6% Place Receives Funding, Forms Oversight Group

By Joe Reuben The Bulletin

Garfield – A project that aims to attract a diverse population of artists, media professionals, craftspeople and other “creative types” to the Garfield neighborhood and Penn Avenue corridor got a boost in June, with the awarding of a $49,250 grant by the Heinz Endowments to the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC).

The Garfield area has begun to see an influx of younger households in the past five years eager to live in a neighborhood on the rebound, according to local experts in the real estate industry. The purpose of the “6% Place Project,” as it is called, is to focus on what the community can do over the next decade to attract even more people who might otherwise opt to live elsewhere, according to Rick Swartz, BGC’s executive director. The theory is that if 6 percent of a neighborhood’s population can be cemented

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Hearing Scheduled for Grocery Store
Bus Rented to Transport Residents

By Paula Martinac The Bulletin

Bloomfield – The City of Pittsburgh Zoning Board of Adjustment has scheduled a hearing for the proposed Bottom Dollar grocery store to be constructed at 5200 Penn Ave.

The hearing will take place downtown on Thursday, Aug. 2, at 10 a.m. at the John P. Robin Civic Building, 200 Ross St. All are invited to attend. At the hearing, Commercial Properties, LLC, the North Carolina-based developer in charge of the proposed construction, will give a presentation about the site plans for the property.

As reported previously in The Bulletin, the board of directors of the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC) passed a resolution in April in support of the developer’s site plan, based on strong community support for the store. The BGC will be providing free bus transportation to the hearing. Those who plan to attend should RSVP by calling 412-450-0447 and indicate if they need bus transportation. The bus will

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Verde To Open Second Restaurant

By Paula Martinac The Bulletin

Lawrenceville – Jeff Catalina says that he and his wife, Erin, always intended to bring several restaurant concepts to life. But, he admits,

See page 5

Is It Time to Legalize Marijuana?

By P.J. Maloney The Bulletin

Garfield – What’s the best way to deal with violence and other public safety issues related to street sales of marijuana? How about legalizing

See page 6

Penn Gets New Mainstreets Manager

By Carolyn Ristau The Bulletin

Bloomfield/Garfield – The Penn Avenue arts and business district welcomed Samantha McDonough as the new Mainstreets Manager

See page 11

ABOVE: Samantha McDonough is the new Mainstreets Manager for the Penn Avenue business district. Read the full story, starting above. Photo by Paula Martinac
Pittsburgh Obama Moves to Former Peabody High School

By Carolyn Ristau  The Bulletin

East Liberty – This summer, the Barack Obama Academy of International Studies (Pittsburgh Obama 6-12) moved from the former Reizenstein Middle School on Penn Avenue to the former Peabody High School at the corner of Highland Avenue and East Liberty Boulevard.

Pittsburgh Obama 6-12 is a magnet school with certified International Baccalaureate (IB) programming. The Middle Years Program is for grades 6-10, and the Diploma Program is for grades 11-12.

"When the school was created, we knew Reizenstein would not be a permanent home," commented Dr. Wayne Walters, principal at Pittsburgh Obama 6-12. The school opened at the Reizenstein location in 2009 with grades 6-9 and added a grade each year up to 12th grade. However, it was clear from day one that Reizenstein was too small a site for a full 6-12 school.

"We promised the first 9th graders that they would only experience one move when they moved initially," Walters explained. That class graduated this spring, which meant the school could now move to a new space to accommodate its increased size.

A committee recommended several sites to the district, all of which were existing school buildings with enough space to handle the student population of over 800. From these recommendations, the district chose the former Peabody High School.

Walters explained that the Peabody site has many advantages over the Reizenstein site, but the most important was the increase in size. One of the requirements of the IB program is an isolated testing area for students taking the IB exam. The former location did not have the space to accommodate this, forcing students to go off-site to take the exam. The new building is large enough to dedicate an exclusive area for testing.

The IB exam tests students’ critical thinking and holistic view of knowledge as opposed to the regurgitation of information required by other exams such as the Advanced Placement. The IB approach requires extensive training for the teachers and students. Walters explained, "The students’ tests are sent all over the world for assessment. This gives them international feedback on their skill sets."

Additional benefits of the new location include the largest gym in the Pittsburgh Public School system and an auditorium and windows, both of which Reizenstein lacked.

There is a downside to the new building. The school is organized into learning communities, groups of classes and grades that interact and learn together. The layout of Reizenstein

See Pittsburgh Obama | page 4
Garfield Receives “Love Your Block” Grant

by Kathryn Vargas  Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

Garfield – Are you ready to love your block? For the second year in a row, Garfield will be working on an exciting community revitalization project supported by Mayor Ravenstahl’s Love Your Block, a servePGH initiative.

Last fall, with Love Your Block funding, the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC) teamed up with the Garfield Community Action Team to make improvements to Hillcrest Street and the Garfield Gators’ field. This fall the BGC will be working with community volunteers to green a vacant, visible lot at the intersection of N. Mathilda and Mossfield Streets.

“I am very impressed with the great transformation both groups made last year,” said Mayor Ravenstahl. “With a $500 Home Depot gift card and the support of City services, they impacted 22 blocks, created two green spaces and picked up 1,500 pounds of litter. The City looks forward to seeing what they will accomplish this fall.”

Love Your Block is a program created by Mayor Ravenstahl and The Home Depot Foundation with the goal of revitalizing Pittsburgh – block by block. Over the last three rounds of Love Your Block funding, the City has awarded 42 mini-grants totaling $32,000 in Home Depot gift cards, provided to organizations working on volunteer-driven community revitalization efforts in Pittsburgh neighborhoods.

This round of Love Your Block is especially exciting because the awards have been doubled to $1,000 gift cards, with an opportunity for the most improved block to win an additional $2,000.

Love Your Block funding also focuses on projects that will have an impact on military veterans. The Home Depot Foundation and the City want to utilize these renovations to celebrate veterans and to promote a beautiful environment where they reside. Because of this, it is very fitting that Garfield is one of the neighborhoods for this funding round. In the most recent census, Garfield (census tract 1017) was noted as having one of the largest veteran populations in the city, coming in at 17.4 percent.

The BGC will call on the community to aid in the completion of this project. The corner targeted is one that is hilly, visible and well-traveled. Cleaning up this lot and repurposing it into a well-maintained flower garden will have a big impact and will make an impression on the many people who travel this route through Garfield. Revitalization of this block will also serve as a catalyst for a long-term plan for the space for a veteran’s memorial, tying the project to a large percentage of the Garfield population and the goals of the Love Your Block initiative.

For more information on how to get involved with Love Your Block, please email kathyrvn@bloomfield-garfield.org or call 412-441-6950 x 17.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor:

I’d like to take exception to Aggie Brose’s idea of what constitutes an eyesore. For many of us, a property with lush and wild growth has a kind of romantic charm and mystery about it that adds a note of diversity to the neighborhood. Walk around Garfield and you will find many more blatant eyesores than the property targeted in volume 37, no. 7 of The Bulletin! “[A House Built of Ivy and Weeds,” July 2012, p. 4]...

I have talked to a number of younger people who have settled in and around Garfield, and they are quick to point out that the lookalike new housing [built by the BGC] leaves a lot to be desired in the way of creativity and spirit. I think the BGC needs to put its priorities elsewhere than overgrown properties.

John Napolitano
Garfield

Dear Editor:

I just felt the need to share about the heroes in our neighborhood. On Monday evening, July 9, my grandchildren and I decided to take a walk. As I started out the door, I noticed a group of people looking and walking in a certain direction. I went down the steps to see where they were going. All I could see was smoke. I said, “Did anyone call 911?” and several people told me they already called. The fire was at 5134 Dearborn Street, a row house....

Quick thinking of some of the neighbors saved homes. A hose was hooked up to water down the houses until the fire department came. There was a person who stated he would go in [the house] and check if anyone was there. Because of this quick thinking and concern, homes, lives, belongings, memories and many other things were saved.

I am very grateful to be part of this neighborhood. You could say not only are we neighbors, we are like a family.

Sandra Talley
Garfield

Letters Policy: Send letters to the editor by the 15th of each month to bulletin@bloomfield-garfield.org. Letters must be no longer than 200 words; we will edit for length, spelling and grammar. The Bulletin reserves the right to reject inflammatory or anonymous letters. Please include your full name and neighborhood, which will be printed in the paper.
Transit Center to Fuel East Liberty Growth

By Margaret Graham  East Liberty Development Inc.

East Liberty – Thanks to a grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation, East Liberty is getting a new transit center.

The city's Urban Redevelopment Authority was recently awarded a $15 million TIGER IV (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) grant to develop the East Liberty Transit Center in partnership with the Port Authority of Allegheny County and The Mosites Company. This grant will leverage city and state funds to develop the $34 million transit site.

"We're very excited about this new development," said Skip Schwab, Director of Operations at East Liberty Development, Inc. "It's because of partnerships like these with the City of Pittsburgh, The Mosites Company, and the Mayor's Office that growth continues to happen in East Liberty."

The updated transit center, to be located at the corner of Penn and Shady Avenues, will improve bike and pedestrian access to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Busway. It will replace the current busway station, the busiest Port Authority station in the county.

Plans include open-air pedestrian bridges, increased secure bicycle parking and improved bus shelters. It will be part of the Eastside III redevelopment, a privately funded project from The Mosites Company. This development will bring short- and long-term jobs to East Liberty, further sparking neighborhood growth.

"This grant will spur a whole new wave of development in East Liberty," said Schwab. "As hotels, Bakery Square 2.0 and other businesses come to the area, this revitalized transit center will connect thousands of people to these assets and others already established in the neighborhood."

Pittsburgh Obama

from page 2

promoted a strong sense of community in the groups by being physically divided into "houses," separate spaces for each of the learning communities that encouraged interaction within each group. Peabody's layout is not as conducive to fostering the learning communities, with classrooms opening off long hallways, but Walters said, "We'll make it work."

As a magnet school, any student in Pittsburgh may apply to attend Pittsburgh Obama 6-12 through the district's magnet school application. A direct benefit to students who receive the IB diploma is that many universities in the United States give them automatic sophomore status. Walters noted that this can benefit the students "academically and financially."

However, Walters cautioned, "Ours is a rigorous program. We look for students who are up to the challenge." He explained further, "You don't have to be the smartest student, but you have to be willing to do the work and engage in thinking and understanding why."

The goal of the program is to create "well-rounded, globally competitive students," Walters said. This is achieved through a focus on multiple subjects including humanities, arts, math and second-language acquisition. Spanish, French, German and Japanese are offered as second languages.

Walters said he is excited about the future of the school in its new location. "We look forward to being part of a new community and engaging in new partnerships."

The Reizenstein site was sold to RGC Longview and Walnut Capital who intend to turn it into Bakery Square 2.0, a mixed-use development. ♦

Thank you! The Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation would like to acknowledge its NPP partners, PNC Bank and Allegheny Valley Bank. Thanks also to BNY Mellon, Pittsburgh Partnership for Neighborhood Development, The United Way, Dollar Bank, Citizens Bank, and all of The Bulletin's advertisers.
Andrew Twigg of Lawrenceville, who marble wainscoting on the walls. ceilings that are 14-1/2 feet high, and . “The main room, he notes, has thought we could have fun with this take history and own it,” he explains. “We in an 1887 building that once housed the space turned up at 43rd Street and Butler, classic American dishes and cocktails. A shops – places where they could feature They were considering banks, barber would have a 1920s, Gatsby-era theme. Catalina explains, for a restaurant that the end of the year.

Residents Get Parking Program Reactivated

By Paula Martinac The Bulletin

Garfield — The block of Dearborn Street between N. Mathilda Street and N. Millvale Avenue and the blocks of N. Millvale between Penn Avenue and Broad Street will once again be included in the City’s Residential Parking Permit Program (RPPP).

The program restricts cars without permits to limited hours of parking in designated areas. To be eligible, blocks must be impacted by their proximity to a large institution, such as a hospital or university, or to a business district.

Area I, as the Garfield blocks are known, was deactivated in 2007 when St. Francis Hospital closed. “Residents, against the advice of my department and Councilman [Ricky] Burgess’ office, petitioned out of RPPP [at that time],” stated Ashley Holloway, Neighborhood Planner and RPPP Coordinator for the Department of City Planning.

Since 2007, Children’s Hospital of Pitts- burgh of UPMC opened, and the West Penn Hospital Emergency Department closed and then reopened. In addition, new residents moved into housing built along N. Millvale by the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC). In early 2012, residents approached Councilman Burgess’ office about being reinstated into the RPPP.

The program requires that 70 percent of households in the area be in favor of taking part. In the first attempt, the Garfield blocks fell short of the required approval percentage, achieving less than 5 percent.

Then N. Millvale residents Mary Anne Stevanus, a BGC employee, and neighbor Catherine Curry, the BGC’s treasurer, took to the streets with approval forms, going house to house for signatures. Their efforts paid off, and Holloway reported the approval percentage he received for the second attempt was actually 76 percent of households. “I got flooded with calls and letters from residents and the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation stating their approval,” Holloway said.

Holloway told The Bulletin in an email that he is “now waiting for the City’s Department of Public Works to post the signs on the streets.”

Area I parking will be restricted to one hour between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m., seven days a week, for vehicles without an “I” permit. “Residents decided this, and it has to stay this way until the permit area is up for recertification in four years,” noted Holloway.

Parking permits will cost $20 annually, with a renewal of May 1. To purchase a permit, a resident must prove he or she lives in the area and owns a car. Each household is also allowed to purchase one visitor’s pass a year, at a cost of $1.

For more information about the RPPP program, call 412-393-0162 or visit the Department of City Planning online at www.city.pittsburgh.pa.us/cp/.

 Federal Reserve stamp that appears on all U.S. paper money.

The owners, working with mossArchitects, the firm that designed Verde, plan to bring what Catalina calls “a highfinance character” to the interior, without making it too “stuffy.” He says he envisions banquets, floor lamps and period wallpaper. “It will be understated but classy.”

Verde’s signature design element is its lighted bar, but Catalina says he is not certain yet if Tender will have a similar stand-out feature. “There are six safes downstairs,” he notes. “We might do something with them. We’d like to reuse as much décor as possible.”

The menu will consist of small plates, featuring regional foods such as city chicken, lobster roll and muffuletta, and desserts will consist of American favorites like peach cobbler and moon pie. Drinks will be “spirits” – whisky, gin, rum and the like – mixed with juices, infusions and house-made phosphate sodas.

Catalina says they hope to start construction in mid-August, with an expected “soft” opening in December.

The co-owners have already presented their plans to the Lawrenceville community and got a “wonderful” reception, he notes.

Tender also had its Zoning Board of Adjustment hearing on June 28; it will take about 45 days until a decision is reached regarding the site plans. Bill Cornell, who owns a building and business on 44th Street and is president of the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation board of directors, spoke at the hearing to affirm that “Catalina was very responsive and responsible to the neighborhood” in opening and operating Verde.

Catalina explains that he and his wife have learned a lot from their experience with Verde, which was their first restauraunt. “It takes a little time to find your identity,” he states. “You’ve got to listen to customers and weigh if and how to respond.”

For example, they found that customers were frustrated by Verde’s “reservations only” policy, so they eventually changed it to accommodate one-third walk-ins without reservations. And, he adds, “Our work’s not done with Verde.”

Asked if there is a third restaurant in their future, Catalina smiles. “I’d love to keep going.”

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SHOWCASE OF THE MONTH

Out of the Woods

By Aggie Brose  Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

Stanton Heights – Once upon a time, there was a forest at the site of 5137 Rosecrest Drive. Fifteen years ago, James and Carmen Green – the recorded owners, according to the Allegheny County real estate website – acquired the site in the 10th Ward, Stanton Heights, and began clearing out the woods to build a beautiful home with an attached garage.

The home is white with black trim and shutters and a bright red door. It has very neat and well-maintained landscaping, with attractive potted plants at the front door and also on either side of the garage door. Trees rim the property, harking back to the days when this was a wooded area.

Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation staff asked Mr. Green why he chose this particular spot to custom-build his home. He explained that at the time he was a City of Pittsburgh firefighter and was required to live within the city limits. He couldn't find the right home, and then saw the tract of land on Rosecrest Drive. He spoke to the nearby neighbors and sought out the owners, met with them and negotiated a good price for the land; this led to securing the financing to build the home. The Greens said they have been very happy with the decision they made, and love the neighborhood. Mr. Green retired as a firefighter and was required to live within the city limits. He couldn’t find the right home, and then saw the tract of land on Rosecrest Drive. He spoke to the nearby neighbors and sought out the owners, met with them and negotiated a good price for the land; this led to securing the financing to build the home. The Greens said they have been very happy with the decision they made, and love the neighborhood. Mr. Green retired as a firefighter and was required to live within the city limits. He couldn’t find the right home, and then saw the tract of land on Rosecrest Drive. He spoke to the nearby neighbors and sought out the owners, met with them and negotiated a good price for the land; this led to securing the financing to build the home. The Greens said they have been very happy with the decision they made, and love the neighborhood. Mr. Green retired as a firefighter and was required to live within the city limits.

We would like to thank the Greens for choosing to invest in the neighborhood of Stanton Heights. The property compliments all the other outstanding houses on the street.

Marijuana

The sale and use of marijuana by adults, under strict government control? That’s what the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC) board of directors wants to explore.

The board voted unanimously on July 9 to seek ways to change the existing law, making marijuana sales and use legal in much the same way alcoholic beverages are.

“Our main motivation is to take this segment of the so-called ‘drug economy’ off the streets,” says the BGC’s executive director, Rick Swartz. “If it’s legal and available from legitimate sources, it will put the street dealers out of work.”

BGC Deputy Director Aggie Brose, who chairs the BGC public safety committee, feels that most of the people dealing drugs on the streets, causing loitering, littering, vandalism and violence, are dealing marijuana. “Whatever trade there is in drugs like crack and heroin appears to be deeper in the shadows, not out in the open on the street,” says Brose if the pot trade is taken off the street, it will go a long way toward making neighbors feel safe in their own homes, instead of worrying about the potential danger that loiterers pose.

Swartz points out that marijuana arrests do not provide long-term relief. People arrested for marijuana possession or sales are generally back out on the street again in a matter of hours. “The criminal justice system has much bigger issues to deal with, and marijuana violations are low priority,” he says, “so I’m comfortable with saying, ‘Let’s deal with reality.’ We need to bring this out in the open and take the lead. Most people don’t want to talk about it. We want to give law enforcement the latitude it needs to concentrate on other more dangerous drugs and violators.”

In passing the resolution, the BGC board expressed the belief that good public policy should treat the sale and use of marijuana the same way it does alcohol and nicotine.

“It would free up dwindling public resources for treatment of addiction,” says Eileen Kraus Dobratz, one of the board leaders on this issue.

Taking the marijuana economy off the streets would have an added value, according to Brose. “A lot of kids start selling pot on the street when they’re in their teens,” says Brose, “and they make a small but steady income, so they drop out of school and before they know it they’re in their 30s and the only skill they have is selling baggies of marijuana. By taking the pot economy off the streets, maybe they’ll plan ahead more and get an education and career skills.”

How will the public react to the BGC’s decision to push for legalization of marijuana? “We think there will be some negative public reaction,” says Swartz, “but we need to put the campaign in the right context. We are convinced that this is the best policy for our neighborhood.”

Brose says a lot of people she talks to in local government, community groups and even law enforcement look on it as a quixotic effort. “They say, ‘That’s great,’ then they get a little smile on their face and say, ‘but you’ll never succeed.’ We’re going to work hard. If it’s working elsewhere [in states like Colorado and Washington], it can work here.”

Public Safety Task Force. The Public Safety Task Force has convened monthly in Garfield since 2000. At the table are representatives from the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation, the Bureau of Police, other neighborhood organizations, the offices of the Mayor and City Council members, various city and county departments and the state. Community members are invited to bring specific concerns to the PSTF’s monthly meeting during the first 15 minutes. The next meeting is August 8 at 4 p.m. at the BGC’s Community Activity Center, 113 N. Pacific Ave.
New EECO Center Off to Slow Start

By Carolyn Ristau  The Bulletin

East Liberty/Larimer – The Environment and Energy Community Outreach (EECO) Center officially opened on April 1, and a ribbon-cutting ceremony led by state Sen. Jim Ferlo, who spearheaded the creation of the center, was held June 21. But despite the official opening, the center is still getting itself organized.

The EECO Center, located at the corner of East Liberty Boulevard and Larimer Avenue, replaced a vacant gas station with a new, green, modular construction. The center is staffed and run by Pittsburgh Community Service Inc. (PCSI), an organization that connects individuals, families and communities with resources to improve quality of life.

A brochure describes the EECO Center as a “one-stop shop for energy conservation and community engagement.” Only a few of the programs envisioned for the center are currently offered, however. The Neighborhood Safety Program offers products and services including water- and energy-efficient Eco-Kits for low-income families. The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and Dollar Energy Fund assist low-income families with their utility bills and supplies. Green Talk Tuesdays, open forums about green practices for businesses and business planning, are open to everyone.

Visitors of all income levels are welcome to drop by the center for information about energy efficiency and about resources available around the city. The scheduled hours for the EECO Center are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. Annette Condeluci, planning and grants management specialist for PCSI, said, “The goal is to get more hours, particularly evening hours.”

However, The Bulletin staff visited the center on four different occasions during the stated hours and the doors were always locked. Sierra Laventure-Voltz, who started as a program specialist for the EECO Center in early July, explained this was due to several factors, including plumbing that needed to be repaired and difficulty coordinating the staff’s summer schedules, as two staff members have to be on-site for the center to be open.

Laventure-Voltz and Condeluci described several potential future projects and programs for the EECO Center. The two closest to fruition are a rain garden, designed by The Penn State Center and managed by the Urban Redevelopment Authority, and a porous pavement exhibit. Laventure-Voltz said that the pavement exhibit will be “like a walk-through garden showcasing different porous materials with information and examples of each. It will have an outdoor classroom feel.”

Condeluci said she hopes the center can become a rental facility for community groups. She noted that the building is small, though, and at best can fit “20 people theater-style with no tables.” She said that opening the doors to community groups will help the EECO Center toward its long-term goal to “become part of the community.”

Information about the EECO Center and its programs will eventually be available through PCSI’s website, www.pghcsi.org. Laventure-Voltz said she thought this would be up and running this month. In the meantime, the center can be contacted at 412-661-0576 or through PCSI at 412-904-4700.
Frank Talk about an American Classic

Gourmet Hot Dog Shop and Truck Expands to Lawrenceville

By Paula Martinac  The Bulletin

Lawrenceville – There’s good news for East End fans of Franktuary, the popular hot dog shop that operates out of Trinity Cathedral downtown and also has a truck that stops on Baum Boulevard at Motor Square Garden on Thursdays. By the end of the year, Franktuary intends to open a second, much larger restaurant in the Shannopin’s Edge development in the 3800 block of Butler Street.

"Why hot dogs?" I asked Megan Lindsey, co-owner of Franktuary, as I perched in the passenger seat of the truck and she prepped for the lunchtime rush in the back with employee Todd Caldwell.

“They’re sort of Everyman’s food,” she explained. She added that her business partner, Tim Tobitsch, “grew up in the New York-New Jersey area loving hot dogs. He had certain carts he’d go to in the city.”

At Grove City College, where the two met, Tobitsch, she said, was frustrated by not being able to find a good frank. So he got a George Foreman grill and started cooking and selling his own out of his dorm room. After graduation, “neither of us wanted to do what we had majored in,” Lindsey said. “We were very young and very innocent.”

With personal loans for start-up, they launched the downtown shop in 2004, in a space at the cathedral that used to be a bookstore. They continue to serve lunch there Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The truck came later; Lindsey said this is their third season with the food wagon, which operates from about March to November. In addition to having semi-regular stops, the truck caters special events for businesses and organizations, and is a fixture at Unblurred: First Fridays on Penn every month.

“The truck helped us figure out the best neighborhood to be in,” Lindsey noted of the decision to expand to a second venue. She herself lives in Lawrenceville, while Tobitsch is in Stanton Heights. The Butler Street property offers them 2,000 square feet of space and a full kitchen. Downtown, she said, they operate with just two portable stoves and two grills, so the new location will give them the luxury of room to experiment.

“I’m not happy with our veggie dog,” she explained of the soy-based hot dogs they buy from a distributor. “With the new kitchen, we can try making our own.”

Other items on the menu will remain the same, like the standard all-beef dog (made by Boar’s Head – “we trust their quality,” she said) and the grass-fed organic franks they source locally. Lindsey said they will be expanding the menu at the new location to include meatballs.

She admitted that her “affection for the hot dog has grown” over the years, especially as the business has included more out-of-the-ordinary toppings. Lindsey is responsible for overseeing the creative development of the menu, and for bringing an “international twist” to the condiments. But she says their most popular hot dogs remain the classics: the New Yorker, with sauerkraut, vidalia onion sauce and brown mustard; and the Texan, with chili, yellow mustard and chopped onions.

Opening a new restaurant will necessitate employing about 15 to 20 additional workers, and Lindsey said they hope to work with organizations like the Eastside Neighborhood Employment Center to hire local residents. “We’ve learned to hire people for their character and trust they can be trained to do the job,” she observed. “We’ve been blessed to have great people working for us.”

Lindsey said they toyed with the idea of calling the new restaurant something other than “Franktuary;” but finally decided to stick with the tried and true, as they’ve already established their brand. So, will they ever get weary of just cooking up hot dogs?

“We have all kinds of ideas for the future,” she noted. “But we’ll take them one at a time.” ♦
Community Renewal Depends on You

Have you noticed all the changes in our neighborhoods? New homes, new businesses, new rental developments, a new public computer center… Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation members helped make them possible!

It’s a fact – membership in the BGC helps to achieve growth and renewal in Bloomfield, Garfield and Friendship, bringing about meaningful change in the lives of our residents. Since June 2011, for example, membership donations helped accomplish the following:

- Construction of 5 new single-family, for-sale homes in Garfield, bringing to 44 the number completed with our partner, Garfield Jubilee Association, since 2002;
- Start of construction of Garfield Glen, 45 single-family houses for rent to working-class households, beginning this summer;
- Operation of MainStreets Program for Penn Avenue that produced public artwork and beautification projects, and filled 4 vacant storefronts with new entrepreneurs;
- Hosting of planning sessions with community residents, city officials and their engineering consultants to move forward a $5 million reconstruction of the public infrastructure along Penn Avenue, between N. Mathilda and N. Evaline Streets., beginning in 2013;
- Opening of Pittsburgh CONNECTS, a free community technology center on Penn Avenue;
- Placement of 45 teens and young adults in part-time jobs with area employers;
- Continuous interaction with law enforcement authorities through monthly meetings of the Public Safety Task Force;
- Redesign of our free monthly community newspaper, The Bulletin, to generate a larger readership and make it a more in-depth, vibrant forum for the exchange of information.

Please consider investing in your community by becoming a member of the BGC, at whatever level you can afford. Thank you in advance for your support of our work.

Rustbelt Rivalry Spreads to the Arts

Garfield/Cleveland – At the end of a blistering June, five artists and one band from Garfield’s Most Wanted Fine Art gallery traveled to Cleveland to participate in the Waterloo Arts Fest, which ran from noon to 7 p.m. on June 30. Side-by-side with Cleveland artists, they displayed their work in Zaller Gallery, painted live, showed independent film projects and performed music.

“We hope to have it turn into a cultural exchange,” said Sarah Gyorki, owner of Zaller Gallery in Cleveland and founder of the Waterloo Arts Fest. “Our artists hope to come to Pittsburgh in the future.”

Gyorki said she “kept in touch with Jason Sauer” after visiting his Penn Avenue art gallery, Most Wanted Fine Art, a few years ago. She invited the Pittsburgh artists to come show in her gallery during the Waterloo Arts Fest and hosted them while they stayed. Jason Sauer, Nina Sauer, Lauren Toohey, Sam Throp and John Lysak showed their work in the gallery. Although Mark Zingarelli, Mia Donna, Anne Michelle Lyons and Frank Knездich were not present, their work was also on display.

Pittsburgh artists Lauren Toohey and Sam Throp participated in the Pittsburgh
YPA Founder Steps Down after 10 Years

By Carolyn Ristau  The Bulletin

YPA (Young Preservationists Association) founder Dan Holland of Friendship stepped down from his post at the end of June. Since 2002, Holland and YPA made great strides in involving youth in historic preservation in the Pittsburgh region.

Holland started YPA “because it needed to be started.” The goal of YPA is to “put young people front and center, at the core of preservation activities.” YPA works to create a better quality of life through identifying, recognizing and restoring, renovating or adapting sites of historical significance in the region. It was the first preservation association in the country focused on young people. Now more than 10 cities nationwide have organizations dedicated to young preservationists. YPA was also part of a larger movement “to get young people involved in Pittsburgh.”

“The first board meeting was in my living room,” Holland said. “Three people showed up; I was one of them.” Over the years, YPA grew to a board of 15 members and to a membership of more than 350 people. In addition, more than 5,500 people participated in YPA events since 2002.

Even though YPA covers nine counties in southwestern Pennsylvania, it has done a lot of work in Pittsburgh’s East End neighborhoods. Since 2005, YPA awarded the Michael Eversmeyer Promise Award honoring new preservation efforts to three East End groups: The Union Project, Highland Park, in 2005; students at the former Peabody High School, East Liberty, in 2011; and Michael Stanton and Open Hand Ministries, Garfield and East Liberty, in 2012.

Every year since 2003, YPA has published a list of Top 10 Preservation Opportunities in the Pittsburgh Region. These lists have frequently included sites from the East End such as Garfield’s B’Nai Israel Synagogue Sanctuary, East Liberty’s Town Square, Lawrenceville’s Pittsburgh Brewing Co. and East Liberty’s Highland Building.

Holland said he is most proud of the Youth Main Street Advisors Program YPA established. In this program, high school students spend a year researching and writing a book about their neighborhood, which then gets published. Students at the former Peabody High School participated in this program over the 2010-2011 school year, and published a book called “Pittsburgh’s East End: Then, Now and Later.” Holland explained that when the students hold the book in their hands “they know they’ve achieved all they set out to do and more. I know it means a lot to them.”

“This is only the tip of the iceberg. I hope YPA can grow and expand and spread the message of young preservation nationally and internationally,” Holland said. He said he would like to see high school and college chapters of YPA in the future.

Although Holland stepped down as CEO, he explained, “I will remain as a consultant to the board and will continue to look for opportunities to work with young people. There is a feeling of hope and promise in young people.” Through the summer and fall, Holland will be coaching track and working on an oral history project with SLB Radio, a radio program that engages children, youth and families. While he will continue to work with other youth, Holland said one of his main goals is “getting my own kids involved in community and leadership.”

Looking over the past 10 years with YPA, Holland said, “I want to acknowledge the role the board and advisory committee played in making this a great experience. It was an amazing team effort. We were fortunate to have such good teamwork.”

For more information about YPA, its programs and awards, visit youngpreservationists.org.

Below: Rick Sebak, emcee at YPA’s 10th Anniversary Celebration, and Dan Holland. Photo by Carolyn Ristau

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on June 19th, after Rich Engel left the position for another job. Funded by the city’s Urban Redevelopment Authority, the Mainstreets Manager oversees business recruitment and development along the corridor.

McDonough is a Pittsburgh native who recently moved back to her childhood home in Hazelwood after inheriting it. She holds a BA in Art and Art History and has taught art classes since 2009. She continues to teach 6th and 9th grade Art Connection classes at the Carnegie Museum of Art during the school year.

“I have lots of ideas,” McDonough said about her new job. “But it’s not so significant what my ideas are. It is more important to facilitate the ideas of the people who live and work on the avenue.”

McDonough brings to the job her experiences from working along Penn Avenue in other capacities. In summer 2011, she implemented “Art Out of the Box,” a project she designed to make “art more accessible” by setting up artists on main streets in five neighborhoods, including Penn Avenue. McDonough said she learned she has “a knack for project management,” which led to her interest in the Mainstreets Manager position.

In June 2011, Friendship Development Associates (FDA) hired McDonough where she is now office manager. In her work at FDA, she wrote a community plan with FDA and Friendship Preservation Group, ran community meetings, wrote grants and managed property.

“I am interested in facilitating more conversation between businesses and the arts on Penn Avenue,” McDonough said. She explained that her goal is to get business owners to take more ownership of the Penn Avenue Arts Initiative (PAAI), a non-profit organization focused on revitalizing Penn Avenue through the arts. McDonough created a Google Calendar and Google Group for businesses and artists along the avenue “as a way for discussions to happen—their issues, ideas and what they’d like to see happen.” Businesses and artists interested in joining the Google Calendar and Google Group can contact McDonough at pennavenueartsinitiative@gmail.com.

McDonough also wrote a grant for a consultant “to create an action plan to bring the Arts Initiative to the next level.” One of her ideas for this next level is expanding Unblurred to include more art programs, “like what Assemble [a community arts and technology space at 5125 Penn Ave.] does, but all along Penn.”

She said she is also planning to continue encouraging people to buy store fronts on the avenue. Several people who are interested in buying buildings on Penn Avenue have already contacted her for information on available properties. McDonough said she is gathering information on the properties that are available in order to pursue connecting these potential buyers with sellers.

Though she said she has some familiarity with the area through her work at FDA and from having lived on the Friendship/Bloomfield border several years ago, McDonough is working to learn more about the community. She said, “It’s great getting out and talking to people I haven’t met yet.”

“If I am able to affect any change as Mainstreets Manager,” McDonough said, “I would like to help create more of a sense of community along the avenue, whether as an arts district or business district. When someone arrives on the avenue, I want it to be clear that this is a cohesive corridor. The more that cohesion is cultivated, the more positive people feel and the more new people will come.”

To contact McDonough, email mainstreets@bloomfield-garfield.org or call 412-389-5521.

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Transportation Planning Workshop Seeks Community Input

By Patrick Roberts City of Pittsburgh, Department of City Planning

East Liberty – From Aug. 6 to 8, urban designers, technical experts, engineers and community stakeholders will be busy working together at the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh branch in East Liberty to develop innovative transportation solutions for Pittsburgh.

This three-day workshop – the fourth in a series of four workshops held in various neighborhoods over the past six months – is sponsored by MOVEPGH, a City of Pittsburgh initiative that looks at transportation solutions throughout the city. The workshop provides an opportunity for residents to join an open discussion about transportation issues that affect them. This final workshop will focus on issues facing the city’s East End neighborhoods, and all are invited to attend.

The purpose of these workshops is to develop and test various design and planning ideas related to transportation solutions for areas of change and redevelopment; increasing transportation choices; developing street designs that include complete streets concepts creating interconnected bike, pedestrian, transit and automobile networks; and developing strategies for maximizing street capacity.

Daytime open house workshop hours are Monday, Aug. 6, 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Tuesday, Aug. 7, 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; and Wednesday, Aug. 8, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. The public is encouraged to drop in at any time during these hours to interact with the planning team and express ideas, plans and concerns.

The event will conclude with an evening wrap-up and public meeting presentation on Wednesday, Aug. 8, at 6 p.m., where the MOVEPGH team will discuss plan updates and new ideas, provide a workshop summary and receive public input. All sessions will be located at the library’s East Liberty Branch, 130 S. Whitfield St.

In addition to joining the MOVEPGH design team as it works to develop transportation solutions, the public can take part in two bicycle tours/audits of East End neighborhoods (held at noon and 6 p.m. on Monday, Aug. 6th and Tuesday, Aug. 7th), and a group ride to Mellon Park for a BikeFest-sponsored movie viewing after the evening wrap-up and public meeting on August 8th.

For more information, visit www.planpgh.com/movepgh. You can also find live workshop updates on facebook.com/planpgh and twitter at @planpgh.

6% Place

with those who have a connection to the creative arts, the neighborhood’s social fabric will feel the benefits over time.

“Garfield’s poised to shed its image as a downtrodden community,” according to Deanna Davis, a real estate agent with Coldwell Banker in East Liberty. “I’ve been working in this market for more than 15 years, and I’d have to say that interest in the neighborhood has never been stronger. People who could choose to live in neighborhoods with better reps are giving Garfield a serious look.”

Davis, together with 14 other community stakeholders and residents, has volunteered to serve on a steering committee that will decide how the funds from Heinz are spent. The committee will also identify the best options for reuse of the Fort Pitt school property. A private consulting firm, cityLab, produced a report last year that suggested a myriad number of initiatives would help Garfield stake out a new spot on the regional map. That report is available on the firm’s website, www.cityLabpgh.org.

The president of cityLab, Eve Picker, is a former Friendship resident who has been active in neighborhood revitalization work for 25 years.

“The steering committee will be a mix of folks from many different walks of life, and the fact that they want to be part of this is heartening,” Picker said recently. “Some initiatives, like building a database of who lives here now and why, can be among the early fruits from its labor. Others, like creating a street market bi-weekly or monthly for vendors of all types to populate, will take the involvement of many more residents to make successful.”

Picker said organizations in Garfield such as Assemble, Earthen Vessels Outreach, the Schmutz Lodge and Garfield Jubilee Association will also have representatives at the table. Her firm will serve as a consultant to the BGC on the project.

“In the end, we’re going to be interested to see what tangible, permanent change results from the vision embodied in the report,” Swartz observed. “We still have an uphill climb before we can say that Garfield is viewed in the same light that Morningside, Stanton Heights and other neighborhoods around us are. So we’re going into this with eyes wide open.”

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“Like” the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation on Facebook for the latest neighborhood information and community photos.
Ronald McDonald House Provides “Home Away from Home”

By Carolyn Ristau The Bulletin

Lawrenceville – The Pittsburgh chapter of Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) provides a “home away from home” for families whose children are receiving treatments and procedures at local hospitals, including Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC, Magee-Women’s Hospital of UPMC, Children’s Home of Pittsburgh and The Children’s Institute. Founded in 1979, RMHC moved to its current location at 451 44th St. on the Children’s Hospital campus in 2009 to meet growing demand for its services.

“We’re unique,” Eleanor Reigel, executive director of RMHC, explained. “Most Ronald McDonald Houses just provide bedrooms.” The Pittsburgh house, on the other hand, provides apartments, each with a bedroom with a queen-size bed, living room with a TV and a pull-out sofa, full bathroom, and kitchen with a refrigerator, microwave, dishwasher, toaster and coffeemaker.

Families also have access to a full common kitchen as well as a laundry room, computers, a Wii system, play area, and library on the penthouse floor. This setup gives the families the option to stay in the privacy of their apartments or to interact with other families and the staff in the common rooms as needed.

“There are only two requirements for families to stay here,” Reigel said. These are they have to live more than 40 miles away and the child receiving treatment must be under the age of 21. While many of the families who stay at the house are from Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia or New York, families come from all over the United States and from other countries attracted by Children’s Hospital’s specialty areas. Rent is only $15 a night and financial aid is available for those who need it.

Elaine Dulaney from West Virginia has been staying at the house since December 2011, while her youngest son, Owen, who turns 1 year old this month, received two bone marrow and core blood transplants. She said they hope to return home this month. Dulaney explained, “If we had to find someplace else to stay it would be impossible to pay $100 a night. Here they never say, ‘Hey, where’s your rent?’”

Dulaney said the best part about staying at the house is sleep. While Owen was inpatient, she and her husband took turns staying one night in Owen’s hospital room and the next night in their apartment at the Ronald McDonald House. “Every other night we got a good night’s sleep,” Dulaney said. She also said the staff is very helpful. “They provide everything you need, so you don’t have to worry about it.”

RMHC has space to serve 60 families a night. In 2011, more than 2,000 families were served. “We’re always full,” Reigel explained. “There’s a waiting list every day, but families are usually able to get a room within 24 hours. The longest wait for a room has been 48 hours.”

While the average length of a stay is one week, some families stay as long as three, six or nine months. Those who stay longer often “start to pitch in; they feel this is their home,” Reigel said. She described one family who volunteered to make dinner for the house one week after their daughter underwent a transplant. They also volunteered to wash up the dishes and clean the common areas. Reigel said that families like that are “why I have the best job in the world.”

To run the house costs $1.2 million annually, including the cost of leasing the space from Children’s Hospital. This money is raised in large part through fundraisers, individual donations and corporate fundraisers and donations. Individuals and groups also donate items to make the families’ stays more comfortable. After naming recent donations of toys and blankets from La-Z-Boy, MetLife, a local quilting group and others, Reigel said, “This place reminds you there are good people doing good things.”

To learn more about RMHC and ways to become involved, visit http://www.rmhcpgh.org.

ABOVE: Elaine Dulaney, Owen Dulaney, and ‘Nana’ Pam Enoch. Photo by Carolyn Ristau

Grocery Store

begin boarding at the BGC Community Activity Center, 113 N. Pacific Ave., at 8:30 a.m. on Aug. 2 and return to the center around noon.

“It’s vital that people attend this meeting to understand how the City will arrive at the decision to permit a store at that site,” said Aggie Brose, deputy director of the BGC. “This is the neighborhood’s best chance in 25 years to get a grocery store.”

Residents with questions about the store or the hearing can call Brose at 412-441-6950 x 15 or email aggie@bloomfield-garfield.org.
GARFIELD

**Recruitment Session**

The University of Pittsburgh will be scheduling for a variety of positions in food service, maintenance, environmental services and administrative support and much more. Come learn about Pitt and how to gain a leg up in the application process from 2 to 4 p.m. at ENEC (Eastside Neighborhood Employment Center), 5521 Penn Ave. Please call 412-362-8580 for registration and details.

**EAST LIBERTY**

**Mobility Vision Meeting**

Help envision an East Liberty in which all people can move around and get to the community safely and with ease, by any mode. Come to a public creative brainstorming session, 5:30 to 8 p.m., Carnegie Library, 30 S. Whittredge St. Dinner and childcare provided. RSVP: 412-361-8061 x28.

**GARFIELD**

**Vacation Bible School**

The Morningside Church of God in Christ, 5173 Dearborn St., will have a free Vacation Bible School from Aug. 6 to 10, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., with a closing program Aug. 10 at 1 p.m. Come join the fun and bring your friends. Lunch will be served and breakfast will be available from 9 to 10 a.m. For more information call 412-361-9865.

**GARFIELD**

**Pajama Party**

Bring your favorite stuffed animal to the 7 p.m. Pajama Party Storytime at Carnegie Library-Lawrenceville, 279 Fisk St. The party animals will spend the night playing games and eating snacks at the library while the kids are at home in bed. Join us at 2 p.m. on Tuesday to pick up your stuffed animal, eat a snack and hear all about their overnight adventures.

**LAWRENCEVILLE**

**Pajama Party Storytime**

At 2 p.m., celebrate the end of Summer Reading with a garden party at Carnegie Library-Lawrenceville, 279 Fisk St. The class will cover two saving tomato seeds at Carnegie Library-Burgh Seed & Story Library, for an evening about gardening thyme.

**LAWRENCEVILLE**

**Gardening Thyme**

Lawrenceville, 279 Fisk St. The class will cover two

**EAST LIBERTY**

**Pajama Party Storytime**

At 2 p.m., celebrate the end of Summer Reading with a garden party at Carnegie Library-Lawrenceville, 279 Fisk St. The class will cover two saving tomato seeds at Carnegie Library-Burgh Seed & Story Library, for an evening about gardening thyme.

**STACYEE PEARL dance project**

Aug. 6–11, participants will design T-shirts with words and art. On Aug. 18, participants will sport their new fashions and configure themselves in different ways, transforming themselves into kinetic poetry. Inspired by magnetic poetry, the second session involves collaboration and movement among participants to form words, sentences and poetry. These workshops are free. Materials and snacks will be provided. Location in Garfield is TBD. RSVP by Aug. 6 by emailing literacyartsboom@gmail.com or calling 773-425-1531. You will also need to fill out the volunteer form in advance, available at http://bit.ly/TheLABVolunteerForm.

**LAWRENCEVILLE**

**Kinetic Poetry**

The LAB invites 9- to 13-year-olds to Movable Type – Kinetic Poetry from noon to 2 p.m. This event on Aug. 18 from noon to 2 p.m. On Aug. 11, participants will design T-shirts with words and art. On Aug. 18, participants will sport their new fashions and configure themselves in different ways, transforming themselves into kinetic poetry. Inspired by magnetic poetry, the second session involves collaboration and movement among participants to form words, sentences and poetry. These workshops are free. Materials and snacks will be provided. Location in Garfield is TBD. RSVP by Aug. 6 by emailing literacyartsboom@gmail.com or calling 773-425-1531.

**GARFIELD**

**Volunteer Training**

Volunteers are essential to Literary Arts Boom (The LAB). This training session from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. on Aug. 18 will be held at 279 Fisk St. Snacks, fun and games for everyone will be provided. Grand prize winners for children, adult and teen summer reading programs will be announced.

**LAWRENCEVILLE**

**Rock All Night Tour**

R.A.N.T. (Rock All Night Tour) is a free, 14-hour community music festival from noon this day to 2 a.m. Aug. 12 with the focus on the many diverse music styles and genres of Pittsburgh bands with the focus on Lawrenceville. The show highlights pre-WWII songs, ’50s Rockabilly, ’60s Garage, ’70s Rock, ’80s Punk and then more contemporary sounds. Local vendor’s tables and refreshments will be available. The outdoor event is suitable for all ages and is bike-friendly. There are multiple locations for this event. To see a schedule and for more information go to http://www.wyep.org/event/lawrenceville-rock-all-night.

**EAST LIBERTY**

**Youth Moves**

Local youth dance programs showcase their work at 7 p.m. at the Kelly-Strayhorn Theater, 5941 Penn Ave. Bring the entire family for this energetic performance. This FAMILYtime program is pay-what-you-can. For tickets and information, visit www.kelly-strayhorn.org or call 800-838-3006.

**STACYEE PEARL dance project**

Popular and thought-provoking ensemble returns to the Kelly-Strayhorn Theater, 5941 Penn Ave., to show “… On Being…” a new work in progress at 8 p.m. STACYEE PEARL dance project interprets and mirrors culture and community, while experimenting with innovative conceptual collaborations between and among activists, musicians, artists and choreographers. Tickets are $10 each. For tickets and information, visit www.kelly-strayhorn.org or call 800-838-3006.

**GARFIELD**

**App Learning Party**

Stop by Assembly, 5125 Penn Ave., anytime from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. to experience and learn about apps for phones. All ages are welcome. Meet app experts, programmers, designers, artists and users. Design your own app. Play with others. All materials provided.

**GARFIELD**

**Workshop Development**

This workshop from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at The LAB, 5125 Penn Ave., is about developing workshops for The LAB. If you’re interested in creating a single workshop or a series of workshops for youths, please attend. We encourage you to develop topics and include media that pique curiosity, prompt inquiry and spark creativity. We’ll review the key elements of a LAB workshop to ensure that writing and other hands-on elements are incorporated, kids have fun, you have fun, quirkiness and discovery ensue, etc. RSVP by Aug. 6 by emailing literacyartsboom@gmail.com or calling 773-425-1531. You will also need to fill out the volunteer form in advance, available at http://bit.ly/TheLABVolunteerForm.

**Turner School**

**Black Hole**

This fascinating educational evening is presented by Charles Burn at Lili Coffee*Shop, 3138 Dobson St. at 6 p.m.

**BLOOMFIELD**

**Cancer Support Group**

Teal Hearts Network, an ovarian cancer support group, meets on the third Monday of each month from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at The Cancer Caring Center, 4117 Liberty Ave. Please call the National Ovarian Cancer Coalition at 412-661-1095 to register.

**POLISH HILL**

**Book Buzz**

Come discuss great books and engage in lively conversation about them. The books and the locations are a little different: edgy memoirs, graphic novels and contemporary horror discussed at bars, restaurants and coffee shops. This month, discuss Black Hole by Charles Burn at Lili Coffee*Shop, 3138 Dobson St. at 6 p.m.

For more listings throughout the month, visit our blog at www.bloomfield-garfield.org.
The Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation mourns the recent passing of Kathleen Sweeney and Marjorie Kirby, who were involved in the very early days of the BGC. Kathy passed away on June 10 at age 62, and Marjorie on June 29 at age 86. We remember Kathy and Margie for their tireless efforts as volunteers and their dedication to the betterment of the community. They will be greatly missed.

The Staff and Board of the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation
**Project: Lido Turns Leslie Park Pool into Concrete Canvas**

By Heather Jarrett  
Leslie Park Collective

Lawrenceville – The Leslie Park Pool, a decommissioned pool at the corner of 46th and Butler streets, is known for its stellar happenings that transform this gorgeous urban ruin into a dynamic outdoor event space filled with food, music, art, performances and activities for visitors of all ages. This summer, Project: Lido, a site-specific art exhibition curated by Amanda Donnan, promises to be the most ambitious project staged there to date.

On Sunday, Aug. 19 from noon to 5 p.m. – two weeks before Project: Lido’s official opening – there will be a free, public community kick-off at Leslie. Kids and adults can explore installation art and get a glimpse into the artistic process as the artists begin to install their work in and around the pool.

Throughout the day, guests of all ages can explore and try their hand at making art. The Mattress Factory Museum will be on-site with make-and-take crafts, including miniature art installation boxes and their popular fabric tent, which invites both kids and grown-ups to step inside and “pop up” in unusual, artful spaces. Assemble Gallery and Project: Lido artist Nina Barbuto will stage do-it-yourself-style activities that blend science and art. The whole family can contribute to huge chalk murals inspired by the landscape of the decommissioned pool.

Everyone can watch artists up close in a plein air (open air) studio led by renowned open-air artists Martha Ressler and Gail Bean.

The inspiration behind the exhibition is the notion of mapping diverse worldly concerns, experiences and ideas onto a familiar, commonplace type of space. Lido is Italian for beach and is a popular term adopted in the United Kingdom for public swimming pools. In curating the exhibition, Donnan sought to bring a group of high-caliber artists with diverse backgrounds to this historically rich space located in the heart of the neighborhood.

“To me, the theme represents many external ideas that all converge in a community meeting space,” says Donnan. “Many of the artists are local but they come from different places, among them Colombia, Puerto Rico, Switzerland, Texas, Oregon, Tennessee and Alaska. I hope this exhibition will not only transform the actual space, but push the boundaries of what a space like this means for the neighborhood.”

With this groundbreaking exhibition, the Leslie Park Collective, a group of volunteers that produces events and happenings at the site, is hoping to tear down the conceptual walls of the traditional gallery space. Over the past three years, more than 3,800 people of all ages and demographics have flocked to Leslie Park Pool for unique and engaging experiences. The collective expects Project: Lido to draw the most diverse crowd yet.

“The pool is compellingly rough; it’s a forbidden space,” says Susan Englert, a member of the Leslie Park Collective. “But for the past several years I, along with Deborah Knox, Batia Rascoe and many other dedicated individuals, have made it our mission to reinvent the pool as an alternative community gathering spot. This type of exhibition is a new concept for us, and we are so excited to welcome old friends and new to discover and explore Leslie.”

Project: Lido will open with a free public reception from 7 to 10 p.m. on Thursday, Aug. 30. The exhibition includes eight artists with installations featuring 2-D and 3-D constructions, time-based media, light, sound and performance. Guests will enjoy music, refreshments and an evening of great art, lively conversation and exquisite company.

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For more information, visit the Leslie Park Collective Facebook page or email susan_englert@hotmail.com.

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