Community Planning Process
Two Meetings Slated

By Joe Reuben
Bulletin Contributor

Residents of Garfield and others with a vested interest in its future will have the opportunity to help craft a new housing and land use plan for the neighborhood in the months to come. Community meetings to kick off the effort have been set for 6 p.m. on the evenings of Wednesday, May 13 and Tuesday, May 19 at two different locations in Garfield to make it easier for larger numbers of people to be involved.

Perkins Eastman, an architecture and planning firm in downtown Pittsburgh, was awarded a contract in March to help guide the Garfield community through the intricate process entailed in devising a viable plan for the use of its land.

Stefani Danes, a Friendship resident, will be the lead consultant on the project for Perkins Eastman. Her firm has been involved in several planning initiatives for Garfield and the Penn Avenue corridor over the past 20 years.

The initial meetings will take place at Valley View Presbyterian Church, at the corner of Black St. and N. Aiken Ave., on Wednesday, May 13, and then again the following Tuesday, May 19, at the Community Activity Center, at the corner of Dearborn St. and N. Pacific Ave. A light dinner will be provided for participants.

Fred Croce, chair of the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation’s housing and

See PROPERTIES page 7

See PLANNING, page 12

Changes on horizon for two Penn Ave. problem properties

Two sites in the Penn Avenue corridor, long known as liquor-serving establishments, will begin new chapters in their existence under different owners.

A two-story building at 5433 Penn, once home to the Horoscope Lounge, was placed under sales agreement with the Friendship Development Associates at the end of March.

The tavern was closed in February 2006 under an agreement negotiated between Allegheny County District Attorney Stephen Zappala and the bar’s owner, Angelo Restano. Zappala had intervened at the behest of community residents, following a rash of criminal incidents and other problems in and around the bar. Restano subsequently was able to place the bar’s liquor license in safekeeping with the PA Liquor Control Board. He had recently tried a pizza and hoagie shop in the premises, but has now closed that business in view of the pending sale.

Plans for the property are only in the discussion stage, but Matthew Galluzzo, the arts district manager for the FDA, confirmed that his group would like to see a restaurant or other complementary use for the first floor.

The deal with Restano includes all of the equipment on the premises, and Galluzzo feels the improvements which Restano made to the bar area may make it easier to find a restaurant-related use. “We’re trying to move activity along Penn Avenue beyond the 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. cycle, so that there is more reason for people to come to the district in the evenings. That will be one of the considerations uppermost in our minds as we look at new uses for the property.”

The other significant development is the signing of a sales agreement by the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation with an entrepreneur for the former Pap’s ‘N Us tavern at 5106 Penn. Vince Masi, who grew up in Bloomfield but now calls McKees

By Richard Swartz
BGC Executive Director

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See PROPERTIES page 7

See PLANNING, page 12

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News from the Larimer Neighborhood

by Ora Lee Carroll
Executive Director East Liberty Concerned Citizens Corporation

There is a lot of activity in the Larimer neighborhood in 2009. Actually the momentum has been building for a couple of years now, spurred by the updating of the Larimer Community Plan. This process, which began in the fall of 2007, ultimately resulted in a strategy to move the community forward. The updated plan established an action plan that revolved around the idea of first building its capacity to accomplish easy goals — also known as “low hanging fruit.” Once the community was able to rally around a few achievable goals then they would be able to attract the necessary resources to sustain growth. As a result five action teams were created; Redd Up, Green Up, One Voice, Celebrate, and Work and Wellness. These teams comprised of residents, businesses, and institutions in Larimer, were charged with pursuing the low hanging fruit.

One of the first projects was cleaning up a vacant lot that was the site of the tragic house fire that took the lives of five children in Larimer. Spearheaded by East Liberty Concerned Citizens Corp. (Larimer’s community development corporation) and its executive director Ora Lee Carroll, along with the Redd Up and Green Up action teams, the lot which had become an eyesore, was cleaned up and turned into a memorial for the children. This spring ELCCC, which is celebrating its 26th year of advocating for the Larimer community, plans to hold another clean up event at the memorial around the anniversary of the fire.

Other recent projects are the beautification of another vacant lot by Green Team members, as well as the painting of two community murals funded by Walnut Capital in conjunction with The Kingsley Association and ELCCC. The Green Team in particular has been very active with a number of projects.

Another priority of the plan was to form a neighborhood collaborative that could serve as an umbrella group to help implement the plan. This has come to fruition with the creation of the Larimer Consensus Group — a collaborative effort consisting of voting representation from ELCCC, Kingsley, East Liberty Development Inc., the five action teams, the business community, and the faith-based community, with ex-officio representation from the Urban Redevelopment Authority, The Community Design Center of Pittsburgh, The Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh, and the offices of City Councilman Ricky Burgess, State Sen. Jim Ferlo, and State Rep. Joseph Preston, Jr. According to Rep. Preston, the collaboration is a start in the right direction. “If anything is to happen in this community, we all have to be on the same page — working together for the common good,” he said.

Since its inception in February, the LCG has been charged with developing a request for proposals and then selecting a firm to complete the Larimer Avenue Corridor Market Study and Land Use Plan. Other collaborations that have been occurring include a memorandum of understanding between ELDI and ELCCC to cover key areas of work in redeveloping Larimer, in addition to ELCCC and Kingsley’s involvement with organizations from Garfield and East Liberty in the Greater East End Weed and Seed Steering Committee, which is working on a new employment initiative for the three communities.

If you would like information about or would like to participate on one of the action teams or find out more about the Larimer Consensus Group or Greater East End Weed and Seed you can contact East Liberty Concerned Citizens Corp., 401 Paulson Ave. at 412-361-8310 or The Kingsley Association, 6435 Frankstown Ave., at 412-661-8751 for further information.

Additionally, volunteers are still needed for the cleanup of the memorial site for the victims of the Larimer fire. Please contact East Liberty Concerned Citizens Corporation if you are interested in volunteering. Larimer Green Acres is the logo for all ELCCC Larimer Projects.

BGC and ENEC partner to provide bank teller training for youth

by Bill Woodward
Eastside Neighborhood Employment Center

The Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation’s Youth Development Center recently partnered with the Eastside Neighborhood Employment Center and the Community College of Allegheny County to conduct a Bank Teller Training at the BGC Activity Center located on Pacific Avenue.

The collaboration developed out of the recent City of Pittsburgh Weed and Seed grant awarded to BGC and the need for the Youth Employment Program participants to earn a credential. The City of Pittsburgh Weed and Seed grant was awarded to the BGC in order to extend workforce development opportunities to residents of the Garfield, Lawrenceville, East Liberty, Lincoln, and Larimer communities. The Bank Teller Training was offered as a 12-hour non-credit, course.

Participants began their journey on March 9 with a Meet and Greet at the BGC Activity Center. Bank managers and community members mingled among light refreshments as a networking opportunity before the first of four training sessions. At the conclusion of the program Banking and the attended all hours of training receive a certificate of completion making them more marketable to prospective employers.

These types of workforce development opportunities are typically offered throughout the year on various CCAC campuses. The Bank Teller Training, however, is its first collaboration with a community organization. While students who attended the Bank Teller Training at CCAC paid a $50 fee, participants in the Weed and Seed/Youth Employment Program training attended classes at no charge to them. Youth Employment Program Coordinator, Charis Walker, explained that the ultimate intention of credentialing is to provide youth with a stronger opportunity to acquire employment, and the CCAC Bank Teller Program is a perfect example of how furthering education can provide community residents with secure and well-paying positions.

The Bank Teller Training program was developed in 2007 when PNC Bank approached Paul Blackford, ten-year veteran of the Community College Continuing Education, requesting the design of a program that would sculpt interested applicants into prepared prospective professionals for PNC Bank positions. Mr. Blackford generated a curriculum based on observations of a bank teller’s typical day, PNC’s interview process for bank tellers, and their bank teller skills assessment. Mr. Blackford used a popular method in teaching referred to as “teaching for meaning” which is implemented in a style that helps the student look beyond the lesson and apply their skills to real life. Tactics such as role playing and hands on experiences were used to guide attendees in recognizing counterfeit money and cash transaction skills, how to dress professionally and speak courteously, how to deal with disgruntled customers, and teambuilding skills. In 2008, Mr. Blackburn was joined by Sylvia Elsayed who teaches a Microsoft Office Element in the trainings. Ms. Elsayed uses similar techniques with students who actually have the opportunity to update resumes and apply for positions while gaining comfort with Microsoft Windows and learning keyboarding methods.

BGC found the training beneficial and motivating to participants. One attendee, Asia Jackson, intends on using her newly developed skills as a part time bank teller to support herself as she completes her studies. Asia chose the Bank Teller Training above other credentialing options because of her desire to study promotional and professional communication. Asia believes many parallels exist between the techniques used in Banking and the entertainment industry such as, persuasive interactions; and being personable and speaking clearly. Asia successfully completed the Bank Teller Training on March 23rd and is currently seeking employment at banks in the area. Another attendee of the training program, Trina Eboe, hopes to establish a Full-Time Teller position after the birth of her first son.

Both the BGC and CCAC hope to establish a continuing partnership offering more training in the future. Prerequisites for the training include a high school diploma or a GED, customer service experience, and a minimum age of 18. If you are interested in future trainings please contact Charis Walker or Robyn Doyle to enroll in the Out of School Youth Employment Program (412-441-9833) or Bill Woodward at the ENEC (412-362-8580).
Coca Café... for the Love of Brunch

By Lisa Porter Werner
Bulletin Contributor

One sunny, but chilly morning in April, my husband, John, was in the mood for breakfast and I was in the mood for lunch, therefore, we decided to have brunch at Coca Café in Lawrenceville. This particular day happened to be Good Friday, so technically the Sunday “breakfast” menu wasn’t offered, but being able to order from the breakfast and lunch menus satisfied us both.

We were prepared to wait to be seated in the richly colorful, roomy eatery, full of natural light, where landscape photography hangs on the walls, stand-out vintage furniture graces the two dining rooms and the surroundings are the embodiment of relaxed dining. Even though a line of people waited to be seated, unlike other popular eateries eager to push you out the door as soon as you finish your meal, the wait staff had no problem allowing customers to linger long after their checks had been paid.

Once we were finally seated, it took quite some time for our food to arrive, but it was greatly worth the wait. We started with the most delicious Chai Latte ever ($2.75) and “regular” La Prima coffee ($1.95) which was also fantastic. We ordered the wild mushroom omelet ($7), shiitake and portobello mushrooms with sweet and nutty Jarlsberg cheese (or your choice of brie), which was light, not greasy like most omelets, every bite filled with flavor and truly delicious; and from the lunch menu we ordered the spinach ricotta panini ($7) with Jarlsberg cheese, fresh roasted red peppers, fresh portobello mushrooms, caramelized onions and turkey (your choice of turkey, chicken or vegetarian preparation) served on slightly crispy bread. The taste of the panini was recognizable, but unique and easily one of the most fresh and best panini I’ve ever had.

All breakfast omelets are served with your choice of toasted bread, including cinnamon swirl, and side dishes such as fresh fruit or grilled potatoes are also available. In addition, the lunch sandwiches are served with a side salad or the side dish of the day, such as mushroom risotto.

But Coca Café’s greatest claim to fame is -- without a doubt -- its Sunday brunch menu. We were not dissatisfied.

Since the Easter Sunday brunch was reservations only, we didn’t have to wait in a long line or fight the massive Sunday brunch crowd before we could be seated, which was nice.

Our party of three started with the potato latkes and smoked salmon adorned with dill crème fraiche which was terrific; the roasted vegetable strudel which contained two thick slices of the palatable vegetable mixture that included fresh corn and fresh red peppers; and the astonishingly large arugula salad with fingerling potatoes and crispy leeks tossed in a warm mustard vinaigrette dressing. This salad was so fresh that the scent of the peppery arugula reached our table before the server was able to place the dish in front of me.

For our entrees, we selected: two orders of the crab cakes benedict, two sizeable portions (per entree) of moist crab cakes that actually contained crab meat, not a ton of filler, served over English muffins and topped with draped poached eggs and a side of steamed asparagus which I can’t compliment enough because it was absolutely phenominal; and the crème brulée French Toast with sautéed pears which was an ample serving and tasted as magnificent as it sounds. Although my dining companion ordered the French toast, my fork kept wandering over to her plate. YUM!

I could easily go to Coca Café several days a week and not tire of the truly great and outstanding food. My only complaint is that there is no bar and they don’t serve alcohol so when those massive crowds gather for the Sunday brunch you can’t sip on a Bloody Mary or Bellini while you wait to be seated.

Traffic restrictions during Marathon on Sunday, May 3

After a six-year hiatus, the Pittsburgh Marathon will return to the streets this year and East End residents will need to plan very carefully if they want to leave their homes and travel practically anywhere by car or bus.

The Marathon will be held Sunday May 3. The first participants will start at 6:30 a.m. and the fastest runners are expected to complete the 26.2-mile course in under 2.5 hours, but most of the route will be closed to traffic for all of the morning and the early part of the afternoon.

The race will start on in the Strip District and finish under the David L. Lawrence Convention Center overhang. Runners will pass through the North Side, West End, South Side, Oakland, Shadyside, Point Breeze, Regent Square, Homewood, Larimer, East Liberty, Highland Park, Friendship, and Bloomfield throughout the day.

Residents who live along or within the race course should be aware that many streets will be closed for much of the day. Sector D (Miles 13 – 7.1) including S. Craig St. to Fifth Ave. to S. Aiken Ave. through Shadyside to Point Breeze to Penn & Braddock Aves. will be closed from 7:30 to 11:45 a.m. Sector E (Miles 17.1 – 22.5) including Penn & Braddock Aves. through Homewood & East Liberty to Baum Blvd and Liberty Ave. will be closed from 7:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. Sector F (Miles 22.5 – 24.4) including Liberty Ave. from Baum Blvd. to 30th St. will be closed from 8:15 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Those who need to leave the city should consider parking their vehicles on streets away from the race course.

Award-winning charter schools to share insights, approaches

The issue of academic progress and student achievement is at the heart of most discussions related to education. A Plus Schools, local non-profit monitoring public education, reports several Pittsburgh Public Schools are struggling to increase academic achievement. As the district begins to make decisions about under-populated schools, academic achievement has become a community priority.

The part of the discussion that focuses on student achievement in these instances revolves around some pretty dismal statistics on grades, SAT and other standardized test scores; student retention and graduation rates in some of these schools. The District has implied that proposed and potential facility and curriculum changes would have a positive impact on these statistics.

Meanwhile, two Southwestern PA charter schools -- City Charter High School and Propel McKeesport -- were among the top 21 charter schools honored in 2009 by New Leaders for New Schools, a nonprofit that focuses on school leadership. The schools’ programs have infused technology and educational supports to provide an environment of success.

Students at both schools have shown a dramatic increase in educational achievement, as measured by state test results in reading and math that factor the impact of a school on its students’ achievement over time; and the progress students make from one year to the next, independent of proficiency targets.

Interested in learning what works and why? Representatives from City Charter High School and Propel McKeesport will present their educational models, curriculums, educational challenges/solutions, and approaches to community/parents engagement on Tuesday, May 12 at the BGC Community Activity Center, 113 N. Pacific Ave. in Garfield. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m., followed by the presentation at 9 a.m.

Please RSVP to Rickf@bloomfield-garfield.org or call 412-441-9835.
Lawrenceville Elm Street
offering home inspections

Do you live in Lawrenceville’s Elm Street District and own your home? If so, you are eligible for a home inspection conducted by a certified professional.

This opportunity is brought to you by The Safe Homes Program, a proactive approach to identifying unsafe conditions in homes on and within the area bounded by Stanton Ave., Dresden Way, Keystone St., and 55th St. in the 10th Ward of Lawrenceville.

The mission of the program is to provide homeowners the opportunity to discover problems before it’s too late; obtain a home inspection and report on home health and safety; acquire official documentation of a problem in order to seek repairs; apply for financial assistance through existing programs within the City of Pittsburgh; and gain access to additional resources within the City of Pittsburgh. Renters should contact their landlords and request they apply for a free inspection.

The Safe Homes Program was created by Lawrenceville Corporation’s Elm Street Committee. Elm Street boundaries were designated by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as part of a state-wide residential revitalization initiative called the Elm Street Program. The program was designed to strengthen older historic neighborhoods adjacent to business districts with the recognition that healthy communities have both strong commercial and residential counterparts.

Learn more at www.lawrencevillecorp.com/programs/elmstreet.htm.

Inspections are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis. Deadline is Monday, June 1, 2009. Applications are available at the LC (5170 Butler St.), Lawrenceville United (4825 Butler St.), 10th Ward Block Watch meetings (second Tuesday of each month at St. Matthew Parish), and for download at www.lawrencevillecorp.com. Applications must be accompanied by proof of homeownership (copy of deed) and submitted to the LC.

The Pittsburgh Regional Organization for the American Society of Home Inspectors (PRO-ASHI) has generously offered to donate each inspection in an effort to encourage home health and safety. Inspection reports are kept strictly confidential and for use at the homeowner’s discretion (i.e., a broken furnace cannot be tagged by inspectors). All PRO-ASHI members conduct their home inspections to the American Society of Home Inspectors Standards of Practices and ASHI Code of Ethics.

If an emergency situation is discovered, we are prepared. Working closely with the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh, we can assist you in your application for the URA’s Home Emergency Loan Program.

HELP offers a 0% interest rate forgivable loan (i.e., you don’t have to pay it back as long as you stay in your home the duration of loan terms). The maximum loan amount is $5,000 for single unit properties and $7,000 for two units. The minimum loan is $500 and the maximum loan term is up to 10 years. Income limits apply. If you are ineligible for the loan based on your income or repair costs, the URA also offers low-interest loan programs that are more flexible than typical bank loans. To learn more about the URA loan programs, visit www.ura.org or call 412.255.6600.

If the problem is not defined as an emergency by the URA, the LC may still be able to assist you. Cases will be reviewed by the Elm Street Committee, who will provide additional resources and, if applicable, pull in volunteers to help with repairs.

Want more information about general improvements to your home? Send an inquiry to info@lawrencevillecorp.com.

To schedule an inspection or learn more, please call the LC at 412.782.5100 x 102.

East Liberty employment

As East Liberty develops, its residents will find an increasing variety of full and part-time employment opportunities throughout the neighborhood. With so much new construction and numerous upcoming store openings, East Liberty stakeholders should take advantage of long-term employment and career opportunities being created.

The East Liberty Job Training and Referral Initiative, a jointly managed project of the Coalition of Organized Residents of East Liberty and East Liberty Development Inc. serves as a link between East Liberty’s employers, training providers and interested residents.

ELDI and development partners have been working with COR to promote East Liberty’s employment opportunities and ensure residents are aware of the processes in which they can apply for employment.

Many potential employers have very informative websites that reveal their unique products, services and job opportunities, as well as offer online applications for specific job openings they are seeking to fill. Additionally, if residents are interested in the construction work and building trades, they will find a growing range of openings they can access through the East Liberty Job Training and Referral Initiative.

If you are interested in obtaining employment in the East Liberty area, contact the East Liberty Job Training and Referral Initiative at 211 N. Whitfield Street, Suite 210, or call 412.661.2600 for more information.

For more information about East Liberty Development Inc., community news, and planning for development and neighborhood initiatives visit www.eastlibertypost.com.
Aggie Brose will be honored at YWCA’s Tribute to Women

The YWCA Greater Pittsburgh 2009 "A Tribute to Women" will honor eight Pittsburgh-area women who have made significant contributions to the community. Aggie Brose, Deputy Director of the Bloomfield-Garfield Corp, was selected to receive the award in the Community Empowerment category. The YWCA will present the awards during its “A Tribute to Women” Leadership Awards Luncheon at the Westin Hotel later this month. Other women receiving the award this year are Sally Wiggin of WTAE; Deborah Acklin of WQED; Valerie McDonald Roberts of Allegheny County Dept. of Real Estate; Olga Welch, Ed.D. of Duquesne University; Ellen Roth, Ph.D of Getting to the Point; Joyce Rothermel of the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank; and Sylvia Hill Fields of Eden Hall Foundation.

Ms. Brose is a lifelong Pittsburgh resident who has been committed to helping the people of her neighborhood help themselves to achieve better lives. Her work has encompassed health, public safety, education, employment, and political and economic empowerment. Her service as a Democratic Party Committeewoman began 40 years ago, and her active involvement as a volunteer with her neighborhood schools and her parish in Garfield began earlier still. Her parish service led to working with Father Leo Henry as a founding member of the board of the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation in 1975.

In respect for the three Pittsburgh Police officers killed in the line of duty on April 4 and in deference to the obligations of Zone 5 staff and city officials, the April meeting of the Public Safety Task Force was cancelled.
**Pittsburgh Public Schools**

**Seeking community input on facilities**

*By Stacie Chandler*

*The Bulletin Interim Editor*

The Pittsburgh Public Schools has embarked on an ambitious process to solicit community input on long-and short-term strategies for maintaining, improving and consolidating the District's facilities.

Because of declining enrollment, many school buildings across the city are under-populated and the District wants to cut costs, improve academic performance, and enhance programs by closing some schools and merging others.

The District's first step is to determine which schools to target for closure or consolidation and that process began on March 30 at community meeting attended by parents, community, members, school district staff, and students in which participants completed a questionnaire about facilities and conducted small-group discussions about the issues surrounding the various options.

In an effort to promote as much public input as possible, the District provided buses that transported participants from various schools across the city to the meeting at IBEW Hall on the South Side.

Superintendent Mark Roosevelt addressed the meeting, saying that "Far more than ever, what you earn is dependent on what you learn" and told the audience that the District needs to make "wise planning decisions" that will have a positive impact on the quality of education provided by the Pittsburgh Public School in the years to come.

The District's Chief Financial Officer, Christopher Berdnik, explained that the District's income in 2008 was $513.5 million, while its income during that time was $515.1 million. He said the $1.5 million loss was due largely to low interest rates in the past year and assured the audience that the District is believed to be in good financial shape at this time.

However, Pittsburgh's population has dropped steadily and the District has seen a corresponding drop in enrollment, from 374,039 in 1999 to 312,800 in 2008. About 65% of Pittsburgh Public Schools students graduate from high school and 45% go on to pursue higher education.

The District is using DeJong, Inc. of Dublin, OH to develop the "Building Excellence: Blueprint for the Future" process. DeJong representatives facilitated the community meeting and described the process. Community input is sought through questionnaires that are being sent home with students and are available on-line at www.pittsburghbuildingexcellence.com. The results will be tabulated to determine priorities, such as travel time for students at various grade levels, the importance of diversity in the school populations, academic preferences, magnet and/or theme-based programs, etc.

The results will be available on-line prior to three more community meetings that will be held May 13 and 14 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at locations to be determined to further define the criteria for "a roadmap for career and technical education," according to DeJong's background report.

The group of people who took the bus from Peabody High School on March 30 included both parents and students. On the trip home, there was a lively discussion of the community meeting.

The Peabody High School students, excited that they were able to give their opinions, talked about how they feel about school closings and mergers.

DeAndre Jackson, 17, a Peabody High School student and staff member for the 206 project (a collaboration of Wireless Neighborhoods and the Bloomfield-Garfield Corp.) said it was "an excellent opportunity to get involved and share my thoughts on the future of Pittsburgh Public Schools' buildings and programs." Lolene Germany, another Peabody student and 206 staff member called the evening activities "a tedious process" but added that she enjoyed "the effort to intertwine ideas and address the concerns and ideas of others" and appreciated "the opportunity to help mold a plan for area youth and the future of the Pittsburgh Public Schools.

The small group setting was a plus for Peabody student and 206 staff member Billie Patterson. "The group activities created a space where my voice was welcome and it also cleared up any areas of misinformation," she said.

While some students expressed personal apprehension about being uprooted or experiencing major changes in their school, they agreed that they would welcome the expansion of facilities and activities that administrators say would be part of the process. Bands, sports teams, and additional extracurricular activities, as well as additional academic offerings would be appreciated, they said.

Students also felt that many of the questions were aimed directly at determining Peabody's future. The school has been designated as a likely location to house the 6- through 12-grade International Baccalaureate in 2010, although there has been no indication of the District's plans for the students currently enrolled at Peabody High School.

The parents spoke primarily about their reaction to the questionnaires and the process. One mother said she feels that the many "community input processes" she has participated in over the years have been more for show than for anything else. "They know what they are going to do and what we say doesn't make a difference," she said. Another said she felt that the questions were crafted in such a way that the answer would be a foregone conclusion.

Her thoughts were echoed by Annette Werner, a parent and PURE Reform member. "A lot of questions seemed to be leading because the options (for responses) are limited, she said. "I declined to answer many because I didn't want to be forced into an either/or situation."

Peabody students and 206 staff members DeAndre Jackson, Lolene Germany and Billie Patterson contributed to this story.
East End groups partner to take jobs, training "on the road"

A promising and innovative jobs-and-training partnership of community groups in Garfield, Larimer, and East Liberty has received a substantial $43,700 grant from the city’s Weed ‘N Seed office.

Leading the partnership are the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC) and the Eastside Neighborhood Employment Center (ENEC), two community-based organizations with extensive histories in reducing and preventing crime through human development programs and job readiness training. Weed ‘N Seed grant funds will create a collaborative, “on-the-road,” job training initiative that blankets Garfield and the greater East Liberty areas, bringing together more than a dozen local organizations to work toward the goal of crime prevention through job training and placement.

“Unemployment in the state is expected to reach 9% before summer,” said Rick Flanagan, director of the BGC’s Youth Development Center. “But in our neighborhoods, the figures will likely be much higher. Our plan for 2009 is to employ an aggressive, multi-pronged approach that dovetails with national jobs-creation efforts.”

A key component of the program will be its mobility: taking ENEC’s valuable resources and knowledge out into the community to better reach residents of the targeted neighbor-hoods. A mobile computer lab will bring training and informational sessions directly to various venues throughout the three communities, and play a prominent role at Eastminster Presbyterian Church. ENEC staff will be on hand to help aspiring job-seekers submit applications online via the lab.

In addition, other activities and services will be offered in collaboration with ENEC’s partner organizations, which include Brothers and Sisters Emerging in Garfield; Wireless Neighborhoods in East Liberty; East Liberty Concerned Citizens Council in Larimer; the Carnegie Library branch in East Liberty; West Penn Hospital in Bloomfield; UPMC; Garfield Juvenile Association; Eastminster Presbyterian Church; East Liberty Development, Inc.; Kingsley Association in Larimer; and the Community College of Allegheny County.

“We hope that the lab’s mobility will make us more effective in connecting potential employers with neighborhood job-seekers,” said Bill Woodward, ENEC Project Director. “We believe this program can create a new way for youths and adults in our neighborhoods to think about the concept of ‘pursuing a career’ versus ‘having a job.’"

By Paula Martinac

Laurentian Hill

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Properties

continued from page 1

Rocks his home, would like to open a new liquor-serving establishment on the first floor of the building. Masi has spent several years booking musical groups into entertainment venues in places such as New York City.

“Soda Pop”, as Masi intends to call the new place, would feature a regular schedule of live musical entertainment that he hopes will appeal to all cultures and tastes.

He would also like to have an outdoor space at the rear of the building for summertime patrons. The bar will serve soda pop and ice cream, and Masi has said he would like to see families use the premises for events like afternoon birthday parties.

The BGC and Masi have executed a memorandum of understanding, regarding his use of the premises, to ensure that it does not become a nuisance to neighbors. If he is successful in lining up the financing for the venture, he says it’s his goal to do a complete overhaul of the interior and front façade. A third-floor apartment would be created that he intends to occupy.

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412 682-1562
**Deaths of officers should spark community dialogue**

Although the city continues to mourn and otherwise feel the emotional ill-effects of the tragic loss of three police officers in Stanton Heights on April 4, the time is approaching for us to analyze the full implications of the incident and resolve what is that we, as a community, can do to prevent its like from happening again.

All of our religions and cultures are of one voice in teach- ing us that sacrifice is necessary as a prelude to redemption. We would be wrong to sweep this latest sacrifice from our memory without undertaking a unified effort at confronting the conditions which breed violence of this nature on our streets and, in too many cases, in our homes.

Now that three guardians of our collective safety have made their sacrifice, so, too, must we sacrifice our time in fostering a sincere effort at dialogue, discovery, and then action. It is a process that is possible only through our persistent and courageous examination of the issues that propel members of our society to take up arms against police officers and other members of the law enforcement community. We owe this to ourselves, and we owe it to the families of the slain officers.

This will not be an easy process, primarily because it will require us to face some uncomfortable feelings we may all hold about one another, as well as to accept the frailties of the human condition as a whole. But these difficulties cannot be the excuse for refusing to try.

Are we doing our best to raise our children in a nurturing, safe environment, one that does not fill them with fear or suspicion of the outside world?

Are we doing our best to make sure they’re getting the best education possible, one that is able to dispel fear and suspicion?

Are we doing our best to prepare younger generations for productive lives in a future Pittsburgh?

How should we instruct our elected representatives in reasoned approaches to gun control, criminal justice reform, drug policy, remedial education, and employment training?

The responses to these questions will determine whether we can continue to feel safe and secure in our homes. Do we have the courage to look deep into our souls and begin a community conversation that may, of necessity, be contentious and fraught with anxiety? We believe the answer is “yes”, and we believe that such a sacrifice, shared by all of us, will lead to our redemption.

(Editors’ note: The views of the writers do not necessarily represent those of the board of directors of the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation, or the staff of The Bulletin.)
Now could be the time to refinance your home

With mortgage rates at an all-time low, many homeowners are wondering if now is the time to refinance. The answer to that question, according to Tamara Davis, Senior Loan Officer at Fifth Third Bank in Bloomfield, is a definite maybe.

There are many factors that have to be considered before a homeowner decides to refinance, said Ms. Davis. First, homeowners should determine what their goal is in refinancing. For many, the loss of income or uncertainty about the economy makes the lure of lower monthly mortgage payments appealing. For others, it’s the idea that they could pay off their mortgage more quickly and build equity in their homes.

“Everyone’s circumstances are different,” said Ms. Davis. However, one formerly popular reason for refinancing – taking the equity from your home to pay off loans or finance an education – is not a viable choice at this time, she said, as the industry has made home equity loans harder to obtain.

When you refinance, you are starting over, she explained. Just as in a purchase, you will have to pay closing costs and related fees, which can run a few thousand dollars. If you bought a home in the past few years with 5% down, you might have to pay up front to bring the balance up to at least 90% of the appraised value.

While housing prices in Pittsburgh were never inflated to the heights that were seen in other parts of the country, local housing values have dropped in some areas and remained stagnant in others. In addition, the number of home foreclosures has affected appraisal values because the value of comparable foreclosed homes is one of the factors considered in determining your home’s worth. Another important factor is the loan-to-value ratio, said Ms. Davis. When a borrower finances more than 80% of the home’s value, the lender requires mortgage insurance to protect itself from default. The cost of mortgage insurance can more than offset the savings of a lower interest rate.

Generally, if the difference between your current interest rate and the one offered by a lender is greater than 1%, you should consider refinancing. At less than 1%, the cost of refinancing is greater than the savings. However, for the past decade or so, mortgage rates have remained fairly consistent, said Ms. Davis, and most homeowners have mortgages at between 6% and 7%, which makes refinancing attractive and advisable for those who qualify.

How much can you save? With a $100,000 mortgage at 6.25%, a homeowner's monthly payment is almost $100 less – $521.65. If your goal in refinancing is to save a little each month, the savings are clear. If you want to build equity, explained Ms. Davis, you can pay more than the minimum payment each month to decrease the principal, but still have lower minimum payments should your financial situation change. By making one extra monthly mortgage payment each year, you can shave five to seven years off the length of your loan and save thousands in interest payments.

One of the first steps in preparing to refinance is to learn your credit score, the number assigned to you based on your credit and payment history. Free credit reports are available. (see box bottom right). As a rule of thumb, said Ms. Davis, those with a credit score of 660 will have a limited number of mortgage options available to them. Those with scores of 720 and above will find that they are eligible for the widest variety of refinancing options.

You should do some research before you decide on a lender. There are many on-line loan sources, but Ms. Davis recommends that you call around and get rates from dependable local lenders. “You can search online for a house, but you aren’t going to buy it until you’ve seen it,” she said. “The same is true for a loan.”

While many people facing financial difficulties are in a tight spot and want to move quickly, Ms. Davis urges caution. “Don’t be desperate,” she advised. “A lot of people are taking advantage of desperation” and rushing borrowers into ill-advised loans. “Do not sign anything blank. You have to watch for variables. Read everything.”

When you speak with lenders, be sure to determine the APR (annual percentage rate), as well as the mortgage rate. The APR is the total amount you will pay – it includes all of the fees and closing costs. If there are hidden fees that run in the thousands of dollars, your 4.5% mortgage rate could sky-rocket to 7% or more. You can ask a lender to give you a good faith estimate of your mortgage loan, which will show all of the costs, fees and payments, said Ms. Davis. When you have settled on the lender you want to use, call and schedule an appointment. “I can take information over the phone,” she said, “but I prefer to meet face-to-face for the first time. I learn more through conversation with a borrower.”

All lenders charge an application fee, which runs in the neighborhood of $300 to $350, said Ms. Davis. So, for your first meeting with a lender, be sure to bring your checkbook, as well as the following:

• One month of pay stubs
• Two years of W-2s
• Social Security numbers
• Drivers’ License or other photo ID
• Current mortgage information
• Homeowners’ insurance information
• Title insurance certificate.

Generally it takes about 60 days to complete the refinancing process. Your interest rate will be locked in for 60 days once you sign the loan application.

For a free credit report, visit www.annualcreditreport.com

This central site allows you to request a free credit file disclosure, (credit report) once every 12 months from each of the nationwide consumer credit reporting companies: Equifax, Experian and TransUnion.
Prices are peaking, jobs are in jeopardy. These days, consumers are being where – even television commercials depict penny-pinchers as practical and patriotic.

What are you doing to make your food dollars stretch? Choosing the store-brand instead of your family's favorite name-brand? Cooking dinner at home instead of eating out? Join the club!

Sometimes the little economies are difficult. Perhaps you are feeling a little deprived. There is something that you can do that will make both you and your wallet perk up. This is the time of year that Farmers' Markets return, and it couldn't come at a better time.

Area Farmers' Markets feature lots of things that are good for your health and well-being, be it physical, economic or emotional. Visit a Farmers' Market and you'll find all sorts of tasty, fresh, locally-grown produce, sold to you by the people who grow it. We all know that fruits and vegetables are nutritious and an important component of healthful eating. At local Farmers' markets, the prices are reasonable and the quality is excellent. You can't help but be cheered by the colorful flowers, displays of jewel-toned jams, jellies and honey, and piles of juicy and appetizing fruits and vegetables.

The produce available at a Farmers' Market is seasonal – unlike the grocery store, which imports produce from wherever it is in season -- you'll only find the items that were ripe this week. There's nothing better than a tasty and nutritious dinner featuring the vegetables you chose that afternoon from a local grower's offerings. And your carbon footprint won't suffer from the high cost of transporting produce internationally, because these fruits and vegetables were grown only a short distance away.

The staff at Richard Chen in East Liberty, shared some of their favorite recipes for the types of produce that will be available in the opening weeks of area Farmers' Markets.

**Recipe:**

**Strawberry Shortcake with Goat Cheese**

**Ingredients:**

- 1 pint strawberries hulled and quartered
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 large egg and 1 yolk
- 1/4 cup sugar
- Juice from 1 lemon
- Zest from one orange
- Vanilla extract to taste
- 1 pint strawberries hulled and quartered
- 1/4 cup sugar
- Juice from 1 lemon
- Zest from one orange
- Vanilla extract to taste

**Directions:**

To serve, place strawberries on top of panna cotta and serve with shortcake.
Farmers’ Markets

**Farmers@Firehouse**, which calls itself Pittsburgh’s only mostly organic farm market, is scheduled to open on Saturday, May 9. Located at 2216 Penn Avenue in the Strip District, the weekly market will be held on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. through the fall. Farmers@Firehouse vendors offer produce, meats, eggs, honey, and breads.

Their Local Butcher option offers buyers the opportunity to place an order on-line for a wide range of meats, eggs and honey from various providers and then pick up their orders at the Saturday Firehouse market. For more information, visit http://www.slowfoodpgh.com/farmers.html.

That perennial travelling favorite, **Citiparks Farmers’ Markets**, will begin again this year in East Liberty on Monday, May 11 from 3:30 to 7:30 p.m. There are five markets at locations across the city (see box). Each market draws different local vendors from Allegheny, Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Green, and Westmoreland counties, as well as a few from Ohio. Vendors accept cash, check and WIC coupons.

According to Market Manager Tom Driscoll, there will be lots of familiar faces standing behind the counters, as well as a number of new vendors. In the markets' early weeks, buyers are likely to see lots of beautiful plants — annuals, perennials, herbs, vegetables, and hanging baskets — and good things to eat — lettuce, rhubarb, spinach, green onions, asparagus and radishes.

He's especially excited about a vendor who has two large greenhouses for growing strawberries, which will be available throughout the market season. There are also vendors offering baked goods from Middle Eastern to Italian, their indoor and outdoor plants, vegetables and fruits, fresh and dried herbs, nuts are available from Kistaco Farm.

The folks at Greenawalt Farms are the source for milk and cheese products, as well as government-inspected raw milk, and green, brown and white eggs produced by free-roaming hens. In season you’ll even find duck and goose meats, eggs, honey, and breads.

Started in 1941, **Farmers’ Market Cooperative of East Liberty** at 344 N. Sheridan Ave. (across from Home Depot) is the oldest farmers’ market in southwestern PA.

Open every Saturday year-round from 5 a.m. to noon, the market features family-operated businesses that offer locally grown farm products.

- Zang’s Greenhouse has year-round plants, holiday flowers, mushrooms, vegetables, birdseed, and cut flowers.
- From Four Seasons Farm you’ll find grain fed, steroid and anti-biotic free poultry, beef, pork, lamb, vegetables and fruits, and more.
- Apples, cider, vegetables, jellies, holiday fruit baskets, dry goods & nuts are available from Kistaco Farm.

**Garfield Community Farm Stand**, located at Valley View Church, 601 N. Aiken Ave., opens May 7 and is open every Thursday from 3 to 6 p.m. The Local Farmers Market at Whole Foods takes place on the third Wednesday of the summer and fall months in the Whole Foods parking lot. the market will be held July 15, August 19, September 16, and October 16.

### Recipe: Rhubarb Meringue Pie

**Ingredients:**
- 1 store-bought pie crust
- Zest and juice from 3 oranges
- 1 1/2 lb rhubarb, chopped
- 1 1/4 cup sugar plus 5 Tbsp.
- 5 Tbsp. cornstarch
- 3 egg whites

**Directions:**

Prebake pie shell at roughly 375 degrees for 15 minutes.

Remove from oven and cool.

Cook rhubarb, 1/4 cup sugar and orange zest in saucap.
Mix orange juice and cornstarch together, add to rhubarb mixture and cook for 1 minute more.

Whisk egg whites until frothy; once frothy add remaining sugar and whip until soft peaks form.

Fill pie shell with rhubarb filling. Top with meringue and bake at 375 degrees until golden brown (about 25 minutes).
Fort Pitt’s little shavers becoming little savers

By Stacie Chandler
The Bulletin Interim Editor

Pittsburgh Fort Pitt ALA is the first school in Western Pennsylvania to be involved in the PNC School Bank Program. This unique partnership with PNC Bank connects PNC branch banks with neighborhood schools to teach children to be fiscally responsible and enable students to do banking at school. Students learn about passbooks, make monthly deposits, get statements, and learn how money grows in their own personal bank accounts. In addition, student leaders are trained as bank tellers and as marketers of the program.

Fort Pitt's School Bank Program, available to students in grades one through five, is led by teachers Renae Foreman and Derek Gordon and coordinated by Mary Ellen Sullivan from PNC Community Development Banking and Matthew Ebberts and Michael Tempest of the Bloomfield branch. Fort Pitt was chosen because of its partnership with the Bloomfield-Garfield Corp. under the umbrella of the PA Dept. of Community and Economic Development.

Five of the school’s banking leaders, fourth- and fifth-grade students trained as tellers and marketers, toured PNC’s Bloomfield branch last month. They received an in-depth, behind-the-scenes tour of the bank facilities and met many of the staff members. The students had all of their questions answered, from how the ATM machine works to how to recognize counterfeit currency to the bank’s security policies.

The students described a typical banking day at Fort Pitt. Two students are tellers and the depositors line up with their deposits and passbooks. The tellers make out two receipts with the student’s name and account number and the amount of the deposit. One is returned to the depositor and another is kept by the teller, who then adds the deposit information into the deposit record. It takes just a few minutes and they generally do the math in their heads, they said proudly. Of course, they added, they check their work using a calculator.

Speaking about the importance of the program, Sullivan said “PNC sees the need for financial education in the early part of a child’s life and hopes the program will expand to other schools.”

Community planning process

continued from page 1

land use committee, was instrumental in preparing the request for proposals that Perkins and two other firms answered in early January. A committee of seven neighborhood residents, plus the executive directors of the BGC and Garfield Jubilee Association, interviewed the consultants and recommended the selection of Perkins Eastman.

“We have two goals in mind with the planning process that’s about to unfold,” Croce said. “The first is to hear the needs, interests, and ideas of those who want to see Garfield flourish, and figure out how they mesh together into a set of strategies that change the status quo. The second is to formulate a road map for how we implement the strategies that form the basis of the plan.” Croce moved to Penn Ave. with his wife, Jennifer Lucchino, in 2006, where together they operate inter*ARCHITECTURE.

The BGC and GJA are counting on other community partners to help channel residents’ energy into the planning process. Representatives of Valley View Presbyterian, St. Lawrence O’Toole Catholic Church, the Open Door Partnership of Pittsburgh, the Open Hand Ministry, Earth Vessel Outreach, Healcrest Farms, Garfield Youth Sports, and the Negley Place Neighborhood Alliance have sat at the table of the Garfield Advisory Committee since last May in order to shepherd the effort to this point.

“We’re counting on these organizations, and others who care about the Garfield community, to stimulate interest among their constituents in the planning process”, Croce said. This would extend to the Pittsburgh Public Schools, the city Housing Authority, and KBK Enterprises, now a major developer in Garfield, he noted.

“At the end of the day, if we don’t have a plan for what we want Garfield to become, then it’s likely some other entity will devise a plan and carry it out,” said Joann Monroe, executive director of GJA.

“We have some major developments happening in the East End now, and it would be a shame if Garfield stakeholders missed this golden opportunity to put their stamp on its future.”

The board of the city’s Urban Redevelopment Authority, at the instigation of executive director Rob Stephany, voted in March to allocate $25,000 towards the cost of the planning effort.

For additional information about the planning process itself, contact Deadra Keener of the BGC at 412-441-6950, ext. 17, or via e-mail at dskeener@gmail.com.
Federal and state laws protect individuals from debt collectors that use unfair, abusive or deceptive practices. While Pennsylvania law applies to creditors (the person or company to whom money is owed) as well as collection agencies hired by the creditor to collect monies owed to the creditor, federal law applies only to collection agencies. These laws do not excuse someone from paying a debt, but protect individuals from “improper” collection practices.

The law limits when and how debt collectors may contact individuals that may owe money. Phone calls are limited to reasonable times of the day (usually 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.) and the collector must identify the purpose of the call. Anonymous calls and letters are illegal. If a collection agency is making the call, a written notice can be sent to the collector advising them to stop all future communication. This letter should be sent by certified mail, return receipt requested as proof that the collector received the letter. (See sample below). The original creditor is not bound by this letter. (See sample below). The original creditor is not bound by this letter.

Collection agencies and creditors can not call individuals at work if an employer prohibits a collector from dealing only with the attorney. Put this in writing and keep copies. Collection agencies and creditors may not communicate with an employer, neighbors, or relatives about someone else’s debt. They can make inquiries of third parties in order to locate a person, but cannot reveal anything about the alleged debt.

Prohibited debt collection practices include: harassment, abuse, unfair practices, and false representations. Are anything that harasses, oppresses, or abuses a person. Examples of harassment and abuse include threatening or actually using force or violence; using foul, abusive, or obscene language; or making repeated telephone calls. Examples of unfair practices are threatening to take action that a collector is not allowed to take (i.e., putting the debtor in jail); does not actually intend to take (i.e., having the debtor arrested); or asking for or accepting post-dated checks. It is almost always a bad idea to give post-dated checks. Examples of false representations include: making false claims that the collector is a lawyer or government official; using papers which look like, but are not, court papers; claims that the debtor owes more than is owed; and making statements that the debtor is committing a crime by not paying a debt. Individuals cannot be sent to jail because they may owe money to a creditor.

Individuals can make a collection agency provide information about the alleged debt. Within five days of contacting an individual about an alleged debt, the collection agency must provide the individual with written notice of the amount it claims is owed, the name of the original creditor, and a statement of the individual’s right to disagree with the claim and get more information about the claim.

If a collection agency or creditor breaks the law, a complaint can be filed with the Pennsylvania Attorney General’s Office through the Bureau of Consumer Protection at 800-441-2555. Legal action can be taken, but there are time limits which must be observed. Individuals may recover money damages or an amount set by law called statutory damages. As always, it is important to seek legal advice. Consumer credit disputes can be complicated and the law can change. The Neighborhood Legal Services Association can provide advice to eligible persons in these situations. Call NLSA toll-free from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 5 to 8 p.m. on Monday and Wednesday evenings at 1-866-761-6572.

For more information, visit NLSA at www.nlsa.us.
Students in the Peabody Health Careers Academy at Pittsburgh Peabody High School are learning patient care skills using the same sophisticated training tools used by nursing and medical students, thanks to a partnership between Pittsburgh Public Schools and STAR, the Simulation, Teaching and Academic Research Center at West Penn Allegheny Health System.

The advanced medical simulators available at STAR have taken the district’s three-year health care career and technical education program to a whole new level, said Robin Campbell, RN, Instructor in the Peabody Health Careers Academy. “It’s a very, very big asset, and the kids are very excited about using the simulators,” Ms. Campbell said.

The people at STAR are likewise thrilled to have the young students in their midst, said Donamarie Wilfong, RN, MSN, DNP(s), STAR’s Director of Clinical Operations. STAR, like all of West Penn Allegheny Health System, is committed to reaching outside hospital walls to assist communities throughout the region.

“It’s great to see students so involved in learning, and to see how our high-tech medical simulators are helping engage them even further in their studies,” Ms. Wilfong said. “Dedicated young people like these will be needed to enter the health professions in the coming years.”

On one recent morning, the students took turns placing an IV needle in a flesh-like simulated arm, monitoring their own accuracy by watching the needle’s progress on a computer screen.

Sixteen-year-old Keirra Schatzman, for one, was impressed. “They are very life-like,” Keirra said of the mannequins. “You can hear the heartbeat when you’re trying to take a blood pressure reading. Hands-on learning is better for us than just reading books.”

Elsewhere in the STAR Center, her classmates learned other basic medical skills such as how to prepare a patient for a colonoscopy, how to monitor vital signs, how to dress a wound and how to attach an intravenous line. “You get a feel for what it’s going to be like one day in a real hospital,” said student Amber Craig, 15.

The hands-on curriculum in the STAR Center is a component of Peabody’s Health Careers Academy, which prepares students for jobs as medical assistants or gives them a strong foundation for further study. For example, Ms. Craig said she plans to continue her studies after high school and become a funeral director, and others are even thinking about careers as doctors and nurses. Topics studied include safety, first aid, infection control, ethics, anatomy, vital signs, medical terminology, nutrition and human development. In addition to Pittsburgh Peabody, the course is also available to students at Pittsburgh Langley and Pittsburgh Carrick High Schools.

The STAR Center opened in September 2007 thanks to a $500,000 grant from the Highmark Foundation. Its lifelike mannequins, which can be programmed to bleed, breathe or cough, are used to train residents in fields such as anesthesiology, surgery and emergency medicine, as well as nursing students.

A year later, STAR added a unique ambulance simulator, as well as a Family Birthing/Neonatal Teaching Facility. Funding was provided by the Highmark Foundation, the Pennsylvania Workforce Investment Board, The Western Pennsylvania Hospital Foundation, and the Women’s Committee of The Western Pennsylvania Hospital.

Medical simulation technologies are revolutionizing medical and nursing education by placing trainees in life-like situations that provide immediate feedback about decisions and actions. Just as airline pilot simulator training dramatically improved air safety by reducing pilot errors, medical simulation has the potential to reduce medical errors, save lives and reduce health care costs.

Any local Emergency Medical Services provider may use STAR’s ambulance simulator for training at no charge. Ms. Wilfong said the staff at STAR is eager to talk to other community groups who may be interested in using STAR’s highly sophisticated training tools. To learn more about the STAR Center at West Penn Allegheny Health System, visit www.wpahs.org/star.
Buyers of new and renovated Garfield homes may be eligible for $8,000 tax credit

One provision of the new federal economic stimulus package may be very appealing to first-time homebuyers interested in purchasing new homes under construction, or being renovated, in Garfield and surrounding neighborhoods.

An $8,000 first-time homebuyer tax credit is available for a principal residence purchased on or after January 1, 2009 and before December 1, 2009. Qualified buyers who purchase a home for $80,000 or more will receive the full credit. Homes with a sales price under $80,000 will be eligible for a credit equal to 10% of the sales price. Houses currently under construction will be included in the tax credit, as long as the buyer is able to occupy the residence before December 1, 2009.

The tax credit can be claimed on the day of the 2009 purchase date. If you are eligible for the $8,000 credit, but has a lower income tax liability for the year, the IRS would send the purchaser a check for the difference between the $8,000 amount of the credit (assuming they qualify for the full amount), and the actual amount of their tax liability.

Yes, if you meet the income qualifications. Individuals filing Form 1040 as Single (or Head of Household) are eligible for the credit if their adjusted gross income is no more than $75,000. Married couples who file a joint return may have adjusted gross income of no more than $150,000. If you are eligible, this summer would be a great time to make an appointment to tour the new homes due to be built in Garfield in 2009. Call the Bloomfield-Garfield Corp. at 412-441-0950, ext. 11, or Garfield Jubilee Association at 412-665-5208.

Career Connections students will be “Paying It Forward”

On Friday, May 15, 250 volunteers from Career Connections Charter High School will actively engage in various community service projects throughout the city of Pittsburgh. Students, faculty members, parents and community members will serve as community volunteers, leaders, and activists in order to have an impact on what defines community.

Community service is one of the building blocks of America’s success. There is a critical relationship between this service and the nation by improving the lives of many, including the “givers”. Some describe it as charity; others see it as paying back. The students at Career Connections Charter High School prefer to see it as “paying forward.”

Besides providing volunteer service to worthy initiatives, research has shown the importance of community service activities in making informed career decisions. Career Connections Charter High School prides itself on its ability to create and provide rich and diverse learning experiences for our students. The “Pay It Forward” event is another opportunity for our students to set goals, work towards those goals, and succeed in various aspects of life.

Many of the students will volunteer at familiar locations such as the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, the Women’s Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh, Light of Life Mission and Pleasant Valley Shelter. We also have students beautifying the community with the Lawrenceville United garden program, Trash the Trash, and a school based beautification program. Volunteers working with Animal Friends and the Humane Society will provide vital resources for animals in need. These are just of few of the locations which will benefit from this community outreach experience.

The students learn teamwork, the power of community service and will create relationships with organizations that help others. The “Pay It Forward” event provides opportunities for community outreach and introduces students to the importance of volunteering.

East End teen receives ACLU award

The American Civil Liberties Union of Pennsylvania recently recognized a high school senior from Pittsburgh’s East End as its Student Activist of the Year.

Madeline Chandler, 18, a senior at the Pittsburgh Public Schools’ High School for the Creative and Performing Arts, was singled out for her role in the Pittsburgh Public Schools recent decision to replace the district’s abstinence-only sex education policy with a comprehensive sexual health curriculum.

Ms. Chandler successfully challenged attempts to prevent her from circulating petitions among high school students, was instrumental in making Peer Sexual Health Advocate training available at CAPA, presented her views at school board meetings, met with legislators in Harrisburg, and wrote for the national ACLU’s blog.

The daughter of Stacie and Curt Chandler of Highland Park, Ms. Chandler will attend the Pennsylvania State University at University Park, where she will major in Journalism and Media Studies.

Warm weather will bring cool concerts

Summer in Pittsburgh is just around the corner, and with it comes a dazzling array of opportunities to attend free concerts and hear great local and national performers live.

The City of Pittsburgh sponsors two perennial favorite outdoor concert series each summer – both in the East End – “Bach, Beethoven, and Brunch” at Mellon Park (on Sunday mornings from June 21 through August 16 from 10:30 a.m. to noon) and “Reservoir of Jazz” in Highland Park (on Sunday evenings from August 2 through 10 from 5 to 7 p.m.).

Bring a blanket or comfortable chair to enjoy the performance. Both events are picnicking favorites for concert-goers and there’s a great deal of good-natured competition for the “Best Brunch Award” given during intermission by the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts at “Bach, Beethoven, and Brunch.” For more information about either concert series, call 412-255-8975.

Allegheny County offers a full schedule of performers at Hartwood Acres and in South Park. The County has not yet published its schedule, but it will be available soon online at www.alleghenycounty.us.

This year the Three Rivers Arts Festival concerts will return to the grass at the newly-renovated Point State Park. The Arts Festival had not published its concert schedule at press time, so visit www.artsfestival.net to get the performers’ names and concert dates.
The meeting room at the East Liberty branch of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh was packed with people on April 14. They had all come to hear the good news/bad news.

The good news is that the East Liberty facility will undergo a massive renovation that will create a more attractive, user-friendly and energy-efficient library. The bad news is that the branch is expected to close this summer and remain closed for about 14 months.

The exact closing date has not been determined. The East Liberty branch is one of the library’s busiest locations, and careful preparation for the closure and renovation has been essential, said Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh Facilities Dept. spokesperson Jane Dayton. She said that they are determined to close the library at the last possible moment, so they are juggling the co-ordination of the packing, removal and storage of books, and the construction start date.

Library patrons are encouraged to begin planning now for the closure. Nearby libraries are the Homewood Branch at 7101 Hamilton Ave.; the Lawrenceville Branch at 279 Fisk St.; the Main Library in Oakland at 4400 Forbes Ave.; and the Squirrel Hill branch at 5801 Forbes Ave. Visit www.clpgh.org for each branch’s hours and programs.

Children’s Librarian Caralee Sommerer said that she is working with local schools, daycares and organizations to provide some satellite services during the closure.

Anne Chen of Edge Architecture presented drawings of the planned renovation. The building’s footprint will grow slightly by expanding the building onto a small grassy area at the corner of Baum Blvd. and Whitfield Street. The large glass walls, which patrons like because they let in plenty of light, will be retained, although they will be replaced with more energy efficient glass.

Perhaps the biggest change will be the building entrance. The current entrance, off the pedestrian space between the library building and the YMCA (which are currently undergoing renovation into lofts) will be closed and that area will become green space. The new building will have two new and more visible entrances, one from the parking lot at Tamello Way and one from Whitfield St.

All library services will be housed on the building’s first floor, with a dedicated children’s area, more computer terminals, expanded best-seller section, study spaces, additional seating areas, and space for the Friends of the Library used book sale. Patrons will have access to two self-serve check-out kiosks, as well as the full-service counter.

There will be three meeting rooms on the second floor – one large room that can be divided into smaller areas and two smaller spaces. The remaining space will be used for library administrative offices.

There will be two book-drop locations, one by the Whitfield St. entrance and another (accessible by both car and pedestrians), will be located on Tomello Way. Bike racks, increased lighting, and signage are also featured in the renovation plans.

The renovation and re-allocation of space mean that the library’s popular computer classes will no longer have a separate computer lab. Library representatives said classes will be offered when the renovated library re-opens in the fall of 2010, but the structure will be different. They could not say what the offerings will be or how the class will be altered. Computer classes are also taught at the Main Library in Oakland and interested persons can visit that location for information on times and topics.

To celebrate all of the upcoming changes, the library will hold a “De-Construction Party” on Friday, May 15 from 7 to 10 p.m. Proceeds from the evening of food, drinks, dancing and fun will benefit Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh’s Libraries for LIFE capital campaign.

Tickets are available at www.carnegielibrary.org/latenight; at the customer service desk at CLP-East Liberty; or by phone at 412-622-3114. Tickets are $35 in advance and $45 at the door.

Library patrons urged to prepare for 14-month closure of East Liberty branch

Democratic Party Endorsed Candidate for Magisterial District Judge in the 6th and 9th Wards

Q: Can you describe your involvement with public safety and quality of life in our neighborhoods?
A: After an honorable discharge from the U.S. Navy, I returned to Lawrenceville to raise my own family. As a parent, I coached youth baseball and football. When the neighborhood began to decline, I became an active block watch volunteer so I could help my neighbors drive out crime and blight. And for the past six years as the Executive Director of Lawrenceville United, I’ve had the privilege of working alongside many neighbors in Bloomfield, Lawrenceville, and Polish Hill as we transform our neighborhood into a safe, welcoming community. Like many of you, I believe that our neighborhood must first be clean, safe, and welcoming if we want to have long-term success. That means residents and businesses working together.

Q: Why is it important for community problems to be solved within the community?
A: Resolving problems within the Magisterial District Judge’s court provides us with an opportunity to relieve the burden on the judicial system, but strengthen our neighborhoods for the long term. For example, I formed partnerships with the local magisterial district judges to have young offenders work with us to complete their community service hours. Our members showed these young people that they are here to help them succeed. They also gained first-hand knowledge of the effort and costs required to correct nuisance crimes like graffiti and vandalism. With this approach, you can transform the situation into a positive experience for everyone involved.

Q: What other experiences qualify you to serve as the Magisterial District Judge for Bloomfield, Lawrenceville, and Polish Hill?
A: I think it comes down to two things: real-world experience in community problem solving and a deep understanding of the legal processes related to community issues. Through my work, I’ve built skills in landlord-tenant mediation, resolving neighbor disputes, addressing youth truancy, serious adult criminal activity, and nuisance crimes. As a result of my advocacy efforts, Mayor Luke Ravenstahl appointed me to the Disruptive Properties Appeals Board, and I was also appointed to the Graffiti Task Force by Mayor Tom Murphy. In addition, under my leadership, Lawrenceville United received national recognition from MetLife and LISC for our community-police partnership. As judge, I am prepared to serve our communities by applying this real-world knowledge to the decision-making process and provide fair, firm, and consistent rulings based on common sense and law.

On May 19th vote Democratic Endorsed Candidate Tony Ceoffe for Magisterial District Judge
Melanie Bloom had never heard about Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) until it claimed the life of her husband David in 2003. A journalist, David Bloom suffered a pulmonary embolism after a blood clot traveled from his leg to his lungs while he was covering the Iraq war for NBC.

Ms. Bloom will share her family’s experience with DVT on Saturday, May 23, 2009 at West Penn Hospital. The public is invited to hear Ms. Bloom’s personal message about the importance of DVT awareness and early detection and learn about the medical management of DVT from West Penn Allegheny Health System physicians and pharmacists.

Guests will be invited to complete a computerized risk assessment and view demonstrations of ultrasound procedures used to detect blood clots. Free parking is available.

Join us for continental breakfast beginning at 9 a.m. with the program following at 10 a.m.

For more information or to make a reservation for this program, please call 412-DOCTORS (362-8677)

Applying for Food Stamps

Rep. Costa and Just Harvest partner to help constituents

The 21st Legislative District’s newly-elected State Representative, Dom Costa, will be working with Just Harvest to help area residents interested in applying for food stamps.

Staff from Rep. Costa’s office and Just Harvest will be at the BGC Community Activity Center (113 N. Pacific Ave.) from noon to 3 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month (May 5, June 2, July 7), to assist constituents in applying for food stamps.

Rep. Costa also wants to know that he and his staff are available through his local office at 1808 Chislett St. in Morningside. Area residents are welcome to drop by the office or call 412-361-2040 for information about a variety of issues:

Debt of Public Welfare (food stamps and welfare); Unemployment Compensation; vehicle registration, titles and licenses; disability license plates and placards; utilities and the Pennsylvania Utilities Commission; Senior Citizen assistance, PACE and PACENET applications, property tax and rent rebates, and living will applications.

You can also write, call or visit Rep. Costa in Harrisburg: 109B East Wing, P.O. Box 202021, Harrisburg, PA 17120-2021; phone: 717-783-9114; fax: 717-780-4761.

The mailing address for the local office is 1808 Chislett St., Pittsburgh, PA 15206. The fax number is 412-361-2043.

The FIXERUPPER® loan. The best tool you can have.

Now is the time to fix up around the house: a fresh coat of paint, repairs to the roof, energy-efficient windows – you name it.

The FIXERUPPER® loan from National City can make it happen. With flexible payment terms, competitive interest rates and low finance charges, it’s a great tool for getting your home improvement projects under way.

For more information, visit any National City location.
**FOLK & FLOWER FEST**

The 12th Annual Friendship Flower and Folk Festival (F4) will be Saturday, May 9, just in time for Mother’s Day. At F4 you’ll find locally grown flowers, vegetables, herbs and perennials for sale – the proceeds of which support the maintenance of Baum Grove. Friendship’s own Proceeds from food, raffle ticket and book sales support Friendship Preservation Group’s efforts to enhance the quality of life for all Friendship residents.

Performers include Flashdrive, Has-Beens, Thirteenth Rune, Friends in Harmony and Drowning Clowns. Among others. There will also be ongoing demonstrations by the Pittsburgh Glass Center, Fresh Heirlooms, Voluto Coffee, skateboard with Mr. Smalls and a Zumba demonstration. Kids will enjoy karate demonstrations, craft tables, street space for bikes and skates, and raile.

**EECM SUMMER CAMP**

East End Cooperative Ministries will offer a five-week Summer Day Camp for youth ages 5-16. A unique program combining safe, supervised recreational activities with an ethically grounded curriculum that emphasizes the development of life skills, the prevention of violence and drug use, and the promotion of ethical behavior, the camp will run from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. from June 29 through July 31.

General registration will be held Wednesday, June 10 from noon to 3 p.m. at Sacred Heart Parish Activities Bldg. The tuition is $240 until June 5 and $260 after June 5. Call 412-361-5549 for information.

**BULLETIN BOARD**

**Table for One**

If you are 18-35, single, and looking for Christian Fellowship outside the four walls of the church, Table For One is what you are looking for. We strive to strengthen the whole person by teaching and encouraging you with God’s word and using God’s word to relate to everyday life. Join us for activities, discussion and outreach-fellowship opportunities. Meetings are on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month. Visit www.aflyn.com/table or call at 412-508-3331.

**Camp R**

The Catholic Youth Association of Pittsburgh’s Camp “R” is preparing for its 69th Anniversary in camping this year. The co-ed residential camp is located in Laurel Hill State Park, 90 minutes from Pittsburgh. The camping season begins July 5 and ends the week of August 14. Call 412-621-3342 for a brochure.

**EECM Fundraiser**

East End Cooperative Ministry will host a fundraiser – A Flavor of the East End – on Saturday, May 30 from 7 to 10 p.m. at the Pittsburgh Glass Center. Tickets are $100 and proceeds benefit EECM’s Hunger, Housing and Children & Youth Programs. For more information, call 412-361-5549.

**Garfield Farm**

Garfield Community Farm has weekly garden work days every Wednesday beginning at 6:30 p.m. at the corner of Cornwall and Wicklow Streets. Participants are welcome to free veggies as they are available. Our Farm Stand, located at Valley View Church, 601 N. Aiken, opens in May and will be held every Thursday from 3 to 6 p.m. For information or to get involved, contact: Rev. John Creasy at john@gpheopndoor.org or 412-979-7764 or Rev. Chad Collins at cdcollins2124@gmail.com or 412-361-0870.

**Rummage Sale**

Eastminster Presbyterian Church, Penn Circle North and N. Highland Ave., will hold a Rummage Sale on Saturday, May 2 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
**L'VILLE DOG PARK**

Help make the Lawrenceville Dog Park a reality!

A group of Lawrenceville residents working to establish a community-based, enclosed off-leash dog park that is well-maintained, safe and enjoyable for our dogs and residents has had lots of enthusiastic support so far, but the Lawrenceville Dog Park Committee needs YOU in our push for this dog park!

Want to join our efforts? Have questions? Comments? Donations? Check out LawrencevilleDogPark.org for more information!

**FRIENDSHIP YARD SALE**

Friendship Preservation Group’s community-wide yard sale will be held Sunday, June 28 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Participants kick in $5 for advertising and take advantage of the opportunity to get rid of some stuff! Restricted to homes between Gross and Nagley. Email Michele Timon at michele.timon@gmail.com.

**SEEDS OF HOPE CAMP**

Seeds of Hope Church’s Earthen Vessels Outreach will hold a six-week summer day camp from June 22 through August 21. The camp runs weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. and includes hot breakfast and lunch, as well as academics, sports, activities and field trips. Camp fees are based on a sliding scale and run from $120 to $300 for the entire summer. For information call Marilyn at 412-414-2993.

**KINGSLEY CAMP**

Now is the time to register children ages 6 through 12 for the Kingsley Association’s "Run, Fun, Fitness and Adventure Summer Camp."

The ten-week camp will run in one-week segments from June 15 through August 17. Camp begins at 8 a.m. and ends at 5:00 p.m., with early drop-off at 7:30 a.m. and late pick-up at 6 p.m. available.

**BULLETIN BOARD**

**GARFIELD GATORS**

The Garfield Gators are looking for committed cheerleaders and players for the upcoming season. For information, call Coach Mimi at 412-245-0691.

**SUSAN WERNER**

East Liberty Presbyterian Church, 116 S. Highland Ave. resident a 90-minute solo concert by singer/songwriter Susan Werner on Sunday, May 3, at 7:30 p.m.

This is a “Pay What You Can” program, with donations for the admission tickets accepted at the door. For information call Randy Bush at 412-441-3800 x23

**AARP PROGRAMS**

The Pittsburgh office of AARP Foundation WorkSearch will receive additional funding to expand its Senior Employment Program for Allegheny County residents and benefit an estimated 200 additional individuals. AARP Senior Employment Program provides paid training opportunities for unemployed, residents of Allegheny County who are 55 years of age or older, income eligible and currently seeking employment. Individuals train in the community to obtain the experience and skills needed to become more marketable. Interested individuals should contact the AARP Foundation WorkSearch office at 412-271-1580. Individuals may also obtain free online AARP WorkSearch Assessment accounts to assist with identifying interests and skills, matching skills to employer needs, and searching for jobs by zip code.

**HELP LINE**

The United Way HelpLine has helped callers with questions about food pantries, children’s health insurance, transportation to doctor appointments, parenting issues, senior services, shelters, domestic violence, utilities, and more. If you have questions, call 412-255-1155.

Trained information specialists are available 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. They will talk with you and refer you to agencies that may be able to help. Emergency calls are handled on a 24 hour basis by specialists trained to handle problems from mental health to housing and more.

**BUSINESSES**

**A Hauling Job?**

- We clear basements, yards, garages, attics, estates
- Fast, Reliable, Reasonable
- Also demolition work, minor repairs, grass cutting, salvage credit.

Call 412-687-6928 or 412-773-0599

**ENTERTAINMENT**

- **SEEDS OF HOPE CAMP**
  - Knoxville: Knoxville School on Charle St at 6 a.m.
  - East Liberty: Shakespeare Shopping Center at 8:30 a.m.
  - Northside: Family Dollar on Brighton Rd. at 7 a.m.

**FUNDRAISER**

- **SUSAN WERNER**
  - East Liberty Presbyterian Church, 116 S. Highland Ave.
  - A 90-minute solo concert by singer/songwriter Susan Werner on Sunday, May 3, at 7:30 p.m.

**CLASSIFIEDS**

**ALL TEXT ADS (INCLUDING FOR SALE ADS) are $5 for 15 words and 10 cents for each additional word. We DO NOT run “personal ads.” BLOCK ads (1.5” x 2.5”) are $15**

Please send ad with full payment to:

The Bulletin, Classified Dept., 5149 Penn Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15224.

**For Sale**

**HIGHLAND PARK** - Charming Victorian home, perfect for an active family. Completely renovated with all new plumbing and electric. Three bedrooms and 2.5 bathrooms, plus three-room master suite featuring a sitting room, bedroom and spectacular bathroom. Fabulous kitchen, living room, dining room and TV room on first floor. Stained glass, pocket doors, fenced yard. Must see the interior of this gem! $225,000. For pictures, visit http://5627jacksonst.howard-homes.com. For a showing, call Kelly Meade at (412) 361-4006 Ext: 237.

**For Sale**

**Bugs Be Dead Pest Control**

Real Estate Inspections

Over 30 Years in Business

ALL WORK GUARANTEED

SUBURBAN EXTERMINATING CO

412-688-8889 OR 412-795-4190

**Warhol**

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AND AS YOU CAN SEE, WE’RE IN EXCELLENT COMPANY.

West Penn Hospital was one of only four major teaching hospitals nationwide to receive Thomson Reuters’ 2008 Everest Award, given to the 100 Top Hospitals® that have reached the highest level of accomplishment.

West Penn is the only major teaching hospital in Pennsylvania to receive this mark of distinction for setting national benchmarks for excellence. To determine its list of 100 Top Hospitals®, Thomson Reuters evaluated more than 3,000 hospitals nationwide on key measures that included quality and value.

It takes a great team to achieve such an honor. Congratulations to all employees of West Penn Hospital, whose dedication to quality patient care is recognized among the nation’s best!

412-DOCTORS (362-8677)

The Western Pennsylvania Hospital
West Penn Allegheny Health System
www.wpahs.org