coat and silk hat. Everywhere that Taft went people reportedly cheered wildly and enthusiastically for him.

Taft's schedule was hectic. He dedicated a Jewish synagogue on Fifth Avenue in Oakland. As the president traveled throughout the East End, Bloomfield, and Lawrenceville, the city was a sea of people eager to greet Taft. In Lawrenceville, ten thousand people flooded Arsenal Park to see the president dedicate the Dolly Madison Fountain. Afterward the president proceeded to downtown Pittsburgh, and later attended a Pirates game (see photo below).

Taft's second trip to Lawrenceville was a much more solemn and personal affair. In 1910, Laughlin committed suicide. Mrs. Taft was so distraught at the news that her doctors advised against her traveling to Pittsburgh for the funeral service. The president came alone and accompanied the

area. Upon learning that he was near Allegheny Cemetery, the president requested that he be permitted to visit the grave of his West Point friend, General Alexander Hays, who had been killed at the Battle of the Wilderness in 1864. After reviewing all the battles listed on the Hays monument, Grant sat on one of the inverted cannons and wept.

The earliest visit of a sitting American president took place in 1816, when James Monroe inspected the work in progress at the U. S. arsenal in Lawrenceville. An arsenal near Pittsburgh was commissioned in 1814 after Congress realized during the War of 1812 that the ability of supplying the army with necessary supplies was totally inadequate.

At the time of the presidential visit, Lawrenceville was little more than a

struggling rural village with a handful of houses and a scant population. On hand to greet the president were dignitaries from Pittsburgh, military personnel, and curious spectators. William Barclay Foster, the founder of Lawrenceville, escorted Monroe in a carriage from Pittsburgh to the arsenal. Colonel Abram Woolley, commander of the arsenal, gave the president a formal tour of the facilities.

In the 195 years between the visits of Presidents Monroe and Obama, the East End was transformed from farms and tiny hamlets into an urban area. However, the most glaring difference is the fact that modern presidents travel with heavy security, while their predecessors moved about freely, escorted by a driver and a small entourage. ♦



PRESIDENT TAFT (CENTER, IN STRAW BOATER) APPLAUDS A DOUBLE BY PIRATE HONUS WAGNER ON HIS 1909 VISIT TO PITTSBURGH.

president toured the facility before presenting an hour-long speech. A few curious spectators and a couple of demonstrators were in the vicinity to greet the chief executive.

This sharply contrasts with the gala celebration that greeted William Howard Taft when he came to Pittsburgh on May 29, 1909. Factories, stores and businesses closed so the employees could catch a glimpse of their president. Homes were decorated with flags and bunting.

At least 5,000 people were on hand to greet Taft when his train pulled into the East Liberty Station. Thousands of people jammed the route to the home of the president's wife's brother-in-law and assistant treasurer of Jones &

funeral procession to Allegheny Cemetery, where Laughlin was laid to rest.

This was the second time that an American president visited Allegheny Cemetery. The first presidential visit took place on September 14, 1869, when Ulysses S. Grant attended celebrations in Pittsburgh in honor of the centennial of the birth of Alexander von Humboldt, a famous German scientist. Afterwards, he accompanied Mayor Jared Brush for a celebration at Friendship Grove, the home of Dr. Gross, a prominent local physician, in the present day Bloomfield-Friendship area.

On their way back to downtown, the president's carriage driver took him along Penn Avenue in the Garfield

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The Bulletin Board publishes listings of volunteer opportunities, free or low-cost events and classes, announcements, fundraising events, and services that are of particular interest to our neighborhoods. Send announcements to Bulletin@bloomfield-garfield.org by the 15th of each month. We do not accept listings over the phone. Listings published on a space-available basis.

OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Need help getting a job? The BGC Youth Development Center is looking for those 17-25 years old to join the BGC Out-of-School Youth Employment Program. Benefits include: transportation assistance, pre-employment training, job placement, flexible hours, development workshops, etc. For more information visit 5321 Penn Ave or call 412-441-9833 and ask for Charis Rose.

LAWRENCEVILLE CLEAN-UP CREWS

On the 3rd Saturday of every month from April through October, residents and community stakeholders come together to clean up, beautify, and plant Lawrenceville. Clean-ups crews work from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. on Saturday, with breakfast and a light lunch provided. In addition, t-shirts, gloves, trash bags, and other necessary tools will be provided. Volunteers meet at Lawrenceville United, 4825 Butler Street, at 9 a.m. on each of the following clean up days: August 20, September 24, and October 15.

LAWRENCEVILLE HOUSE TOUR

Lawrenceville Hospitality House Tour will take place Sunday, Oct. 2 from noon to 5 p.m. The self-guided tour begins at entrance to Allegheny Cemetery (trolleys and transportation also available). Tickets are on sale Sept. 6 at Lawrenceville businesses: Jay Design, Perk Me Up, Gallery on 43rd, Dandelions, Coca Café and Pavement. \$12 in advance, \$15 day of event. Volunteer docents needed. Contact Kate at 412-600-2068 or visit www.lawrencevillehousetour.org.

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Pennsylvania law requires all children under 12 to wear an approved helmet while riding a bike. Bike Pittsburgh has supplied Bloomfield Development Corporation with bike helmets free for Bloomfield residents. Call the BDC for more information at 412-681-8800

HOMEBUYER EDUCATION

NeighborWorks Western Pennsylvania is offering free Homebuyer Education Workshop Sat. Aug. 13 from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Bloomfield-Garfield Activity Center on 113 N. Pacific Ave. Lunch will be provided. This presentation will highlight the right steps toward homeownership. To register call 412-281-1100 X 121 or visit www.nwwpa.org.

RIDESHARING

The CommuteInfo program is designed to increase the number of people who travel to work or school by riding transit, carpooling, vanpooling, or bikepooling. Commuters and employers can visit www.commuteinfo.org or call toll-free 1-888-819-6110 for more information or to request a commuting report.

COUNCIL TO GO

Meet Councilman Patrick Dowd at Council to Go, his mobile district office. August sessions will be held on Friday, Aug. 26, 7:30 to 9 a.m. at Perk Me Up at 4407 Butler Street in Lawrenceville and Thursday, Aug. 25, 7 to 8 p.m. at State Rep. Dom Costa's Office at 6808 Greenwood Street in Morningside. For a full schedule as well as more information, visit www.pghgov.com/district7 or call 412-255-2140.

A PLACE TO BELONG

Children ages 5-11 are invited to our Vacation Bible School, Polar Expedition (Jesus' Love Is...), from Mon. Aug. 22 to Friday, Aug. 26. Registration begins at 5:45PM. VBS starts at 6 p.m. and ends at 8 p.m. Door of Hope Community Church, 5225 Holmes Street. All are welcome every Sunday at 10 a.m. for Sunday School for all ages, plus Christians in

Recovery, and our Church Service at 11 a.m. For more information, please call 412-781-6440, email us at doorofhopecommunitychurch@verizon.net or check out our Facebook page for our calendar and updates on activities.

ST. RAPHAEL - CENTENNIAL MASS

Saint Raphael parish in Morningside will celebrate its 100th anniversary on Saturday, Sept. 24. This event will take place at Churchill Valley Country Club, 800 Beulah Rd at 6 p.m. A centennial mass will be held at Saint Raphael Church, 1118 Chislett St, Pittsburgh, PA 15206, on Sunday, Sept. 25 at 11 a.m. with Bishop David A. Zubik presiding. For further information contact Mary Exler at 412-361-5837 or visit www.anniver100@verizon.net.

OUTDOOR YOGA

Join your neighbors, the Yoga Hive (5491 Penn Ave), in Highland Park every Sunday for outdoor yoga. We will meet to the left of the fountain. Class starts at 9:30 and runs until 10:45 a.m. Sliding scale fee \$5 - \$12. Bring your mat, a towel, water and get ready to practice outdoors. Questions: info@yogahivepgh.com

2ND ANNUAL BOCCE TOURNAMENT

At 11:30 a.m. on Saturday Aug. 20, more than 20 four-person teams will showcase their bocce skills and enjoy a day of food, music, and fun at the Second Annual Bocce Tournament and Festival, which will be held in the Smallman and 12th Street parking lot across the street from the John Heinz History Center. Spectators will enjoy Italian food and beverages provided by Common Plea Catering and music from Pure Gold and other local bands. Admission is free for spectators. For more information or to sponsor a team, contact Natalie Taylor at 412-454-6325 or ngtaylor@heinzhistorycenter.org.

FREE FORECLOSURE WORKSHOP

Struggling to make your mortgage payments? On Aug. 22 from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. NeighborWorks Western Pennsylvania will host a free work-

shop at NeighborWorks Home Ownership Center located at 710 Fifth Ave. in Uptown. Skilled counselors will explain foreclosure timeline in depth, the appropriate way to submit a complete modification package, and solutions available to homeowners.

EVENTS AT ASSEMBLE

What's going on at Assemble in August? "With What They Left" is an exhibit created by four artists transforming yesterday's junk into furniture, sculptures, etc. Work will be displayed from August 5 to 27. Make stuff with books before you have to use them for school at the Back to Books party August 17 from 4 to 7 p.m. A small donation is asked to participate. Mosaic-making workshops on August 6 and 13 from 12 to 4 p.m. Kids of all ages welcome, snacks and drinks will be provided. All of these events take place at 5125 Penn Avenue. Contact assemblepgh@gmail.com for more information.

NEW BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH

Flea market, bake sale and BBQ dinner on Saturday, Aug. 6 from 8 a.m.-12 p.m. at New Bethel Baptist Church, 221 43rd St in Lawrenceville. Step up and go green with Jesus Vacation Bible School, Aug. 10-12 at 7 p.m. Revival! Revival! from Aug. 24-26 at 7 p.m., featuring Pastor Richard W. Wingfield from Unity Baptist Church, music, Trini Massie Choir. All are welcome to attend any of these events. For more information contact Annie Walker at 412-231-3128.

HOMEOWNERS' LOAN PROGRAM

Do you need financial assistance in order to save your house? Don't hesitate to take action. The Emergency Homeowners Loan Program has federal funds upwards of \$100 million dollars available to help homeowners facing foreclosure. This money is available on a first-come, first-served basis, so act fast. Call the new 2-1-1 line today to get connected with the right agency to walk you through the application process.

For additional listings, please visit The Bulletin's blog at www.bgcbulletin.blogspot.com.

Avenue Insider

by Christine Bethea
Bulletin Contributor

Susan Constance is what people call a “boomeranger.” She moved to Portland for 17 years to work for Pendleton as a textile designer, then came back to the ‘burgh due to her family and her love of the “Most Livable City.” Constance grew up on the Southside where she was raised with the idea that “you make stuff.” An easy assumption when you have a grandfather who blew glass “for fun”; a father credited with building a neighborhood merry-go-round (animals and all); and a mother who encouraged creativity in making Christmas gifts. Constance got so good with her weaving kit that she was able to monogram initials in the middle of her potholders.

“I don’t think I had any choice

but to become an artist,” said Constance, “Everyone in my family was one, whether we made money from it or not.” She claims there was little or no art in the schools she attended, where a kid was lucky to get an occasional crayon thrown at her. It was most definitely her family background that stirred her creative soul.

Her career path predestined, Susan went on to work for a number of artist venues. She attended and taught classes for nearly every age group. And around 2006, she went to work for the Digging Pitt Gallery in Lawrenceville. It was there that writing – the other art bug – bit her.

“At that time, the blog boom was just getting started,” said Constance. “I’m proud to say that we created one of the city’s first art blogs and initiated online art shows.” Digging Pitt featured more than 30 local artists with



Susan Constance

SUSAN CONSTANCE'S BLOG ENTRY ON “UNBLURRED” FEATURED THE PITTSBURGH GLASS CENTER, AMONG OTHER VENUES.

connects to their home sites. Constance honed her skills by practicing on her own personal art blog, which she named “Oranje,” and before long she was working on several blogs at a time and training other arts bloggers. That’s when New York called...or should we say e-mailed.

“CBS New York found me by reading one of my posts. They were starting a local online affiliate and offered me job writing for their ‘Best Of’ department.”

CBS New York wanted to feature Pittsburgh as one of its pick cities, offering up the local art, entertainment, and color by those who know it best – Pittsburghers.

The first story out of the can for Constance was easy. She chose to write about “Unblurred: First Fridays on Penn.”

Constance elaborated: “There are so many reasons why the Penn Ave art scene is so exciting. For one, you have to look at the consistency. Unblurred has been around since 1998, a trailblazer in

the city. And along with the decapitated parking meters and the occasional boarded-up building are some phenomenal small art galleries showcasing some very powerful art.”

Other reasons Constance chose Unblurred for her first blog entry was the welcoming feeling you get from the avenue. The footprint of Unblurred is just large enough, and offbeat fashion is expected. No one ever looks at you askance. There’s also that sense of experimentation: “A lot of unexpected art happens.”

Most importantly, the art is affordable. “There is the likelihood that you will meet the artist in person, and get their art and their story directly from them.”

Also cool. Little kids often show up with their parents to help paint murals and do other community art. Every Unblurred is a family affair.

For Constance’s first CBS post, check out: <http://cbsloc.al/qx9WN2>. ♦

“Avenue Insider” is a monthly series that highlights businesses in and around Penn Avenue to share what’s good in our neighborhoods.

CARNEGIE LIBRARY HAPPENINGS - AUGUST

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh - East Liberty Branch
130 S. Whitfield St. 412-363-8274
All programs are free

Baby & Me

For ages birth to 2. Thursdays, August 4, 11 at 10:30 a.m.

Terrific Tales for Toddlers and Preschoolers

For ages 3 to 5. Fridays, August 5, 12, 19 at 10:30 a.m.

Kids Create: Origami

For all ages. Saturday August 20 at 3:30 p.m.

Bounce Around the World

For ages 7 to 12. Thursday, August 11 at 11 a.m.

Summer Reading Book Discussion Group

For grades 4 to 6. Wednesday, August 10 at 6 p.m.

Game-O-Rama: Games Around the World

For ages 5 and up. Saturday, August 6 at 11 a.m.

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh - Lawrenceville Branch
279 Fisk St. 412-682-3668
All programs are free

Adult Book Discussion

Monday, August 8 at 5 p.m. This month’s title is *Please Look After Mom*, by Kyong-suk Sin

Family Fun: Drop-In Art Club

For all ages. Saturday, August 6 from 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

Family Storytime: Bread

For all ages. Saturday, August 6 at 11 a.m.

End of Summer Party

For everyone who participated in Summer Reading Program. Saturday, August 20 at 11:30 a.m.

Friends of CLP-Lawrenceville Meeting

For current and new members. Saturday, August 13 at 11 a.m.



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STARS COME OUT FOR LESLIE PARK POOL PROJECT

by Susan Englert
Leslie Park Collective

On Sunday August 7, from 7 to 11 p.m., the decommissioned community swimming pool at 4700 Butler Street in Lawrenceville will again thrum with activity – and not a drop of water. The Leslie Park Collective will host Urban Star Party v2.0, a free, hands-on astronomy extravaganza for all ages. The collective hopes to top last year's blockbuster attendance of nearly 650. The second annual one-night event is again sponsored by Google's Pittsburgh office.

Urban Star Party v2.0 is a lyrical convergence of star-themed activities and performances, all in the empty swimming pool. The event brings the enchantment of star-gazing to a wide audience of city dwellers – star parties in Pittsburgh are typically held at observatories that are driving distance from the city.

Urban Star Party will kick off at 7 p.m. The Mattress Factory will host two activities for all ages: Pinhole Constellation, a do-it-yourself star system created on paper and illuminated by natural light; and Black Light Star Collage, in which participants use flashlights to create a glowing star collage on transparent paper. Local storyteller Alison Babusci will present an early evening trio of tales about the sky drawn from American Indian and

other folklore.

The Amateur Astronomers Association of Pittsburgh (AAAP) will host "old school" star-gazing with five enthusiastic volunteers on site to help guests of all ages gaze heavenward through one of their magnificent professional-grade telescopes. AAAP's members are eager to explain how the equipment works and share their vast knowledge about the wonders in the nighttime sky.

Assuming clear skies, the astronomers expect viewing conditions to be excellent for the moon, Saturn, double star Alberio with blue and yellow stars, the Ring Nebula, and Open Cluster M11 with thousands of stars. We may also get a glimpse of Mercury and Venus before sunset. The pool's bowl-like enclosure should enhance the viewing environment, dampening the glare from Butler Street below.

For "high tech" star-gazing, Google's Sky Map software engineers will be on hand to demonstrate their wildly popular "Sky Map" application on large-screen monitors. The "app," developed at Google's Pittsburgh office, lets users locate and name planets, stars, and constellations just by pointing any Android™ phone toward space. The demo will complement firsthand viewing through AAAP's telescopes.

Google is especially excited about drawing children and unfamiliar



STAR-GAZERS TURNED OUT FOR LAST YEAR'S URBAN STAR PARTY.

audiences to Urban Star Party v2.0 to explore astronomy, telescopes, and the science behind how they work. The evening will educate children and adults from all over the city on how developers of software applications think about and implement a project like Sky Map. Many of Google's Sky Map engineers are also dedicated amateur astronomers.

Urban Star Party will also feature an outdoor lecture at dusk by AAAP with an enjoyable overview of astronomy and dramatic projected images. The trio Sleep Experiments will create an ambient soundscape for Urban Star Party, with their "meditative, atmospheric dream-pop" musical sets throughout the evening.

For Urban Star Party v2.0, the pool will again be illuminated with atmospheric lighting to help guests navigate safely at night. Light refreshments will be sold, and the site is handicap accessible.

Urban Star Party v2.0 is part of the ongoing programming being staged by the Leslie Park Collective, a community group re-imagining a decommissioned city pool as a

multi-use venue for recreation, performance and exhibition. The collective worked with the Urban Design Build Studio at Carnegie Mellon from August 2010 through May 2011 to develop a master plan for a future spray park and community center. The collective is writing funding applications with the city, and the completed project is at least a few years in the future.

The project has ongoing support from Mayor Luke Ravenstahl, Councilman Patrick Dowd, Senator Jim Ferlo, CitiParks, Public Works, Lawrenceville Corporation, Lawrenceville United and a host of Lawrenceville residents who, along with the CMU Studio, led six workshops in 2009-2011 to generate ideas for re-use.

Community members can find the Leslie Park Pool project on Facebook: Urban Star Party v2.0. For additional information, contact event managers Susan Englert at susan_englert@hotmail.com or 412-559-1861, and Deborah Knox at knoxconsulting@gmail.com or 412-344-3966. ♦

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ASSEMBLE, from page 10

evening, more than 400 guests painted a collage of abandoned buildings on the wall. Adding color to these two-dimensional buildings was meant to inspire community involvement in blighted neighborhoods. Strangers, passerby, and friends contributed to the interactive exhibit.

As an event-based operation, this

space at 5125 Penn Avenue announces workshops and openings online via its website, Facebook page and Twitter. Pedestrians can also note future events on the bulletin board right outside the door. Barbutto's describes Assemble's motto as, "Learning through making through learning." ♦