

the Bulletin

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Students harvest sunflowers in Garfield. Read the full story on page 7. Photo by Kathryn Vargas

A Grocery Store for Garfield?

By Paula Martinac *The Bulletin*

Bloomfield/Garfield – Plans to bring a grocery store to Penn Avenue that were shelved last March may get back on track in early 2012.

As reported in *The Bulletin* last April, C. Brantley Tillman of Commercial Properties, Inc. in Raleigh, N.C., announced that he was “not moving forward” with plans to bring Bottom Dollar, a discount subsidiary of the

Southern supermarket chain Food Lion, to 5200 Penn Avenue. Although Tillman’s engineer revised the store drawings to address concerns of nearby residents about truck traffic, a few people on South Pacific and neighboring streets vociferously contested other issues, such as placement of the parking lot, lighting and possible noise.

Faced with continued opposition from

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New Rental Housing Developments Underway

by Joe Reuben *The Bulletin*

Garfield – After months of tying together legal and financial loose ends, the Garfield Glen townhouse project finally emerged from the starting gate as demolition and site grading activity began in November.

A joint initiative of the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC) and S & A Homes, Garfield Glen will deliver 45 new, single-family homes to the Garfield neighborhood by the end of 2012. The homes will

be a mix of two-, three-, and four-bedroom units, with a bath, powder room, and basement. All homes will carry the federal Energy Star rating, signifying efficient use of energy. Contractors are in the process of taking down homes on Dearborn, Broad, and Kincaid Streets to make room for the new development, which will fill in blocks on those streets between N. Mathilda and N. Atlantic Avenue.

See **Rental** | page 3

ALDI Construction Delayed Again

By Paula Martinac *The Bulletin*

Friendship – Reports are still circulating that the discount grocery store ALDI has backed out of its deal to renovate and move into the former Day Auto on Baum Boulevard, but *The Bulletin* has confirmed those

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From Guangdong to Garfield

By Joshua Barszczewski *The Bulletin*

Garfield – Visitors to the Eastside Neighborhood Employment Center (ENEC) are likely to see a new face – at least, if they go to the center on Thursdays and Fridays. That’s when Han Cui, the ENEC’s newest intern,

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The Beauty of Working Together

By Margaret Graham *East Liberty Development, Inc.*

East Liberty – Imagine you’re a web developer. You just started an independent business, and you don’t need to lease an entire office just for you (nor can you afford to). So, you work at a coffee shop. A coffee from a

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Paula Martinac

Erin and Jeff Catalina opened their much-awaited restaurant, Verde Mexican Kitchen & Cantina, on November 15. The restaurant serves authentic Mexican cuisine and a full array of Mexican beers and tequilas. Located in the Glass Lofts at 5491 Penn Avenue, the restaurant boasts a mural by local artist Gabe Felice.

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Grocery from page 1

neighbors, Tillman released his option to buy the property, saying he needed to focus on the 15 other stores Bottom Dollar was constructing in the region. However, he left the door open to revisit the plan at a later date.

Now, with more nearby neighbors supporting the idea that the avenue needs a grocery store – it has been a virtual “food desert” since Giant Eagle left in 1987 – the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation reopened conversations with Tillman this fall. The property at 5200 Penn is still for sale.

“There’s still interest in the neighborhood,” said Kate Tillman Brown, VP of Development for Commercial Properties. “But it’s not up to us. It’s up to our tenant to decide how they’re going to grow their business.”

In mid-November, BGC staff toured the construction site of a new Bottom Dollar in McKeesport, at the intersection of Walnut Street and Eden Park Boulevard. The 18,000+-square-foot facility is similar to the proposed store on Penn, with some changes necessary to fit the smaller, urban site. The McKeesport store is nearing completion and will be opening to the public in January.

“It’s a nice building, solid construction,” observed Rick Swartz, executive director of

the BGC. Looking at a line of coolers for frozen foods that wrap around two walls of the building, he noted, “There are more coolers than I’ve seen in many stores, even Giant Eagle.”

Aggie Brose, the BGC’s deputy director, remarked that the aisles of the store are extra wide. “Some stores you can’t get two carts through,” she said. Brown told *The Bulletin* that Bottom Dollar did extensive research to find out what customers wanted, and wider aisles were among their interests. “It makes it feel more plush,” Brown said. “They configured the store to appeal to shoppers.”

Another signature feature of Bottom Dollar stores is a separate, refrigerated produce room that is kept at 35 degrees. “It keeps everything crisper and fresher than cooling it from below,” Tillman said. Because of the temperature, though, “You don’t stay in here long. You get your produce and get out.”

Bottom Dollar carries national brands as well as its own line of food products. “It’s nice when you come in and can get the brands you like,” said Brown, jokingly noting her own allegiance to LeSueur baby peas.

“You’ll find nothing but groceries here,” Tillman added. “No lawn chairs or anything like that.” Brown noted, however, that the



Kate Tillman Brown and Aggie Brose discuss the layout of the Bottom Dollar store in McKeesport. Photo by Paula Martinac

store carries a handful of non-grocery items, like light bulbs, for customers’ convenience.

If Bottom Dollar decides to come to Penn Avenue, Swartz asked Tillman if he would consider modifying the exterior design of the building to match the urban look of Penn Avenue, and Tillman was receptive. “Changing the aesthetics is not a problem,” he stated. “It’s the nuts and bolts, the set-up of the aisles, for example, that we can’t change.”

Construction of the McKeesport store, which included a demolition of existing structures and removal of gas tanks, has

taken just seven months. “This store is going to be a real asset to this community,” Tillman observed.

Tillman and Brown offered to have BGC staff back for the grand opening in January. Rich Engel, Mainstreets Manager for the BGC, suggested bringing a van-load of nearby residents, so they could see firsthand what a Penn Avenue store might look like and offer. “We’d love to be there,” Brown said of the 5200 Penn location, but stressed again that the decision is up to their tenant. ♦

ALDI from page 1

rumors are false.

“That is incorrect,” Brent Laubaugh, Vice President for ALDI in this region, said of the rumor. “Development will begin next year.”

ALDI was originally set to start construction in spring 2011. When spring came and went, *The Bulletin* learned that the start of construction had been postponed until the fall, due to the maternity leave of a key staff member at ALDI’s Saxonburg, Pa., regional offices. But it’s almost winter, and the building remains empty. Construction has been delayed yet again until “early next year,” according to the developer John Odell of Warner Pacific Properties in Michigan,

which owns the property. Odell confirmed that “ALDI is our tenant. They are happy to be coming to the neighborhood.”

Under the new schedule, Odell projected that the store will open in the late spring or early summer of 2012. He pointed out that rumors often fly “when deals drag out.” Odell further offered that the President of ALDI, who is usually not hands-on in development deals, has taken a personal interest in the Baum Boulevard location and became very involved in the planning. “He wants it to be a signature store,” Odell explained. “This will be a model for all their other urban stores.” ♦

West Penn Begins Recruitment

by Paula Martinac *The Bulletin*

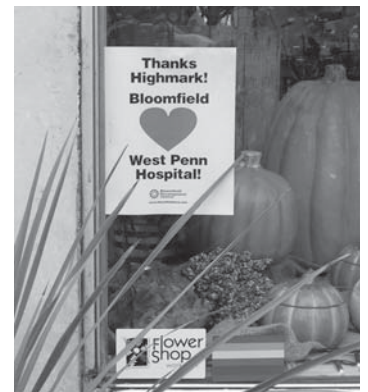
Bloomfield – Less than a year after it laid off hundreds of employees, closed its emergency room, and shuttered most in-patient services, West Penn Allegheny Health System (WPAHS), shored up by a partnership with insurance giant Highmark Inc., has begun the process of rehiring staff for West Penn Hospital.

Although there is no specific reopening date for the ER and in-patient facilities, Dr. Keith Ghezzi, CEO of WPAHS, reported at a November 16 press briefing that it will be early in the first quarter of 2012. WPAHS has already held one recruitment fair for nurses at which 600 applicants showed up, and will offer another on December 7.

WPAHS currently has 12,000 employees, but “we have the opportunity to grow more jobs,” said Dr. Ken Melani, CEO of Highmark. “We’ll also be supporting medical education and training” to prevent shortages of healthcare employees down the road.

Ghezzi stated that the system will be hiring a total of about 200 new employees, but he was not specific about what those positions would be. “Current employees [of WPAHS] will be transferring around,” he noted, so it is still unclear what kinds of staff West Penn will need. “We already have support services, but we will fill in as needed.” He said former staff that left last year or were laid off would not receive preference.

Physical changes in the West Penn facility



Signs in store windows along Liberty Avenue show appreciation to Highmark. Photo by Joshua Barszczewski

will be phased in over the next two years, with a total of \$18 million in renovations overseen by Astorino, a local architectural firm. Improvements will include a new entrance and reception area for the ER; a new façade and drop-off porte cochere for the Liberty Avenue entrance to Mellon Pavilion; renovations to four floors; and the transformation of all patient rooms into private rooms with updated technology. The total bed count will increase from 225 to 250.

“We’re upgrading the hospital to the current standards,” explained Ghezzi, making it the “West Penn of the future.” ♦

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Rentals from page 1

"By June, we should be ready to start looking at tenants for the first of these houses," Rick Swartz, executive director of the BGC, told *The Bulletin* recently. "We will have the services of a private management firm in screening and qualifying applicants. But I think I'm safe in saying that people with a steady source of income, fairly good credit history, favorable landlord references, and a clean slate, as far as the law is concerned, will be the ones we pursue most aggressively."

Because the development enjoys subsidies from public sources, Garfield Glen will be open only to households earning less than \$35,000 for a family of five, \$32,000 for a family of four, \$29,000 for a family of three, and \$26,000 for a two-person household. Swartz said the BGC can live with the restriction because, by and large, it means working-class individuals will be the beneficiaries of the development.

"To be honest, we are not looking for folks who cannot hold a job, or have other serious issues," Swartz advised. "We are looking for people who can act responsibly, and are able to uphold their obligations to their families and their neighbors." People can add their name to a list that will be notified when the application process is opened by calling Swartz at 412-441-6950, ext. 11.

Garfield Glen has the added benefit of offering employment for city residents and contracting opportunities for minority and women-owned firms. As many as 10 laborer positions could be available, according to Renee Robinson at Garfield Jubilee Association (GJA), which is providing technical support to the project. Interested job applicants can reach Ms. Robinson at 412-665-5213. Contractors are asked to contact Keelyn Young at GJA at 412-665-5220 to learn how to get in on the bidding process.

As Garfield Glen gets underway, the

fourth and final phase of the Garfield Commons housing development could start as early as spring 2012. Tisha Germany, project manager for KBK Enterprises, which has developed Garfield Commons in partnership with the city's Housing Authority, said 50 rental units are planned for construction in the vicinity of the water tower that overlooks Garfield. Germany told a community meeting on November 9th that over \$80 million will have been invested in the development of 225 homes that is replacing the old 330-unit, Garfield Heights public housing project. Phase I started in the fall of 2006 on Fern and Mossfield Streets.

"Phase III is already leased up, even though we are just completing construction," Germany announced at the meeting. Phase III homes are centered mainly on Columbo Street between Schenley Avenue and N. Pacific Avenue. Joann Monroe, executive director of Garfield Jubilee Association, told the November audience that 53 East End residents have been placed in construction jobs during the project's five-year run.

Germany said KBK recently decided to situate 10 of the 50 rental houses scheduled for Phase IV along a section of Columbo Street east of N. Atlantic Avenue, on land owned by the Housing Authority. Germany said it was KBK's desire to fill in a section of Columbo that is largely vacant with detached houses as an effort to knit Garfield Commons a little more tightly into the fabric of the adjoining neighborhood.

Germany said KBK has also added several new employees to assist the firm with its growing presence as a developer in the city, and to help staff the KBK Foundation. The foundation has supported youth education and recreation programs in the area, and provided computers to a number of the households living in the Garfield Commons development. ♦



The demolition of 5131 and 5133 Dearborn Street is making way for the construction of new rental housing. Photo by Paula Martinac

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The opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the publisher.

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EYESORE OF THE MONTH

Property Adds to Neighborhood Problems

By Aggie Brose Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

Garfield – 5137 Broad Street in Garfield has been nominated by neighbors as the “Eyesore Property of the Month.”

According to the Allegheny County real estate website, the owners of record are Clifford Foster and Julia Evans, and they use an address for tax purposes of 173 Harvest Drive, Verona, Pa. 15147-1711. According to the website, the county real estate taxes for 2010 and this year remain unpaid.

BGC staff contacted the Bureau of Building Inspections and learned that the property has been cited as recently as August 30 for overgrown weeds and debris.

BGC staff believe there may be other code violations for which the owners could be cited, but, in the meantime, there are individuals seen loitering in front of the premises for lengthy stretches of the day and night. Hence, the reason for the nomination: 5137 Broad Street has become a backdrop on this block for negative social behavior that is managing to intimidate other residents.

Commander Tim O'Connor of Zone 5 revealed at the November 9th meeting of the BGC's Public Safety Task Force that individuals loitering in front of 5137 Broad and other properties are apparently using the rear yard of 5137 as a public restroom. O'Connor said he had personally seen toilet paper hanging from the porch railing. If true, this is a reminder that further change has to come to the community to make it a place where such behavior is not tolerated.

Efforts by BGC staff to reach either Foster or Evans have not been successful. No



The back yard of this eyesore is reportedly being used as a restroom. Photo by Rick Flanagan

published phone number could be found for them. One is left to wonder if they are even aware of conditions at their property. If they are, do they even care?

The situation is unfortunate for surrounding property owners, a number of whom are living either in newly

See **Eyesore** | page 16

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Garfield Groups Report Positive News on Initiatives

By Paula Martinac *The Bulletin*

Garfield – On November 9, the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation and Garfield Jubilee Association gave a report-back to the community full of positive updates on initiatives in housing and commercial development, employment and training, and youth development.

The groups' executive directors, Rick Swartz of the BGC and Joanne Monroe of GJA, kicked off the meeting with news on the housing front. Swartz outlined the progress on Garfield Glen, a new 45-unit, scattered-site rental development being built in partnership with S+A Homes (*see related article, page 1*). Monroe turned the floor over to GJA's housing specialist, Barb Murphy, who discussed the 44 new single-family, for-sale homes GJA and BGC have built in the neighborhood since 2002, and one Habitat for Humanity house at Kincaid and N. Evaline that brings the total to 45. Four additional homes are planned for 2012.

"New homes are changing the community in a positive way," Murphy told the audience of about 40 people. In addition, "We've had no foreclosures. Our homeowners learn everything they need to be successful," including credit repair and budgeting skills from GJA's Rochelle Williams. "I love to help people reorganize their lives and money," noted Williams.

Tisha Germany of developer KBK Enterprises reported to the audience on the status of Garfield Commons, the 225-unit rental complex that replaced Garfield Heights, the old public housing development. Germany stated that the project is drawing to a close, with the final 50 units to be completed in 2012.

Giving some historical perspective, Monroe noted that, back in 1999, the Garfield community initiated planning for a comprehensive housing development strategy for the neighborhood. The plan was to construct 700 units of housing, create two senior midrises, replace Garfield Heights, and transform Garfield into a mixed-income commu-

nity. With the exception of the 700 units, all of the goals, she stated, have been achieved. "We've reached 67 percent of our housing goal," Monroe said proudly, "with 476 new housing units. There has been \$100 million in investment in our neighborhood over the past decade."

Aggie Brose and Rich Engel of BGC reported on the organization's Elm Street and Mainstreets programs, respectively. Brose, the BGC's deputy director, discussed \$5,000 matching grants from the Urban Redevelopment Authority available to residents in the Elm Street district (bounded by Broad, N. Atlantic, Columbo, and N. Fairmount) for renovations to the exteriors of their homes, such as painting and repointing. She also talked about the many Elm Street beautification projects, spearheaded by a volunteer group called Garfield Community Action Team (www.gcatpgh.com).

Engel discussed commercial development along Penn Avenue, noting that the vacancy rate has declined from 70 to 30 percent in just 15 years. The BGC's Mainstreets Manager, Engel works to help property owners who may not have the time or know-how to fill empty storefronts. Brose hinted that there could be "exciting news" soon about both a grocery store and a bank for the avenue. She also restated the plans for rebuilding the Penn Avenue roadway between Mathilda and Evaline, with construction coming in 2013.

Melvin Gay of Garfield Youth Sports reported that three of the neighborhood's five youth football teams won championships this year in their age brackets. He also talked about the City's plans to turn the Fort Pitt field into a football- and soccer-only field, reseeding it and repairing the parking lot. Swartz observed that, when Pittsburgh Fort Pitt ALA closes next spring, "there could be some really positive development at that historic site" for the community.

GJA's job developer, Renee Robinson, sketched out the progress made toward

hiring Garfield residents for development projects in the neighborhood, and Monroe talked about GJA's YouthBuild program, which trains young people in construction skills. Rick Flanagan reported on the BGC's youth and adult employment initiatives, and also on the opening of Pittsburgh CONNECTS, the BGC's free computer lab at 5321 Penn Avenue.

Finally, Keelyn Young of GJA announced the launching of a "Lot Layout Design Contest" to create a park-

let on the cleared-out lots at the corner of Hillcrest and N. Aiken. All residents over age 14 are eligible to submit a design plan, with the potential of receiving a VISA gift card in addition to having the winning design implemented. Details are available by calling GJA.

For more information about any of these neighborhood initiatives, contact the staff members mentioned above at the BGC (412-441-6950) or GJA (412-665-5209). ♦

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Beauty from page 1

coffee shop costs, on average, \$3. Drinking three coffees a day brings you to \$9, plus all of the distractions that come with working at a place designed for selling coffee, not creating websites.

Sounds like a problem, right? Enter The Beauty Shoppe, a coworking space on 6014 Penn Avenue in East Liberty. The Beauty Shoppe has all of the amenities of an office: fast Internet, a conference room, printing and scanning, a physical address, kitchenette, coffee and a lounge – all for about the cost of a coffee a day (\$100/month). This “flex” membership offers a shared desk and office area. To get a full membership with a dedicated desk and office area, the cost is just \$175 each month. All memberships are per user, per month.

The Beauty Shoppe is a project of Edile, East Liberty Development, Inc., and thinktiv. Matt Ciccone, founder of Edile, said the concept for shared office space sparked for him when he founded GTECH with Andrew Butcher and Chris Koch. GTECH could not find anything suitable for the organization's needs at the time. Talks began, but fizzled out.

Ciccone toured a shared workspace in Washington, D.C. called Affinity Lab, but a coworking space in Pittsburgh never materialized until 2010.

“The start of the Beauty Shoppe was when I founded Edile and once again needed a place to work,” Ciccone said. “I thought it was good timing to get a coworking space off the ground, because I saw growing start-up activity coming out of the universities and an opportunity to provide a crucial piece of

infrastructure to enable small companies and entrepreneurs to create – and create in Pittsburgh.” Ciccone chose East Liberty because of existing ties with ELDI and the amenities in the neighborhood that are attractive to small businesses, start-ups and entrepreneurs.

“One of the lessons learned from Affinity Lab's experience was that after companies ‘graduated’ out of their space to their own office, they typically stayed in the immediate vicinity, occupying vacant upper floors and offices,” he said.

Ciccone sees the Beauty Shoppe (and other projects like it) as a way to bring entrepreneurs to Pittsburgh. In the short time since the Beauty Shoppe has opened, they've received inquiries from people wanting to move to Pittsburgh from places like New York City. “Projects like the Beauty Shoppe are helping to make Pittsburgh, the East End, and East Liberty competitive nationally for entrepreneurial talent,” Ciccone said. For more information on The Beauty Shoppe, email hello@thebeautysoppe.org. ♦



At work in The Beauty Shoppe. Photo by Margaret Graham

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Pitt Made a Difference

By Kathryn Vargas Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

Garfield – On Saturday, October 22nd, more than 2,500 Pitt students descended on 65 Pittsburgh communities for the annual Pitt Makes a Difference day, an annual volunteer excursion opportunity organized by the University of Pittsburgh. Garfield was fortunate to get 42 students and staff members to help with various community projects in the neighborhood. They were joined by community volunteers, including some from the Garfield Community Intensive Support Program (CISP), a program that allows juvenile offenders to stay in their homes rather than go to a detention facility.

Many of the volunteers committed to picking up litter and cleaning up vacant lots in the neighborhood. As part of the Mayor Luke Ravenstahl's Love Your Block program, volunteers cleaned along Hillcrest Street and

the Garfield steps in an effort to make the walk to Pittsburgh Fort Pitt PreK-5 cleaner and safer for children. Volunteers also committed to cleaning around Mandela Park, Penn Avenue, Atlantic Avenue, Browns Way, and Dearborn Street. Another group of volunteers joined residents along Black Street to help clean up around the MOMS Green Community Garden and Play Yard.

In addition, a group of students helped with the harvesting of the GTECH sunflower garden at the corner of Broad and N. Graham. Students learned how to effectively harvest sunflowers to produce bio fuel. To harvest the lot, volunteers cut down the sunflower stocks and used the face of the sunflower plant to scrape out all of the sunflower seeds. ♦

TreeVitalizing the Neighborhood

By Kathryn Vargas Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

Garfield – More than 20 volunteers from TreeVitalize came together on November 12 to plant 13 new trees along N. Winebiddle and Dearborn Streets in Garfield. The trees were awarded to homeowners who had given their signed consent and had a proper planting environment along their property.

The tree types planted ranged from Japanese lilac to hedge maples and more. These trees will need continued support for at least the first two years after planting. The residents who wanted the trees will have assistance from the tree tenders who live and work in Garfield, many of whom are committed to ensuring that the trees grow healthy and strong.

Why are trees an asset to the community? Although there are many misconceptions about trees, the reality is that they are indispensable to the vitality of the neighborhood. Summer shade from street trees decreases household energy bills and reduces ultraviolet damage. Trees reduce storm run-off, noise, air and water pollutants. They also stabilize soil to prevent erosion and absorb carbon to reduce greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change. Street trees slow traffic, making streets safer for both

pedestrians and motorists. Perhaps most importantly, it is estimated that a street tree can increase property values by 5 to 10 percent.

This was TreeVitalize's second planting in Garfield. The group plans to have many more tree plantings in the future. If you are interested in helping to organize a tree planting on your block, please call 412-441-6950 x 17. ♦



Tree planting on N. Winebiddle. Photo by Kathryn Vargas



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The Garfield Community Action Team (GCAT) would like to thank all the volunteers who helped with Garfield's neighborhood improvement projects! We have accomplished so much this year because of you!

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Neighborhood FOCUS

A Homegrown Production

Quantum Theatre looks to the East End for locations and talent in its latest production, *Fat Beckett*

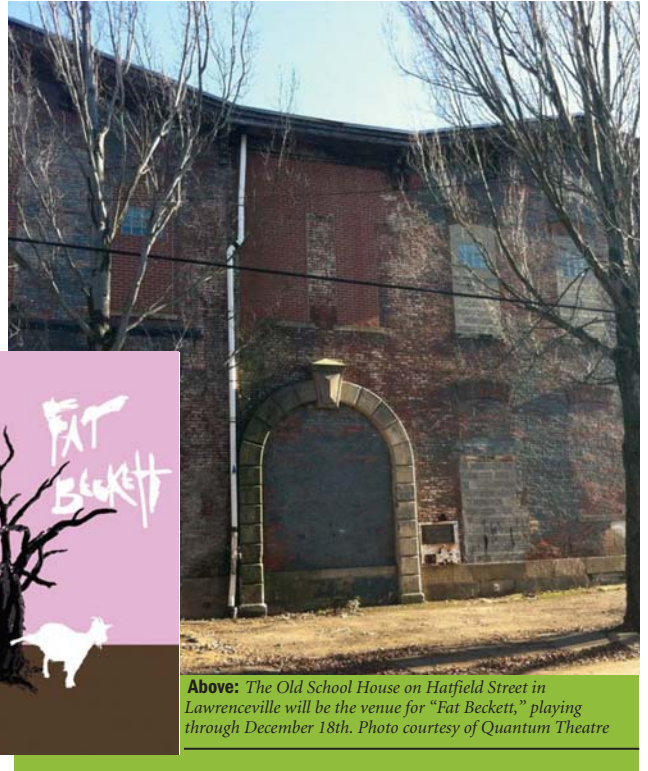
By Meghan Ginley *Quantum Theatre*

Quantum Theatre, Pittsburgh's site-specific theatre company, has moved back to Lawrenceville to produce *Fat Beckett*; a comedy written by Lawrenceville resident Gab Cody in collaboration with Rita Reis, and directed by her husband, Samuel Turich. This is the second time Quantum has called Lawrenceville home, with *When the Rain Stops Falling* produced last fall in the old Iron City Brewery. It is the eighth straight production for Quantum to take place in an East End neighborhood.

"[The production of *Fat Beckett*] began as part of our Neighborhood Initiative," Quantum Theatre Artistic Director Karla Boos explained. "It's a program designed to increase the economic impact in the communities where our productions are held. We love being in this section of town [because of] the people, the businesses, and the energy."

Fat Beckett will have its world premiere at the Old School House, 4830 Hatfield Street, as part of Quantum Theatre's 2011-2012 season, faithfully fulfilling Quantum's mission to create original, challenging theatre, support local artists, and continue a quest for truthfulness, giving "voice to artists who invest deeply and touch the personal."

Cody and Reis' play is both a response to legendary playwright Samuel Beckett's seminal work *Waiting for Godot*, as well as an attempt to have a conversation with the gatekeepers of his legacy. After Beckett's death in 1989, his estate became very protective of the licenses of his work, and only allowed his plays to be performed if they adhered to his strict stage directions, including provisions such as forbidding women to perform men's roles under threat of legal action. While *Fat Beckett* shares a similar structure to *Godot*, it casts two female



Above: The Old School House on Hatfield Street in Lawrenceville will be the venue for "Fat Beckett," playing through December 18th. Photo courtesy of Quantum Theatre



"We know our audience because we're a part of it."

protagonists, Sophie and Kiki, who set out on a whirlwind journey of time-and-space travel in search of their beloved goat, Biquette.

"[*Fat Beckett*] is funny and subtle in some ways, because these ladies are more directly challenging Samuel Beckett, as well as challenging all patriarchies, and humorously representing this seemingly endless journey we're all on to find a little peace," said Boos. "I saw a good match with the kind of laboratory [Quantum] provides and [Cody and Reis'] inspired piece. The Old School House is the perfect place to see *Fat Beckett*, the space really complements the work."

The Old School House provided numerous opportunities for inspiration to the creative team. The space possessed the perfect mixture of intimacy and vastness the producers had been searching for, and thanks to the Lawrenceville Corporation's Maya Henry, *Fat Beckett* found its fit. For the theatrical and collaborative couple, Cody and Turich, working in the neighborhood they call home was an opportunity they couldn't pass up.

"There's definitely something about the neighborhood that attracts a pioneer spirit. That same spirit of determination in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles is what is required of artists who wish to remain creative for the long haul," says Cody. "The neighborhood is transforming as artists reclaim and restore buildings, many on our block. We've lived on this block for four years, and for four years we've daydreamed about doing some sort of show in the Old School House on Hatfield Street. This show is a dream come true."

As Pittsburgh continues to nurture new playwrights and artists, Quantum continues to fulfill its mission to "bring forth artists forging new theatrical ground." Luckily, Boos and Quantum Theatre recognize talent, and Cody, Reis, and Turich are just the latest batch of local visionaries to emerge from Pittsburgh's neighborhoods.

"Working with local playwrights, all local artists, allows a work to develop organically," says Boos. "We have history together, we share a community, and we know our audience because we're part of it."

As a great "thank you" to the people of Lawrenceville, Quantum Theatre is inviting residents to the Community Night Preview on Thursday, December 1st. Tickets are \$15 (\$20 off their normal ticket price). To order, call 412.362.1713 or visit Quantum Theatre online at www.quantumtheatre.com. ♦

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The 2011 Lawrenceville Joy of Cookies Cookie Tour returns this holiday season



A gingerbread Cookie Tour sign sits in the storefront of Wagner Shoes. Photo by Patrick Bowman

By Patrick Bowman Lawrenceville Corporation

Lawrenceville – The holiday season is here again, and that means that Lawrenceville's Joy of Cookies Cookie Tour is back and ready to replace the big-box malls for Pittsburgh's shopping needs.

This marks the 12th year of the tour, which will take place Thursday, December 1st through Sunday, December 4th, with participating stores along Butler Street, Penn Avenue, 43rd, 44th, and Hatfield Streets.

The Joy of Cookies Cookie Tour began in 1997 as a holiday open house at Jay Design Soaps & Gifts. Driven by a spirit of collaboration among the merchants, the event grew to include more than a dozen Lawrenceville merchants, with cookies added in 2000. Today, the Joy of Cookies Cookie Tour Planning Committee expects more than 4,000 attendees.

"The Cookie Tour is getting better with age," Mary Coleman, lead organizer and owner of Gallery on 43rd Street. "Each year we add new businesses to the tour, and this year we have 34 Cookie Tour stops."

Merchants are inviting visitors to experience the many independently-owned shops, galleries, and boutiques in Lawrenceville that offer a range of unique, eclectic, and handcrafted gifts for the holiday season.

The Cookie Tour's "un-mall" experience allows shoppers to enjoy a bustling, revitalized business district while sampling home-baked cookies at 34 different shops and taking home free recipes for their own baking.

"Last year we saw an increase in the number of visitors to the business district, with many shops and businesses reporting

an increase in sales over the previous year," said Coleman. "We are headed in the right direction. We hope for continued success."

The tour happens Thursday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Sunday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. On Saturday, visitors can catch a trolley cruising the neighborhood from 34th to 55th Streets and side streets in between.

Also on Saturday, visitors can attend a Cookie Mall bake sale from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Teamsters' Temple, located at 47th and Butler Streets. The bake sale, organized by the Lawrenceville Rotary, will benefit local community groups.

Cookies will be baked by Alissa Miller, and a map with participating businesses and restaurants/coffee shops ("Take-A-Break" stops) can be downloaded at www.lvpgh.com/joyofcookiestour. ♦

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Montessori School Staying Put

By Joshua Barszczewski *The Bulletin*

Friendship – Although many schools throughout the city will close their doors or move into other buildings at the end of the school year as part of Pittsburgh Public School's District Realignment Plan, Pittsburgh Montessori will not be one of them. It will stay in its Friendship location, despite rumors that it might relocate to the Fort Pitt PreK-5 building in Garfield that's being vacated next spring.

Superintendent Linda Lane and PPS administrators never formally proposed

moving Montessori into the Fort Pitt Building, says Lisa Fischetti, Chief of Staff to Superintendent Linda Lane. "However, it did emerge as a conversation at a board meeting. The staff explored it at the board's request."

Since the possible move was not in the original District Realignment Plan, adding it as an item would have needed the support of the Board of Education. "We told the board, that after further consideration, we do not believe that this is something we should be doing. We are not going to be changing the Plan to include anything to do with Montessori," Fischetti said.

Fort Pitt PreK-5 will shut down at the end of the year. Students will be reassigned to Arsenal in Lawrenceville, Woolsair Bloomfield or Fulton in Highland Park.

The Board of Education voted on the District Realignment Plan at its Legislative Meeting on November 22. A complete copy of the plan may be viewed at <http://tinyurl.com/7vld7x>. ♦

Magnet School Registration

Parents interested in enrolling their children in one of Pittsburgh Public School's Magnet or Career and Technical programs (CTE) need to do so by December 16. A complete list of programs and registration forms can be found at www.pps.12.pa.us. Parents may also request copies at 412-622-7290.



The lights were burning the evening of Wednesday, October 19, when parents, students and staff attended the annual Literacy Night at Pittsburgh Arsenal PreK-5. The theme of the night was "Comprehension Is All Around," which reflects Arsenal's instructional focus on reading comprehension. Students learn the following steps for reading comprehension: listening, reading, thinking, and responding. One hundred students and their parents spent the evening attending a choice of four workshops targeting the instructional focus steps. Mrs. Nada Jordan, Intervention Teacher, and Mrs. Rebecca Gaertner, Reading Specialist, organized the event, which involved raffle prizes and a dinner. Photo by Judy Flaherty

Mr. Roboto Grand Opening Rocks Penn

By Rich Engel *Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation*

Bloomfield – On October 27, the Mr. Roboto Project at 5106 Penn Avenue held a pre-opening housewarming, with Chris Niels and Burnout Wacry, to thank their early supporters and welcome their new neighbors. Just a few days later on November 4, their grand opening occurred during the Unblurred gallery crawl, with Frizz and Crazy Scorpion Group. On November 5, the venue hosted the 14th annual A.D.D. Fest with Gutter Glitter and Barren Scepter. Art by Mike Budai graced the walls during Unblurred.

For readers unfamiliar with Frizz, Burnout Wacry and other such monikers, these are names of bands – and bands are why Mr. Roboto has been around for more than 10 years.

Mr. Roboto's new 1500-square-foot home, formerly Pap's 'N Us tavern, was purchased by Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation in July of 2008. Renovations to accommodate the Mr. Roboto Project were mostly made by local contractor Sipes & Son this summer. Plans for the upper floors of the building are yet to be determined; they are not yet fully renovated.

Mr. Roboto Project, a cooperatively run performance space, art gallery and zine library, began in 1999 in Wilkinsburg. Memberships are inexpensive, and members have, among other things, the ability to rent the Roboto performance space for shows and other events. A member's cost to rent the space is \$65 or 25

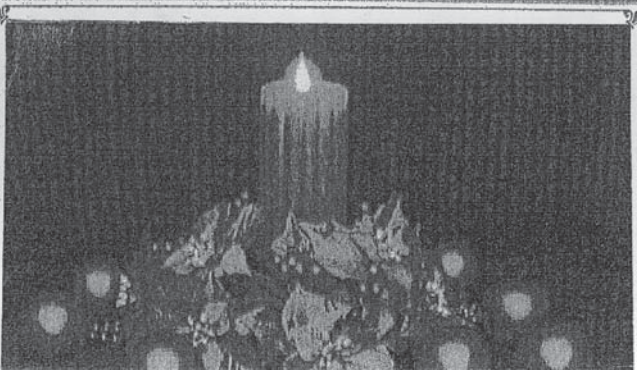
percent of the money received at the door, whichever is greater, up to a maximum of \$250.

At the pre-opening event, vegetarian victuals were provided by The Quiet Storm, Iron Betty, My Goodies Bakery, and guest chef Brian Kupcheck. Chris Niels' charming cover of John Prine's tune "Paradise" put to rest the idea that Roboto only hosts punk music. The bar was held down by Martha Riecks and Emma Rehm, serving locally brewed root beer from the Barny Soda Company and mocktails.

No alcohol will be served at Mr. Roboto, and no smoking is permitted; shows are appropriate for all ages.


Monthly meetings are open to the public, and run by current board members Brian Gruetzel, Mike Roth, Renee Hagens, Ricky Moslen, Darren Toth, Bret Strawn, and Christopher Schwarzott. More information about membership and upcoming performances are at <http://robotoproject.info>.

Founding members Mike Roth and Andy Mulkerin plan a book about the project, supported in part by Sprout Fund, now their neighbor down the avenue. "This is just a space where people are there to experience music, and they can be right up there with the band," says Roth. ♦



Our Remembrance Candle

During this Holiday Season, more than ever, our thoughts and prayers turn to those who have lost a loved one this past year. We are lighting a candle in our funeral home in remembrance of all the families that we have been privileged to serve. And it is in this spirit that we simply, but sincerely say... May the Peace and Joy of the Christmas Season be yours throughout the New Year.



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Rogue Landscapers Uncover Rock

By Joshua Barszczewski *The Bulletin*

Bloomfield – One can only imagine the myriad treasures buried within Bloomfield's and Garfield's urban jungle – abandoned toys lurking in sewers, perhaps, or lost coins embedded in the sidewalk. For a group of local volunteers, a treasure of a more historic sort was found in an abandoned flowerbed: a rock bearing a plaque from a former community beautification effort.

Jason Sauer, George Eiceman, Minette Vaccariello, Rebecca Mizikar and Jeff Ault, all volunteers for the Penn Avenue Green and Screen Project, were engaging in what Sauer refers to as “renegade landscaping” when they found the rock at the corner of Penn and South Pacific.

“We got a bunch of plants for the Green and Screen project and had some left over, so we tried to find other places on the avenue to put them. We decided to plant the lot there, to beautify the neighborhood,” Sauer said.

The plaque commemorates the construction of the “Dream Our Community” Flower Bed, created for the 1999 Friendship/Garfield Community Arts Festival. Angele Ellis, a local poet and activist who had chaired the festival, is credited on the plaque. “Dream Our Community” was the theme of this street festival, whose aim was to link Garfield



Plaque commemorating the “Dream Our Community” garden project. Photo by Paula Martinac

and Friendship along our common border... and to draw on the combined talents of the community and its organizations: Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation, Friendship Development Associates, and Friendship Preservation Group,” Ellis told *The Bulletin*.

Originally, an old wooden bed frame that had been painted bright colors by children during the course of the festival

surrounded the flowerbed. Jeffrey Dorsey, currently the director of The Union Project in Highland Park, came up with the initial conception for the lot, and Diana Ames chose the selection of plants to help beautify the neighborhood and make the avenue more welcoming for residents on both sides. “This was a time when some Friendship residents had to be strongly persuaded to walk along Penn

Avenue, much less cross it!” Ellis said.

The flower plot, which sits at the edge of the parking lot belonging to what used to be Rite Aid and is now Family Dollar, bears little resemblance to the bright and festive garden replanted 12 years ago. “It was really pretty,” said Aggie Brose, Deputy Director of Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation. “It had bushes and there was a discussion of putting some sort of sign that listed all the businesses in the neighborhood.”

Unfortunately, the painted bed frame rotted just a few years after the Community Arts Festival. “The perennials within the frame also suffered from neglect, and I believe the last vestiges of this bed – with the exception of the rock that holds the plaque – were removed when the Rite Aid drugstore became Family Dollar,” Ellis said.

When Sauer and the other Green and Screen volunteers began their renegade landscaping efforts, they didn’t anticipate finding such a rich icon of Penn Avenue’s history. Yet, despite the plaque’s scratches and faded luster, it remains a symbol that Penn Avenue beautification projects, like Green and Screen, are not necessarily new and, in fact, share the same “Dreams” for the community. ♦

Guangdong from page 1

will be busy working and learning about social work and social administration in urban environments.

The ENEC frequently hosts interns from universities in the Pittsburgh region so that the students can gain hands-on experience about how to better the community through non-profit administration.

Han Cui, 22, is a first-year graduate student at the University of Pittsburgh and will be completing her internship part-time. Cui is studying for her Master of Social Work in Community Organizing and Social Administration at Pitt’s School of Social Work. A Chinese native, she completed her undergraduate studies at the prestigious Guangdong University of Foreign Studies, focusing on journalism.

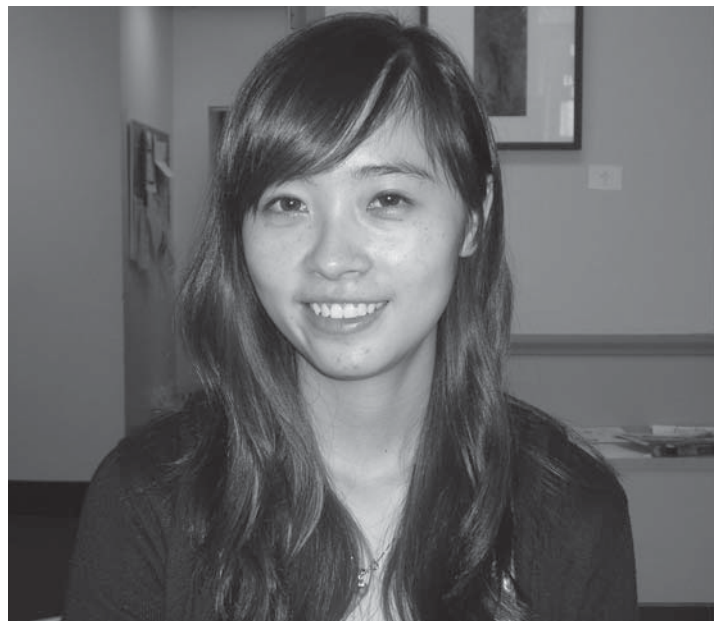
After completing her degree, she decided to come to the United States to further her education. She eventually settled on Pitt. “I applied to other universities, too, but Pitt accepted me the earliest,” Cui said. She was also admitted to Syracuse University, but Pittsburgh’s low cost of living swayed her decision. “I was concerned about tuition and living expenses. Pittsburgh is cheaper and more suitable for me.” While students in some graduate programs, such as those in engineering or the hard sciences, are routinely given tuition waivers and stipends for teaching requirements, such luxuries are

not often offered in social work programs.

While a student in China, Cui volunteered in the broadcasting department at the 2010 Asian Games in Guangzhou. The 2010 Asian Games was a major international event that cost approximately \$450 million and attracted almost 10,000 athletes and nearly 35,000 spectators. Thus, working at the ENEC is a substantially different experience for her. “It’s a brand-new world for me, working in a non-profit in the United States,” she said.

Her day-to-day tasks at the ENEC change, depending on what work needs to be accomplished and what her supervisor, Rick Flanagan, wants her to do. Sometimes she learns by observing him at his various meetings, and sometimes she is assigned her own tasks. Rick is very helpful, she said, because she can gain insight into how to be an effective social worker by watching his techniques.

Originally, she was concerned about her ability to perform well at ENEC because of her background. “Not anymore,” she said. “My colleagues are very nice.” Not fully comprehending cultural differences has made her coursework at Pitt more difficult, though. Whereas many of her fellow students already know how to analyze various aspects of their own society, she must do so without firsthand knowledge of



Han Cui is the newest face at the Eastside Neighborhood Employment Center. Photo by Joshua Barszczewski

American cultural norms, traditions, and beliefs. Still, she likes her classes. “It’s so interesting to study cultural differences and human behavior.”

Although she has not yet decided if she wants to pursue journalism or social administration as a career, she would like to

stay in the United States after completing her degree. “If I cannot find a job because of the economy, I’ll go back to China,” she said. Currently, Han Cui lives in Squirrel Hill with three other Chinese graduate students. ♦

Celebrating Youth Workforce Development

By Joshua Barszczewski *The Bulletin*

Bloomfield – Nonprofit and community development workers are not likely to self-aggrandize, but sometimes they should celebrate their own successes. That was the message underlying the Celebrating Youth Workforce Development event, held on November 16 in the Wintergarden Conference Room at West Penn Hospital. Approximately 100 people attended the event, most of whom were employees from youth development nonprofits such as Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation, Neighborhood Learning Alliance, Hill House Association, and the Boys & Girls Club of Western Pennsylvania, among others.

Rick Flanagan, Youth Development Director for Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation, emceed the event. He introduced Kathleen McKenzie, Vice-President of Community and Civic Affairs for West Penn Allegheny Health System, who spoke of the importance of youth workforce development organizations to West Penn Allegheny Health System, which is currently hiring. "It makes so much sense for this meeting to be located here, because we're growing. Although we've downsized before, we are now upsizing," she told the audience. (See related story, page 2.)

The initial idea behind the celebration,

Flanagan explained, came after a meeting at the Boys & Girls Club of Western Pennsylvania. Jim Brenner, the youth services supervisor at the Pittsburgh Partnership, a division of the City of Pittsburgh's Department of Personnel and Civil Service Commission that focuses on developing Pittsburgh's workforce, was presenting 10-year data and statistics on the collective efforts of both in-school and out-of-school employment efforts. After learning that major benchmarks – such as total number of youths who achieved certification, increased literacy or numeracy rates, and found post-secondary employment – had been exceeded, the workforce development organizers and professionals decided that an event in honor of their successes was in order.

Reverend Willie Slaughter of Hill House Association spoke of one boy who first came to Hill House's Out of School Youth program. The teen had been reading at a sixth-grade level and needed a job to take care of his family. With Hill House's help, he got a job as a security guard and now, only a few years later, is in the process of applying to University of Pittsburgh for his post-secondary education. "Some of our youths, from 17 to 24, test at third-, fourth- or fifth-grade levels. By the time



BGC In-School Youth Employment Program Coordinator Mary Bray addresses the audience at the "Celebrating Youth Workforce Development" event at West Penn Hospital. Photo by Rick Flanagan

they leave us, they've got job credentials and are up to grade level," Slaughter said.

A common theme of the event was that although working with youths in urban communities can be a challenge, there are reasons to stay optimistic about Pittsburgh's youths. Even those who drop out of high school sometimes find their way to workforce development organizations. "They want to work. They may have made some bad decisions in their lives, but if

they need a 12th or 13th chance, we need to be there to give it to them," said Jesse Sprajcar, who works for Communities In Schools of Pittsburgh-Allegheny County.

Throughout the event, speakers frequently mentioned how vital these sorts of programs are to the region. "We're not just working with youths," said Hill House Association's Tony Bell. "We're rebuilding our community." ♦

Students Master Computer Basics at Tech Center

By Lauren Mobertz *Neighborhood Learning Alliance*

Garfield – When Michael LaFleur, coordinator of Pittsburgh CONNECTS, Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation's tech center at 5321 Penn Avenue, began teaching a course called Computer ABCs, he hoped to share valuable computer skills with students who had none. He understands how to frame his class so that computer beginners can understand.

LaFleur carefully explains every click he makes. That way, his students learn not only how to complete tasks on a computer, but why computers work the way they do. He says he is thrilled by his students' progress.

A former Apple employee, LaFleur begins the course by introducing his students to computers. He teaches them about CPUs, monitors, memory, and networks. Eventually, his students familiarize themselves with Internet tools such as online search engines and email. They are currently learning about word processing.

"It's really enjoyable," said Sarah Lee, a resident of Laurentian Hall, the senior living center located on the floors above the tech center. Lee has attended classes since September.

Though LaFleur's students were at first so unfamiliar with computers they did not know how to turn them on, many of his students can now log into their computers on their own, use email, and open computer programs of their own accord. "It's good to see people actually get something out of the

class," LaFleur said.

"I didn't know too much about computers so I figured I'd come," said Ruth Bobel, another student. Like Lee, Bobel lives in Laurentian Hall. After taking Computer ABCs, she is thinking of buying a computer.

Perhaps LaFleur's most difficult tasks are teaching his students to be risk-takers and explore the capabilities of computers. For his students, "Every click is like an adventure," he said. His students are sometimes afraid to complete a step on their computers without understanding its consequences.

Mary Rose Fignar is another of LaFleur's students. "Michael puts up with us, that's the biggest thing," she said, jokingly. In addition to attending weekly Computer ABCs classes, Fignar often visits the tech center to email her children.

Another of LaFleur's students, Oakland resident Sam Douglas began taking the course unintentionally. Originally, Sam came to the tech center in search of a job. Michael helped him with an application and told him about the course. Since then, Sam has not missed a class.

"Any time I've ever been with computers, I wouldn't last," Douglas said. "He's a good teacher, Michael. It's not easy, but he makes it easy." ♦

For more information about classes at Pittsburgh CONNECTS, call 412-362-8580.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING PENN AVENUE RECONSTRUCTION – PHASE I CITY OF PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

Date: January 12, 2012

Location: Saint Lawrence O'Toole Activity Building
North Atlantic Avenue
Neighborhood of Garfield
City of Pittsburgh, PA

Time: 6:00PM – Sign In; Refreshments
7:00PM – Presentation

THE CITY OF PITTSBURGH, IN COOPERATION WITH THE PA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, THE FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION, AND THE PENN AVENUE RECONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE, WILL CONDUCT A PUBLIC MEETING FOR PENN AVENUE RECONSTRUCTION – PHASE I FROM MATHILDA STREET TO EVALINE STREET IN THE BLOOMFIELD AND GARFIELD NEIGHBORHOODS.

THE PURPOSE OF THE MEETING IS TO PRESENT THE SCOPE OF THE PHASE I PROJECT, VIEW THE PRELIMINARY PLAN SET, DISCUSS THE SCHEDULE AND PHASING OF CONSTRUCTION AND TRAFFIC CONTROL INCLUDING BUS AND VEHICLE DETOURS, AND HEAR ABOUT THE AESTHETICS AND STREETScape ELEMENTS FOR THE REVITALIZED CORRIDOR.

THE PROJECT TEAM WILL BE PRESENT AT THE PUBLIC MEETING TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS AND PRESENT THE PROJECT PARTICULARS AND PRELIMINARY PLAN SET. THE MEETING LOCATION IS ACCESSIBLE TO PERSONS HAVING DISABILITIES. ANYONE WHO NEEDS ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, HAS SPECIAL NEEDS, OR REQUIRES SPECIAL AIDS SHOULD CONTACT:

PATRICK HASSETT, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, CITY OF PITTSBURGH, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, BUREAU OF TRANSPORTATION AND ENGINEERING AT 412-255-2883



Intersection of Penn Ave and Millvale Ave

Newscaster Receives BGC Founders Award

By Paula Martinac *The Bulletin*

Garfield – P.J. Maloney, Vice President of the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation's Board of Directors, points out a coincidence in the fact that he was chosen to receive the 2011 Father Leo Henry Founders Award, given annually to the person who best demonstrates a commitment to working for change in the community. The award is named for the former pastor of St. Lawrence O'Toole Church, who founded the BGC.

"I wanted to be a priest," Maloney, a Pittsburgh native, says. "I wanted to serve the community. I even went high school at a seminary." Getting the award, then, "really means something. Father Henry took his concern for the community to an extreme degree, and I really appreciate his work and the risks he took."

Unlike Father Henry, Maloney's career plans changed while he was studying at Saint Meinrad in Indiana, where he "became fascinated with journalism" under the tutelage of his English and journalism teacher, and worked as editor of the school newspaper and yearbook. He decided the priesthood was not for him and went on to major in journalism at Marquette University, finding another important way of serving the community: through the dissemination of news.

Following a two-year stint in the Army,

some of which he spent in Vietnam, Maloney honed his journalism skills at a small weekly newspaper in the North Hills and a few radio stations. But in 1975, when KQV Radio went to an all-news format, he applied for a job and was hired – and has been there ever since. He is KQV's early-morning newscaster, the voice listeners hear on their way to work Monday through Friday.

Maloney has served on the BGC's board since 2000, when he was living on South Winebiddle Street and responded to a letter from Aggie Brose, the BGC's deputy director, inviting him to consider running for the board. He has brought his journalism skills to the table as chair of the Marketing & Communications Committee. The committee oversees the publication of *The Bulletin* – including the recent redesign – and works with staff on other marketing initiatives, such as the organization's website. His other committee work includes the Youth & Employment Committee.

In addition, Maloney has been very involved in the BGC's annual fundraiser, a formal luncheon held at the Pittsburgh Athletic Association. Last year, he helped create and was the narrator for a short video, "BGC: People Moving On," which debuted at the luncheon and is now on

the BGC's website. He is also the event's emcee every year.

Maloney says one of best parts of being on the BGC board is working with "the talented, passionate staff," and that he "wants to be part of the success they bring to the neighborhood." Through his long tenure on the board, he has felt the BGC has made important accomplishments – he ticks off housing, education, public safety, employment, and marketing projects. "There's a sense," he notes, "that things are really getting done." ♦



P.J. Maloney says he wanted to be a newscaster since he was young. Photo by Paula Martinac



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Local Events Classes Announcements Fundraisers

December 2

GARFIELD**Bank Accounts with PNC**

Come to Pittsburgh CONNECTS, the BGC's tech center, 5321 Penn Avenue, to sign up for a savings account with PNC. Participants save \$25 and can sign up on the spot without any cash. The event starts at 2 p.m. Call 412-465-0858 for more information.

OAKLAND**BGC 35th Anniversary**

Join the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation for its 35th anniversary celebration, with keynote speaker Tom Murphy. Murphy is a Senior Resident Fellow at the Urban Land Institute and is a former Mayor of Pittsburgh. The event will be held at the Pittsburgh Athletic Association, 4215 Fifth Avenue, from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. The cost is \$60 per person.

GARFIELD**Banking and Finance 101**

Courtney from NeighborWorks will be teaching Finance 101 at Pittsburgh CONNECTS, 5321 Penn Avenue. Suitable for all ages, this class will cover information on how to start keeping track of your finances and stop feeling so broke. No matter what your income level, these money tips can help anyone start saving. The class starts at 3 p.m. Call 412-465-0858 for more information.

MORNINGSIDE**Ceili Club Dance**

The Pittsburgh Ceili Club will be holding a Christmas dance at the Morningside VFW, 1820 Morningside Avenue. Appetizers will be served at 7 p.m. and the dancing will begin at 8 p.m. Admission is \$5 for club members and \$8 for non-members. For more information, visit www.pittsburghceiliblue.org.

December 2-3

EAST LIBERTY**Staycee Pearl Dance**

Kelly Strayhorn Theater's resident dance company, Staycee Pearl dance project, presents OCTAVIA, a contemporary dance piece that celebrates the life and work of acclaimed African American science fiction writer Octavia Butler. A student matinee is at 10 a.m. on December 2; the world premiere is at 8 p.m. on December 2; a repeat performance is at 8 p.m. on December 3. Choreographed by Staycee Pearl, OCTAVIA is part of the KSTImoves contemporary dance series. For tickets or information, visit www.kelly-strayhorn.org.

December 3

GARFIELD**Christmas Celebration**

At 5 p.m., the Morningside Church of God will present "Jesus is the Reason for the Season," a concert in honor of the Christmas season. Musicians and performing guests include Minister Leslie Sandidge and Company, Minister Michael Warren, Temple of Praise, Pentecostal Temple COGIC, First Church of God in Christ Braddock and other soloists, mimes and praisers. This event is free.

BLOOMFIELD**Waldorf School Fair**

The Waldorf School, 201 S. Winebiddle, will host its Winter Fair from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. Come experience the magic of the season and make a felted animal, pull warm taffy, take a horse-drawn carriage ride and watch a puppet show. Share a simple meal of soup, bread and fruit; then, visit our special silent auction and bake sale. Admission is \$8 per person. Children ages 2 and under are free. Lunch is \$5. For more information, call 412-441-5792.

LAWRENCEVILLE**Light Up Lawrenceville**

A children's party on Dec. 3 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Teamsters Temple, 4701 Butler Street, will feature crafts, gifts, and photos with Santa during the Cookie Mall; free for all families. Come and buy cookies and stay to see Santa! To volunteer for this event, please call 412-802-7220.

December 4

GARFIELD**Steeler Game Broadcast**

Watch the Pittsburgh Steelers live on the huge flatscreen TV at Pittsburgh CONNECTS, 5321 Penn Avenue. The broadcast starts at 1 p.m. Call 412-465-0858 for more information.

December 5

UPTOWN**Homebuyer Education**

Attend the next NeighborWorks Western Pennsylvania homebuyer education workshop to learn about buying a home. Workshops are taught by certified instructors and respected real estate professionals. Workshops are regularly held at the NeighborWorks HomeOwnership Center in the Uptown neighborhood of Pittsburgh and in communities throughout the region. These classes exceed the minimum standards of Fannie Mae, Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency and Allegheny County/City of Pittsburgh Economic or

Development Departments and Urban Redevelopment Authorities. Call 412-281-1100 ext. 121 to make a reservation for the class at the NeighborWorks HomeOwnership Center, 710 Fifth Avenue, in Uptown. The classes will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and lunch will be provided.

LAWRENCEVILLE**Adult Book Club**

At 6 p.m., the Adult Book Discussion Group at the Lawrenceville Branch of Carnegie Library, 279 Fisk Street, will discuss *The Fat Man: A Tale of North Pole Noir* by Ken Harmon.

December 6

GARFIELD**Dress to Impress**

Interviewing is not just about what you say, but also about making an impression. Join the Eastside Neighborhood Employment Center, 5321 Penn Avenue, for a special workshop focusing on your dress, body language, grammar and other important etiquette techniques to make your next interview a success. The workshop starts at 1 p.m. To register, please call 412-362-8580 or leave a message at 412-465-0425.

LAWRENCEVILLE**Japanese Bookbinding**

At 6 p.m., the Lawrenceville Branch of Carnegie Library, 279 Fisk Street, will host a workshop on Japanese Stab Bookbinding with Pat Buckley. The Stab technique has been in use since the early 14th century and makes great books to give as gifts. All materials will be provided. Space is limited, so registration is required. Due to the use of sharp needles, this program is not appropriate for young children. Call 412-682-3668 to register.

December 8

HIGHLAND PARK**Networking Mixer**

At 5:30 p.m. at the Union Project, 801 N. Negley Avenue, Classic Events! will host a holiday networking mixer. Classic Events! is a public relations, marketing, and networking group providing a variety of social functions designed to introduce and give exposure that connects a variety of businesses and organizations to community stakeholders, thus cultivating relationships that assist in the socioeconomic development of the region. This is an event is free and open to the public. A vendor and ad book is available for entrepreneurs to showcase their business, service, product or organization. For further information, call 412-723-2414 or email yourclassicevent@yahoo.com

December 9

EAST LIBERTY**FashionAFRICANA**

A live multi-media presentation of fashion, dance and music commemorates the 10th anniversary of FashionAFRICANA. Co-presented by Kelly Strayhorn Theater, 5941 Penn Avenue, FashionAFRICANA features a fashion show, art by

Vanessa German, a concert and pre-show mixer. Visit www.kelly-strayhorn.org for tickets or information.

December 10

EAST LIBERTY**Holiday Bazaar**

From 11 a.m. until 5 p.m., the Kelly Strayhorn Theater, 5941 Penn Avenue, will host a Holiday Bazaar. One-stop shopping for original handmade items from skilled local artists will be available. The Bazaar is open to the public at no charge. Balafon West African Dance Ensemble will perform at 2 p.m.. The admission is Pay What You Can. Visit www.kelly-strayhorn.org for more information.

HIGHLAND PARK**Pottery Tour**

In the spirit of community building, artists of the Union Project Ceramics Cooperative are joining with other Pittsburgh potters to host a free, family-friendly celebration of all things clay. This day-long event, sponsored by Standard Ceramics, will include a self-guided tour to six Highland Park locations (noon to 7 p.m.) and will culminate in a celebration at The Union Project Studio (7 to 11 p.m.). Drive or walk through historic Highland Park to view and support the work of more than 20 local artists. At each stop, including Union Project itself at 801 N. Negley Avenue, tour-goers will meet at least two ceramic artists who will personally present their work for sale, from functional cups and bowls to large pieces suitable for display. Take advantage of this unique chance to meet with artists, learn about their work, and find the perfect gift. For more information on the day's events and a map of the tour, visit HighlandParkPotteryTour.Wordpress.com.

December 11

GARFIELD**Computer Repair**

From noon to 2 p.m., bring your slow or sick computer into Pittsburgh CONNECTS, 5321 Penn Avenue, for repairs. If you have a desktop, please bring in just the tower. The experts will fix your machine on the spot if possible. Both MAC and PC are acceptable. Call 412-465-0858 for more information.

December 14

GARFIELD**Manufacturing Jobs**

Did you know that you can earn over 50% more by working in manufacturing than you can in the fast food industry? Or did you know that the manufacturing sector is the second-largest industry in Pittsburgh. Eastside Neighborhood Employment Center (ENEC), 5321 Penn Avenue, can help you join this exciting field. Come to the ENEC at 1 p.m. to enroll in a free training program. New Century Careers offers a 16 week program and will help you find a job when you are done. This information session will feature an instructor who will answer all of your questions and get you started on enrollment for the January 2012 term. To register, please call 412-362-8580 or leave a message at 412-465-

Sorry, we do not accept listings over the phone.

The Bulletin Board publishes listings of volunteer opportunities, free or low-cost events and classes, fundraising events and services that are of particular interest to our neighborhoods. Listings published on a space-available basis. Email listings to bulletin@bloomfield-garfield.org.

Volunteer Opportunities & Services

0425.

GARFIELD

iTunes Help

Have an Apple product and hate figuring out iTunes? Pittsburgh CONNECTS, 5321 Penn Avenue, can help! Have all your questions answered and figure out how to tackle iTunes on your own. This workshop starts at 6 p.m. Call 412-465-0858 for more information.

December 17

East Liberty

Gene Stovall Concert

Celebrate the holidays with Gene Stovall in concert with friends at the Kelly Strayhorn Theater, 5941 Penn Avenue. The concert begins at 8 p.m. Visit www.kelly-strayhorn.org for tickets and information.

December 24

HIGHLAND PARK

Christmas Eve Service

Open Door Church will host a Christmas Eve service at 5 p.m. at the Union Project, 801 N. Negley Avenue. Valley View and Fourth Presbyterian churches will also be participating in the service. All are welcome.

December 26-January 1

GARFIELD

Kwanzaa on Penn

If you are interested in volunteering, performing, or attending Kwanzaa on Penn Avenue, contact Sam at 412-441-6149, or email kwanzaa@friendship-pgh.org.

December

GARFIELD

Netbook Raffle

Pittsburgh CONNECTS, 5321 Penn Avenue, will raffle off a Netbook. No purchase is necessary. To enter the raffle, people must be registered with a username and password at Pittsburgh CONNECTS; have completed a minimum of three hours of training at the Pittsburgh CONNECTS center; and be 16 years of age or older. Participants receive an additional entry for every three more hours of training. For more information, call 412-362-8580.

GARFIELD

Events at Yoga Hive

Yoga Hive, 5491 Penn Avenue, has many exciting events this month. On Saturday, December 3 from 1-2:30 p.m. is the "Headstands + Inversions" workshop. On Sunday, December 11 from 3-5 p.m. will be a "Ying Yoga" workshop. On Saturday, December 19 from 7:30-9 p.m. is "Be is for Balance: Honey

Tasting + Yoga." On Saturday, December 22 from 6-8 p.m. is "Winter Solstice: 108 Sun Salutations." On December 23 from 6-7:30 p.m. is a special Holiday Candlelight Class. More details about the events can be found at yogahivepgh.com or by emailing info@yogahivepgh.com.

GARFIELD

Microsoft Office Classes

Pittsburgh Connects, 5321 Penn Avenue, will be holding classes in Microsoft Excel, PowerPoint, and Word during the month of December. All classes begin at 6 p.m. The beginner-level Excel class is December 6. An advanced Excel class is December 12. The beginner PowerPoint class is December 13 and the advanced PowerPoint class is December 20. The beginner Word class is December 8 and the advanced Word class is December 19. All classes focus on Microsoft 2010.

EAST LIBERTY

Library Events

The East Liberty Branch of Carnegie Library, 130 S. Whitfield Street, has a number of exciting events in April. On December 6, a fun Dinosaur Program for children ages 6-12 will take place at 5:30 p.m. On Saturday, December 17, at 3:30 p.m., the library will present Kid's Create: Origami. The event is available for people of all ages. On December 29 at 3 p.m., the library will host Family Fun: BINGO for families with children age 3 and up. Call 412-363-8274 to

register for any program.

Ongoing

GARFIELD

PNC Partnership

Join Eastside Neighborhood Employment Center's (ENEC) PNC Bank Partnership program and take the first step towards your new career in banking. Attend two workshops to learn about PNC Bank and ENEC can help you with your application. The workshops are every Tuesday at 10 a.m. To register, please call 412-362-8580 or leave a message at 412-465-0425

GARFIELD

UPMC POWRR

Want to work with UPMC, but frustrated by the application process? The UPMC POWRR Program is for you! Join the Eastside Neighborhood Employment Center (ENEC), 5321 Penn Avenue, on December 15 at 9:30 for an information session on the UPMC POWRR program. Weekly workshops on Thursdays at 10 a.m. will help you to learn the skills and tools you need to get a job with UPMC. Attend three workshops and ENEC will help you with the application process. Positions are available in housekeeping, dietary, transportation, environmental services, and nursing assistance. To register, please call 412-362-8580 or leave a message at 412-465-0425.

LAWRENCEVILLE

Teen Time

Every Wednesday at 4 p.m., the Lawrenceville Branch of Carnegie Library, 279 Fisk Street, has a special program for middle and high school teens.

LAWRENCEVILLE

GED Classes

Do you need your GED or want to increase your academic levels for a job or to enter training? Are you interested in the medical or trades fields or want to explore career options? Sign up for free Career Pathway GED classes with Goodwill. In addition to learning the academics you need to pass the GED test, you will learn skills to prepare you for training, college or to enter the workforce. Classes are ongoing with orientation every eight weeks at various locations throughout Allegheny county. Classes are small, leading to individualized help, and are available mornings and afternoons. Call 412-632-1841 for more information or to reserve your spot in January's start session at Goodwill's Workforce Development Center, 118 52nd Street.

HIGHLAND PARK

Ola Appetite Café

Chef Olafemi Mandley has opened a new café at the Union Project, 801 N. Negley Avenue. It is open from 8:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Ola's daily menu of sandwiches, soups and pastries are made from whole ingredients and she is now taking orders for homemade sweet potato, pumpkin and apple pies for the holiday season. Contact Oacatering@yahoo.com for more information on the café or catering for special occasions.

Email Bulletin Board listings for

January by December 12 to

bulletin@bloomfield-garfield.org.

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The Schmutz Company: All Business and Nonsense

by Christine Bethea *The Bulletin*

Garfield – The Schmutz Company, located at 5405 Broad Street, is like a mega puppet theater or a cyber toy workshop rivaling you-know-who at the North Pole. Or maybe it's both. Even David English, who runs the place, wonders sometimes. But what's more important is what happens there: pure uninterrupted fun.

English has been working at fun for a long time. Since the age of 3, he's been creating unique characters often built from whatever was at hand. He constructed figures from dirt, wire, paper or even parts of his GI Joe and He-Man toys. His father, who owned an Oakmont funeral home and his mom, an avid quilter, encouraged his sculpting tendencies. They were even amused when they discovered how he would often bury his little creations in the back yard. In fact, they decided that their had a great future career – as an embalmer. He, however, had other ideas.

His ideas crystallized one day when he saw Jim Henson's Muppets on television. He decided that being a puppeteer was a cross between being a funeral director and being a quilter. "That it! That's what I want to do," he told his mom.

English earned a degree in puppetry in 2002, and began working toward his goal

of becoming a puppeteer. During the time, he also worked in a warehouse and at various bars, both as a bartender and as a bouncer. He saw each venture moving him one step closer toward his dream, if only because they earned him enough money to buy more art supplies.

"I don't regret any of those jobs," he said. "They taught me the value of good honest labor." For a while, English taught classes in Prague. The thought of having his own puppet empire was never far from his mind. While working as a mortgage processor in Pittsburgh, he met his future business partner, Don Orkoskey, who at the time was a struggling photographer.

"I was slacking off a bit, making these cool little characters out of glue, clay and string. They were all over my desk. Don peeked into my cubicle, and before long he was taking photos of them." The two men's creative minds clicked, but it took a few more years and a few more unsatisfying jobs before they realized that they had the ability to do something very special with their talents. In 2007, they formed the Schmutz Company, making animated advertising and other stop-motion art.

"Don came up with the name 'Schmutz.' It's a Yiddish word that literally translates



Dave English with one of his puppets. Photo courtesy WDO Photography

as 'moving dirt.' We work with so many different materials, it seemed appropriate."

In 2009, English moved to Garfield, "closer to the density of art," and connected to the community right away, renting a home from a well-known Pittsburgh artist named Connie Cantor. The space was airy and raw and had its own balcony. In 2011, English joined the board of the neighborhood development organization, the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation.

Today, English and Orkoskey are thriving in their new location and expanding their creative haven. They received a Spark grant from The Sprout Fund in 2010, which expanded their business connections, and a Super Spark grant in 2011, which is allowing them to work with the Children's Museum on a special collaboration.

"Our project is called the Make Shop Show. It lets kids become part of the whole 'make' culture. They can also tell stories and create people which I believe is part of the human experience, wanting to make

movable figures. If a kid makes a duck with four legs and a top hat, I tell them it's OK. You did a very good job," English said.

The Schmutz Company works with national groups and organizations as well as local ones in the East End: Everyone An Artist, Penn Ave Arts Initiative, GA/GI Festival, the Waffle Shop, Zombos and Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC. One engagement in which adults could animate a tabloid scandal led to English being hired in the Education Department at the Warhol Museum. "Where," he points out, "everyone has weird stuff all over their desk."

If you have weird ideas, or need them, English and Orkoskey are your go-to guys. In addition, they often offer space for artists to exhibit or perform, and have plans for a Garfield Bridge Program to expand their art residencies (they've had five since March of this year) between the Schmutz Lodge and the building next door, which they recently purchased. For more information, visit schmutzco.com or makeshopshow.com. ♦

Eyesore from page 4

constructed houses, or well-maintained older homes. It is not a block of Broad Street that has been beset by such an unsavory environment in years past.

Anyone who may know how to reach Mr. Foster and/or Ms. Evans is invited to contact the BGC office (412-441-6950 x15) to share that information so that we can begin to address the neighbors' concerns. We will hold the source of such information in strict confidence.

Follow-up on a previously nominated Eyesore: The Eyesore Property of the Month in July was 555 N. Aiken Avenue in

Garfield. The BGC is still searching for the owner of record for the property, Greg Stellmach. The BGC received a phone call on July 26, 2011, advising that Stellmach was seen in the Bier Haus Tavern on Spring Garden Avenue on the lower North Side. It is possible that he is living somewhere nearby, but this information has not been confirmed. His rowhouse on N. Aiken continues to deteriorate on a daily basis. Anyone with any information on Stellmach's whereabouts is welcome to contact the BGC at 412-441-6950 x15, so that we can eventually hold him accountable. ♦



You are Invited...

To the BGC Annual Family Holiday Party!!!

Friday, December 9th
BGC Community Activity Center
113 North Pacific Ave.
6:00PM-8:00PM



Visit with Santa and get your picture taken!

★
Enjoy free hot chocolate and cookies!

★
Make a holiday card & ornament!

★
Enjoy holiday music and a beautiful tree!

Please contact Kathryn Vargas at the Bloomfield Garfield Corporation at 412-441-6950 ext17 with any questions.
 Sponsored by the BGC and The Garfield Community Action Team