Façade Collapse Brings Lawrenceville Neighbors Together

By Paula Martinac

When part of the façade of her century-old brick rowhouse collapsed, Loretta Jennis didn’t realize that the calamity would actually strengthen her ties with her Lawrenceville neighbors.

On the morning of February 23, Jennis’s neighbor, Ray Halyak, a retired PennDot worker, had just finished shoveling the snow from Jennis’s walk and returned to his home four doors up Holmes Street. What he heard next “sounded like a big peal of thunder, like in the summer,” said Halyak, who has lived on the block for 40 years.

Jennis, a lifelong Lawrenceville resident who has been in her house for 10 years, said there had been no forewarning of trouble, just the giant boom that signaled disaster – the lintel and top portion of her façade had crashed to the ground. “You couldn’t believe how fast it came down,” noted Halyak.

Neighborhood Academy Students Volunteer in New Orleans Rebuilding

By Paula Martinac

Five neighborhood high school students got a close-up look at the destruction wrought by Hurricane Katrina, when they traveled to New Orleans during the first week of their March spring break to volunteer in the city’s reconstruction.

Teens from the Neighborhood Academy, a private school of 60 students located at 5231 Penn Avenue in Garfield, spent two and a half days gutting houses in Hollygrove, one of the New Orleans neighborhoods hit hardest when the levees failed and flood waters surged. The deadly August 2005 storm demolished more than 200,000 Louisiana homes, many of which are still in ruins.

The Neighborhood Academy students included eleventh grader Abby Buettner, tenth grader raisaunya Jones and DonQuia Snowden, and ninth grader Leyland Foizey and Cevian Williamson. Faculty members Emily Baldwin, Alexis Book, and John McClelland supervised the group.

The students said they had seen Katrina’s damage in the paper and on television, but the visit brought them closer to the devastation and纹理.
PUBLIC SAFETY TASK FORCE REPORT

Citizen Observer Links Police, Public to Protect Neighborhoods

An important new public safety initiative is coming to Pittsburgh! Citizen Observer delivers free citizen alerts and crime prevention information to the community, providing an effective Internet communication tool to protect neighborhoods. More than 300 communities throughout the country are currently plugged into the system.

Here’s how it works. By registering at the Citizen Observer website (www.citizenobserver.com), individuals and businesses can get up-to-the-minute information and alerts on recent crimes, wanted fugitives, and crime prevention from the police in their neighborhoods – like having personal access to a police radio. In addition, Citizen Observer posts photos and descriptions of missing persons, such as children or Alzheimer’s patients who have wandered off.

Users stipulate how they want to receive their alerts - via the Internet, e-mail, fax, pager, or text messaging. The speed of the system’s technology means that alerts may arrive in as little as 45 seconds after the police release the information.

Registered users can also provide anonymous tips to the police to help solve local crimes, becoming part of a two-way communication system between the public and law enforcement. The program bolsters the work done by neighborhood watch groups, making their efforts even more effective.

Citizen Observer began in Pittsburgh in March as a pilot program in Zone 1 (the Northside communities), and will be available soon in Zones 2 through 5. To fund the pilot for the first two

Zone Meetings

If you would like to stay up-to-date with police efforts in your area, then please attend one of the monthly zone meetings, held by each zone’s police dept.

The Zone 5 Meeting is held the 2nd Wednesday of every month at 7 p.m. on the 3rd floor of the Zone 5 Police Station in East Liberty. For more information, call Zone 5 at 412-665-3605.

The Zone 2 Public Safety Council Meeting is held the last Thursday of the month at 7 p.m. at the Hill House. For more information, call Zone 2 at 412-255-2827.
Thirteen students at Peabody High School, who are participating as part of the Earth Force project in collaboration with the University of Pittsburgh’s CAST program, have presented their graduation project on recycling and a community-wide clean-up.

The students have been working to make a difference by recycling trash and keeping their school and communities clean. They organized a few events to provide information about recycling and keeping the environment clean.

The students’ week of events, which began Tuesday, April 10th, culminated in a student-run assembly on Friday, April 13. The informative assembly explained why people should recycle, and included speeches by representatives from the Mayor’s office, ABITIBI, and the PA Recycling Council, as well as Peabody’s own principal, John Vater.

The assembly was highlighted by a fashion show featuring clothing made from recycled materials. As part of the students’ project, an ABITIBI paper recycling bin has been placed at Peabody. This bin will be open to all members of the community who want to contribute used paper items for recycling.

ABITIBI pays schools and organizations that have bins on their property based on the amount of paper collected. Peabody will benefit greatly if everyone in the community uses the bin.

The students’ week of events also included a fashion show featuring clothing made from recycled materials.

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ABITIBI pays schools and organizations that have bins on their property based on the amount of paper collected. Peabody will benefit greatly if everyone in the community uses the bin.

The students would also like to remind everyone of the Community Clean-Up that will take place on Saturday, May 12, in conjunction with the Excellence for All event, which will take place on the same day. (See ad, page 9.)

Garfield Gators are recruiting!

The Garfield Gators are recruiting youth football players and cheerleaders for the 2007 season.

Sign-up will be held on Saturdays in May (May 5, 12, 19, and 26) from 2-4 p.m., at the Community Activity Center, 113 N. Pacific Avenue in Garfield.

Anyone who is interested, please come!
On April 4th retired Senior Editor for the Post-Gazette and member of the District 2 School Board Coalition Mr. Clarke Thomas wrote a [perspective] piece in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette where city Council candidate Patrick Dowd accuses Lawrenceville United of drawing a direct correlation between race and crime. Mr. Dowd's unfounded and irresponsible comments have deeply offended our organization. The following are statements attributed to Mr. Dowd, and the response from Lawrenceville United.

Mr. Thomas writes in his April 4th article: These questions (To be answered by City Council candidates) were gleaned from a list drafted by Patrick Dowd in his race for the District 7 seat on City Council. "Many housing experts have criticized groups like Lawrenceville United for drawing a one-dimensional correlation between race, crime and low-income housing. What do you think are the major contributors to crime in your district? And what would you do about them?" Lawrenceville United Executive Director Tony Ceoffe writes in response:In his April 4th Perspectives column, Clarke Thomas urges local voters to wake up and ask political candidates the tough questions that will affect the "future welfare of the city." Ironically—or perhaps hypocritically—Mr. Thomas himself has relied on a political candidate to spoon-feed him the questions that voters should ask of their city council representatives. Mr. Thomas adds a caveat of "full disclosure," noting that the source of his questions is a current candidate for city council. We hope that readers don't think that, simply because Thomas tells us that he's copying off Patrick Dowd's paper, this excuses his journalistic laziness. Furthermore, as Lawrenceville residents who have worked hard to improve our neighborhood's quality of life, we take issue with the portrayal of our organization in an unfavorable light. Mr. Thomas and Patrick Dowd unfairly singled out our organization's work, stating that Lawrenceville United has been criticized by "housing experts" (who will apparently remain comfortably anonymous). Mr. Thomas suggests through Patrick Dowd's words that we do not understand how "low-income housing," crime, poverty, and racial disparity create complex challenges in our city's neighborhoods. In fact, we do recognize a strong correlation between housing and crime, and we also make a distinction between low-income housing and severely blighted, substandard housing that is unfit for human habitation. In our neighborhood, crime data [have shown] that these severely blighted buildings owned by absentee landlords are often the home base for criminal activity. These are houses with broken or boarded windows, lacking safe heating or lighting systems, and infested with insects and vermin. These are structures that people do not want to live in; sadly, these buildings inadequately serve as homes for people without better choices. In addition, they are inhabited by a different group of people who exploit our residential neighborhoods by using these buildings as headquarters for their criminal enterprises. We are working to make Lawrenceville safe and healthy for ALL people, regardless of race, age, or income, but that won't happen until the twin problems of blight and crime are addressed. Mr. Thomas is right to suggest that city residents should consider the causes and effects of crime in our neighborhoods. But we won't find answers by adopting a line of questioning that is designed to serve a single candidate, or by unfairly criticizing organizations that are working to create a solution.

Tony Ceoffe  
Executive Director  
Lawrenceville United

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They were there for us and for our country. Some couldn't wait to come home to the families they loved... others gave the ultimate sacrifice. Today, as every day, they remain unforgotten.

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The Bloomfield-Garfield Corp’s EYESORE PROPERTY OF THE MONTH

Each month we highlight either property owners whose neglect hurts the neighborhood or those who have admirably maintained or renovated their properties. Properties are nominated by community members. To nominate a property for either Eyesore or Showcase Property of the Month, please call Aggie Brose at 412-441-6950.

Housing Court (Finally!) Gets Tough on Problem Property Owners

Almost five years ago in our November 2002 issue of The Bulletin, Louis V. and M. Sebastian, the recorded owners of 5014 Jordan Way and 5120, 5022, 5024 and 5031 Broad Street were highlighted in a feature that was then called “Bad Property Owner of the Month.” At that time, the Bureau of Building Inspection (BBI) had issued several citations, including rubbish, overgrown weeds, and broken window panes, among other violations. Additionally, all of the aforementioned properties were vacant and condemned. Although several cases were filed against the

Allegheny Cemetery Invites the Community

Annual Memorial Day Service at the 1937 Soldiers’ Memorial Monday—May 28, 2007 11:30 a.m.

“The Parade arrives at Allegheny 11:15am”

Photos by Mandy Kendall / The Bulletin

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Call today: 412-391-4333 or www.cdcp.org
Financial Education Fair Invites Residents to Take Control of Their Money

By Emily Keebler
Neighborhood Housing Services

In the market for a new or used car? Or thinking about buying a home? How much you can borrow, and the rate of interest you pay, will determine how much car or house you are able to buy. What you may not know is that your record of payment on credit cards and loans, the amount of debt you currently have outstanding, and whether you have paid your bills on time will impact the amount of a loan and the interest rate you are able to get. These factors are best summed up in your credit score.

The Financial Education Fair, a free event, will hold the first-ever Financial Education Fair in the Pittsburgh area on Saturday, June 2, 2007: “You Control of Their Money”. President and CEO of the Urban Fair’s Honorary Chairwoman, Esther Bush, will open with remarks from the event, will hold the first-ever Financial Education Fair in the Pittsburgh area on Saturday, June 2, 2007: “You Control of Their Money”. President and CEO of the Urban Fair’s Honorary Chairwoman, Esther Bush, will open with remarks from the event.

For more information on the Financial Education Fair, contact the Financial Education Consortium at 412-281-9986 or ekeebler@nhswpa.org.

A Good Credit Score Is Worth the Discipline

By Cathy Niederberger
PNC Senior Vice President, Community Development Banking

In America in 2007, it is more important than ever to know how to manage your money. The most recent records show that from 2000 to 2004 real income (income adjusted for inflation, the upward movement of prices of goods and services) decreased by 3%, an equivalent of $1,600* in just four years. If we are essentially making less and less money each year, we must be sure to make wise decisions with the money we do have, by budgeting, saving and investing, and avoiding unnecessary, expensive financial “opportunities” such as predatory loans.

To help residents of the Pittsburgh area do just that, local non-profits, government agencies, and financial institutions have come together to form the Financial Education Consortium of Southwestern Pennsylvania. This collaboration of financial service educators will hold the first-ever Financial Education Fair in the Pittsburgh area on Saturday, June 2, 2007: “You Control Your Money: Be Wealthy for Life”.

The Financial Education Fair, a free event, will open with remarks from the Fair’s Honorary Chairwoman, Esther Bush, President and CEO of the Urban Fair, and include seminars on Knowing Your Credit, Budgeting, Avoiding Predatory Lenders, Youth Financial Literacy and other beneficial topics. In addition, over 40 agencies will be on hand to speak with participants one-on-one about financial education programs that are available in the area, such as matched savings programs, free homeownership classes, low-interest loans, and much more.

The event will be held at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center in Downtown Pittsburgh from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM on Saturday, June 2, 2007. Attendance is free to all, and prizes will be raffled throughout the day. Participants may come for just one seminar, but are encouraged to stay the whole day.

For more information on the Financial Education Fair, contact the Financial Education Consortium at 412-281-9986 or ekeebler@nhswpa.org.

Dear Neighbor,

During my term on City Council, I have fought to improve our quality of life. We have added police, we are fighting drugs, and we put beat cops back on the streets of our business districts.

Working with our community, we have shut down nuisance bars, brought new money for essential projects and leveraged funds to tear down dilapidated houses and clean up blight. We have made a good start. There is much, much more to do.

We have been able to restore previously cut essential services like rodent control and reopen some rec centers and pools. And last year we restructured the existing city debt so we could restore a modest capital budget to pave streets and purchase police cars and fire equipment without raising taxes.

My wife Sharon and I are raising our children here, and teaching them the values we learned from our parents, respect for our neighbors, and the belief that as a community we are all in this together. I am running for re-election to City Council. I ask for your vote so I can continue to work for all of us.

Len Bodack
Endorsed Democrat For City Council

PRIMARY ELECTION TUESDAY, MAY 15TH
No one was injured by the falling bricks and stone. “It was morning, and the kids were coming to school,” said Jennis, whose house sits directly across the street from McCleary Elementary School. “Sometimes during fire drills, they bring the kids across the street. It could have been a lot worse!” Only Jennis’s property was affected; even cars on the street escaped harm.

The police and firefighters who responded to Jennis’s 911 call notified the Housing Authority, which ended up inspecting the entire block, since the houses are connected in two rows. On March 5, the city’s Department of Public Safety slapped all 13 homeowners with building code violations, notifying them of “an unsafe condition” and ordering them to complete all repairs within a mere 15 days.

“That was the worst part,” said Jennis. “I panicked – 15 days to fix everything!” The falling bricks also damaged her awning and porch roof. Jennis called her city Council member, Len Bodack, and state senator, Jim Ferlo, whose offices helped get an extension to do the work – as long as it takes to make the improvements.

Bodack’s office also alerted her to the possibility of a 0% home improvement loan from the city. (See sidebar.) Jennis’s façade repair will cost about $5,000, which her insurance company declines to cover, claiming that the damages were caused by 20 years of repeated freezing and thawing. Insurance will, however, pay for the awning and porch roof. At press time, Jennis had just signed the contract for her repair work to begin.

But there’s more to the story. After receiving their citations, the homeowners on the block - a mix of longtime residents and fairly new arrivals - held a meeting in Jennis’s home to share information and plan a course of action. “Neighbors didn’t really know each other,” Jennis said. “I was so impressed with how everyone came together.”

Five of the homeowners, Halyak said, ended up hiring the same contractor to work on their homes, which turned out to be minor brick pointing and similar repairs. Jennis and her next-door neighbor joined together to hire a different contractor, as their homes required more significant work than the rest of the block.

After their first meeting, the neighbors reconvened two weeks later, and “we’re just going to keep meeting once a month, even if we don’t have to,” said Jennis, who noted that neighbors take turns hosting the brand-new block association. Ideally, they would like to see the neighborhood return to what it once was – a safe place to own a home and raise a family.

Jennis and Halyak both noted negative changes in the neighborhood, including a shooting two years back and a recent drug bust. “We just come home, lock the door, and stay in, scared to go out at night,” said Jennis. “The 10th Ward could really use some help.”

The neighbors offered advice for other homeowners. “Get to know who’s living next door. Who’s on your block? Who’s looking out for you?”

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**Affordable Home Improvement Loans**

Did you know that the Urban Redevelopment Authority’s Pittsburgh Home Rehabilitation Program offers 0% interest loans to homeowners for making improvements to their residences? Examples include correcting building code violations, removing lead hazards, and providing accessibility. Homeowners may borrow up to $25,000 for a single unit and $35,000 for a two-unit home, with terms ranging up to 20 years.

To qualify, you must own and occupy a residence within the city of Pittsburgh and fall within specific family income limits. More information is available from URA at 412-255-6666, or on the Web at www.ura.org/phrp.html.

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**Photo by Ray Halyak**

**HOMEOWNERS IN THE 5200 BLOCK OF HOLMES AVENUE IN LAWRENCEVILLE (FROM LEFT): HELEN SCHMIDT, LORETTA JENNIS, FRANK PADOL, DAN GibBONS, KAREN GibBONS, JAY RESSLER, BRIGITTE MARY, AND MARGARET COSTELLO; (ON PORCH) JOY HALYAK AND MARTHA RESSLER.**
news vividly to life. "I just wanted to see what it looked like and what happened," said Williamson, who had never been that far from home.

"Other people were helping out, too," said Jones, about her decision to lend a hand. Baldwin arranged for the group to work with Trinity Christian Community, a New Orleans ministry active in the rebuilding efforts, often with the help of out-of-town volunteers.

The group had to raise funds to cover their own travel expenses. A talent show at the school, gifts from family and teachers, and donations from local businesses like Dozen Cupcakes in Squirrel Hill, National City Bank, and Del Monte, brought in over $5,000 to cover their costs.

When they arrived in New Orleans, the devastation was "so much worse than I thought it would be," recalled Foizey. "It was just insane. There would be a ceiling that looked like it was falling in, and it was amazing that it hadn’t."

Outfitted in respirator masks to protect against mold and other environmental hazards, the students performed hard physical labor from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., tearing down drywall and ripping out damaged insulation, leaving only wooden frames standing. Then they carried debris to the street for collection. Other volunteer groups will finish the rebuilding process.

Foizey said he had done remodeling work before, when his family remodeled its attic. But Jones admitted she "had never done anything that hard before - except for homework!"

Although they received no school credit for the trip, the students said they wouldn’t have missed the experience. From now on, Jones said that she will think long and hard about asking for things from her family, since she witnessed firsthand how so many people lost everything. "It made me appreciate everything I have so much more. It made me appreciate my family."

"It made me appreciate my fridge," Foizey quipped, but he meant he was grateful to have enough to eat, unlike many residents displaced by the storm.

The trip wasn’t all work, however, and the group had plenty of time to sample local cuisine like po’boys and "alligator bites" and to explore tourist attractions that were not damaged by flood waters, including the historic French Quarter.

Baldwin said the students will create a PowerPoint presentation of their trip to share with the rest of the school, using the dozens of photos they took to document the experience.

A Community-Building Event to Support East End Students and Families

On May 12, 2007, Peabody High School will be collaborating with their community partners to host ‘Excellence for All: An East End Community-Building Event.’ Special Keynote Speaker: Cle “Bone” Sloan, now an inactive member of the L.A. Bloods Gang and author and star of the award winning documentary, Bastards of the Party. Currently airing on HBO, Bastards of the Party is the story of “one gang’s violent evolution and a new generation’s search for a way out.” Sloan makes a positive call for change in modern gang culture with his message of reformatting the current gang structure to non-criminal and positive activities that build a societal connection and a larger purpose.

Superintendent Mark Roosevelt will provide introductory remarks about the important role that residents of all ages, community organizations and service providers play in improving the academic performance for all East End students through Excellence for All.

The purpose of the event is to connect the resources of the community, provide meaningful opportunities for community involvement and strengthen the East–End community for the advancement of all students. In addition, speakers and workshop presenters will be on site to discuss issues that address the needs of students in the surrounding community.

Exciting entertainment, speakers and lunch is planned throughout the day.
Kirkland, the first of five District 9 candidates to speak at the event, told residents she felt that a lack of economic development, unemployment, and “parents outlawing their children,” were the most pressing issues in District 9. The biggest roadblock to the district faces in moving forward, Kirkland feels, is that it lacks the sense of neighborhood that she sees still existing in Friendship. The communities in District 9, Kirkland insisted, need to come together and break the barriers between neighborhoods in order to work together for the health of the district as a whole. “Segregation is over,” Kirkland said. “We cannot segregate ourselves.”

Kirkland says that it is also important to hold community groups accountable for actually providing the services that they claim to provide to the community. When asked how she would accomplish bringing the neighborhoods together, Kirkland suggested that town meetings would be one way for communities to meet on issues that affect all of them.

District 9 candidate Eric Smith also named the economic conditions of District 9 as his highest priority. Economic blight must be addressed “before we’re all movin’ out of here,” Smith quipped, referring to Pittsburgh’s population loss. Smith also said that city residents need to see a better return on their tax dollars, in the form of better city services for all residents, and breaking the barriers between neighborhoods in order to work together for the health of the district as a whole. “We cannot segregate ourselves.”

Smith proposes that the city and county look at ways to make the Port Authority more profitable, perhaps by allowing private bus companies to take over some of the services, and finding other economic opportunities to bring money back into the city.

Ora Lee Carroll, executive director of the East Liberty Concerned Citizens Council and also a District 9 candidate, pointed to her extensive background as a community leader as an indication of her ability to be a successful council member. Carroll has worked on a wide variety of programs, such as a behavior modification program for youth, and has worked with the local, state and federal governments to create successful community programs.

Carroll says that it is important for council to develop a plan to obtain a fair distribution of city services for all residents, and that neighbors must connect and work together to improve their communities.

Using the Larimer Community Plan as a model, Carroll says that she would push to rehab existing housing stock for low-income residents and clean up vacant lots for community use.

Rev. Ricky Burgess, the endorsed Democrat for the District 9 council seat, insists that the most important thing is to look at “the future of the district,” rather than focusing on the past. Burgess says that economic stability and public safety initiatives would be priorities of his council term. Burgess says that as a council member, he would make public safety a top priority, and would push for both targeted police sweeps to take out drug and sex offenders, combined with targeted social service efforts to prevent people from turning to such crimes in the first place.

Burgess promised that, if elected, he would, within the first 100 days of his time in office, take specific steps for violence reduction and economic development.

Burgess says that currently, each community has its own economic development plan, and that by creating a comprehensive district-wide plan instead, the district has a better chance of pulling out of economic distress.

District 9 candidate Judith Ginyard said that she feels it is important to bring fiscal responsibility back to the city. “We’ve been doing this the same way too long,” Ginyard says.

Ginyard says that her history as the former executive director of the Lincoln Larimer Community Development Corporation gives her the experience of knowing how to run a fiscally solid organization. Creating homeownership opportunities is also a priority for Ginyard, who has the experience of being a Pa. Department of State licensed Real Estate Broker. Ginyard also serves on the Executive Board of the Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group (PCRG).

“Whatever needs to be done in our neighborhoods, we as a people must do it.”

Absent from the forum was District 9 Councilwoman Twanda Carlisle. Representatives of Councilwoman Carlisle said that she was unable to attend the forum due to a previously scheduled event with the Black Contractors. Councilwoman Carlisle had not returned a request for comment as of The Bulletin’s press time.

Although not part of the Friendship candidates forum, another important race for the East End is the one for county executive, between incumbent County Executive Dan Onorato and Richard Swartz, executive director of the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC is the publisher of The Bulletin), and a relative newcomer to politics. Asked what he has to offer the County, Swartz responded that he wants to work with “the many interests who want to see a stabilized funding picture for the bus transit system at the Port Authority, so that no communities are left without service... “in addition to looking at a light rail system that could serve the entire county.

Swartz also says that he would like to remove the freeze on the real estate assessment system, which he calls “inequitable for those who have purchased or built new homes recently, and for those living in neighborhoods or communities where market values are falling.”

Among Swartz’s other priorities would be conducting an in-depth review of the criminal justice system, specifically exploring...
A Message from the Mayor

By Mayor Luke Ravenstahl
Mayor, City of Pittsburgh

Over the past month, I have begun acting upon my pledge to create a new Pittsburgh today and a better Pittsburgh tomorrow. We’ve persisted in our efforts to produce fresh ideas and bold leadership to ensure our city’s fiscal recovery. We are finding new ways to make the most out of every taxpayer dollar, through public/private partnerships and by addressing, head-on, our city’s largest budget dilemmas related to pensions and health care. At the same time, we are finding new ways to make sure our residents have state-of-the-art recreational facilities and enjoy living in one of America’s cleanest and safest cities.

I’ve been visiting our neighborhoods, joining residents for community clean-ups, even rappelling down Mt. Washington’s hillside. On Earth Day, I took the final steps to give our citizens another great regional park. The Grandview Scenic Byway Park, the first regional park located in Pittsburgh’s south neighborhoods, has been talked about by local officials for years. We realized that the only way to ensure the park’s existence was to work together with our non-profit organizations and foundations for funding, expertise, and resources. We also announced the opening of Schenley Park’s new ‘Sportsplex.’ This new track and soccer field is another example of our strategy to revitalize our neighborhoods through public/private partnerships. We are the black and gold and green city and we recognize that our natural assets are as important as our great sports teams.

We are also making real strides in addressing our largest budget dilemmas. We cannot rely on outside organizations to fix a problem that is affecting every city in America. For that reason, I called together Pennsylvania’s first Mayor’s Pension Summit, gathering mayors, government officials, and budget experts for a day of roundtable discussions and problem solving. The summit signaled a first step toward creating a solution, not just managing a problem.

We have also been proactive in controlling our city’s health care expenses. Both pension and healthcare are the largest strains on our city’s budget, and if not addressed, will deter our goal of continued fiscal recovery. As a result of our competitive bidding process for a new health care provider, we will save taxpayers over $17 million dollars while keeping our promise to City workers by maintaining their benefits at no additional cost.

These cost savings help to ensure fiscal security for our City, which in turn spurs investment and development throughout. I kept my promise to the residents of the Hill District by bringing $90 million dollars of development into Oak Hill, a project that had been stalled for more than 10 years.

Pittsburgh’s Urban Redevelopment Authority implemented my Green Building Agenda, an agenda which celebrates sustainable building and living, and offering local development economic advantages by positioning and marking Pittsburgh as the black and gold, and green city. By providing financial incentives such as lower rates and extended payment deferral periods for development projects pursuing green building standards, we are encouraging that the money invested in green manufactured products be spent right here in our Pittsburgh. We need to be smart in ensuring we utilize as many economic development tools as we can, and by doing this we will give our developers more of a reason to build green, in turn strengthening the economic development of our city and ensuring our fiscal recovery. In order to keep moving this agenda forward, we will make certain that the implementation of green economic development principles are monitored by a new, full-time staff position with the City’s URA.

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By providing new resources for our citizens and finding new ways to implement fresh cost-saving ideas, we are furthering the economic development climate in our City. We are staying focused in providing the most we can for our taxpayer so that companies will want to invest in our city and our youth will want to stay.
BUSY, Page 16

SIMPLE
Professional Organizer Carol Briney offers suggestions and answers your questions about overcoming the clutter in your life.

Busy versus Busyness
By Carol Briney
Professional Organizer

Are you truly busy or is busyness a way of avoiding your life? As someone who has coached and spoken to hundreds of people about having a simplified and balanced life, I have noticed two major categories into which most people place their lives.

The first category is being busy. We are all busy in this fast-paced overly informed world. The trick is to choose, really choose what you want to be busy with. How do you want to spend the 24 hours you have in each day?

I do believe that we all have a choice on how we spend our lives. However, most people spend more time planning their one-week vacation than they spend on deciding what they do want in their one and only life.

The second category is busyness. Most of you who have been reading my column for years know that I believe that being “too busy” is a choice that we make. People call me all of the time and speak to me about being “too busy.” They tell me I just do not understand their life. What I do know is we all have choices. We can all choose what we really want to do and what does not seem to fit for us.

I had a woman client in the past who told me that she had heard me speak at the National Bi-Polar Association Convention and thought that I might be able to help her in all of her day-to-day work. She told me that she feels like she is doing 100 things at one time and none of them are being done properly. She had not been able to find a way to manage her work so that she could work effectively and efficiently.

By Sue Kerr
Family Services of Western Pennsylvania

Family Services of Western PA Honors the Contributions of Foster Parents

In honor of Foster Care Awareness Month, Family Services of Western Pennsylvania is pleased to celebrate the contributions and dedication of our more than 55 foster families who have improved the lives of hundreds of children in Allegheny County.

Since 1885, Family Services and its predecessors have provided foster care to children in Allegheny County. There are currently more than 21,000 Pennsylvania children in the foster care system. Family Services is one of several private, non-profit agencies that contract with the Allegheny County Department of Human Services’ Office of Children, Youth and Families (CYF) to provide foster care to children temporarily separated from their families.

According to Evangeline Holmes, Foster Care Manager, “Our foster parents are part of [a] team working to reunify the child with their birth family. That’s our common goal for each child.”

Bonnie, an 18-year foster parent veteran, explained that “Sometimes it is heartbreaking, but making a difference in a child’s life is more fulfilling than you can put into words. We have experienced the miracles that can happen when you offer love, patience and understanding. [The miracles] are what makes being a foster parent worth it all.”

Bonnie and her husband Nick have fostered over 120 children.

Another couple, Jana and Ken, have traveled all over the world and have seen first-hand the impact of poverty on children in Asia, Africa, and South America. So, when they came back to Pittsburgh and settled in a Northside neighborhood with their young son, they decided to do something to help local children in need and become foster parents with Family Services. “If we could come back to the States and make a difference in the lives of our most vulnerable children, we were determined to do it,” says Jana.

After completing the necessary training and paperwork, Jana and Ken have opened their home to four

See BUSY, Page 16
See FOSTER, Page 16

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**CREDIT, From Page 6**

- Don’t skim, read the fine print – A loan or credit card application is a contract, so read it thoroughly before signing. Be aware of introductory rates that expire as well as the length of monthly billing cycles.
- Set a budget and stick to it – Don’t jump at the first appealing offer; compare rates and fees offered through mail solicitation, on the Internet or at the local bank.
- Develop a financial plan will help you keep your finances in order. Don’t spend more than you can afford, and don’t reach your credit limit or “max out” your cards. Be sure to have a plan to pay down your debt, and stick with it.
- Apply for credit sparingly – Having too many open lines of credit will lower your score.
- Compare credit card and loan offers – Don’t jump at the first appealing offer; compare rates and fees offered through mail solicitation, on the Internet or at the local bank.

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**OTHER**

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Please make money orders (no checks or cash) payable to: BERNETTA JONES or SUN COACH LINES

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Info: 412-687-1280 or 412-680-4894

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**LHS Presents 1930s Labor/Politics**

Join the Lawrenceville Historical Society on Thursday, May 17, for “Labor and Politics in the 1930s,” and find out how Pittsburgh went from a Republican stronghold to a Democratic bastion, Dr. Eric Davin, Professor of History at the University of Pittsburgh, is the invited speaker. The event is free, and it’s happening at Canterbury Place, McCoy Auditorium (1st floor), 310 Fisk Street, Lawrenceville. Starting time is 7 p.m. For information, e-mail info@LHS15201.org.

**New Bethel Church Free Tutoring**

New Bethel Church is looking for students in grades 1 through 9 who require tutoring and homework help in math, reading, and language arts during the school year. The free tutoring takes place Saturdays from 10 a.m. to noon at 221 43rd Street, Lawrenceville. Skill Builders software helps students learn at their own pace. If you can work a keyboard and need help in any of the subjects listed above, this is the place for you! Refreshments are served at the end of each session. Please contact Nicita Moses, Tutoring Administrator, at 412-728-4046 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday, or by e-mail at nicita-moses@verizon.net; or Damalie Ratley, Tutoring Instructor, at 412-605-0126.

**Morningside COGIC Penticost Service**

“The Holy Ghost” is the theme of Morningside Church of God in Christ’s Penticost Service on Sunday, May 20, at 4 p.m. The speaker will be Dr. Willa M. Johnson, Pastor Emerita. Morningside COGIC is located at 5733 Dearborn Street in Garfield. For more information, please call 412-361-9865.

**DAT’s Summer Session Registration**

Dance Alley Theater’s 8-week summer semester starts June 9, and registration by May 25 receives a $10 discount! Visit us online at www.dancealley.org and register yourself or your kids today! A wide range of creative movement classes are offered for children as young as 3 years old, including First Steps, Creative Movement, Creative Pre-Ballet and Introduction to Dance, as well as a variety of classes for tweens, teens and adults. From Modern Technique, Jazz and Ballet to Hip Hop, Salsa and Middle Eastern Dance to the popular Pilates classes, Dance Alley Theater has something for everyone. This semester we’re also offering three new classes in Irish Step Dancing for kids and adults - no experience necessary! Get great exercise and enjoy moving to traditional and contemporary Irish music as you learn a variety of movements and proper technique for reels, jigs, slip jigs, and figure (or team) dancing! All dance and movement classes are taught in a fun, creative and uniquely non-competitive environment with seasoned master teachers, often with live accompaniment, at DAT’s studios at 5530 Penn Avenue, in Friendship/East Liberty. For more information, please call 412-363-4321.

**Grow Your Own Food!**

Plots are available in two spots on Dearborn St. for those wishing to garden. Youth are especially welcome. The ground will be turned over for you. Some tools will be made available. Some seeds and seedlings will be provided from last year, but feel free to purchase your own. Why not grow your own fresh vegetables, get a little exercise, and watch Mother Nature do her thing? Call Tim at 412-661-0805 for questions, encouragement, gardening tips or to reserve a plot.

**Young Mothers Gathering**

The Parish Nurse Ministry of Our Lady of the Angels Parish cordially invites you to attend “A Gathering of Young Mothers” from our community. The event will take place on Saturday, May 12, from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the Holy Family Social Hall, 256 44th Street. The free gathering includes continental breakfast, a speaker, and a Mother’s Day remembrance. Free child care is available in the Fingerprints Day Care Center. Please register by May 4 by calling Linda at 412-828-2850 or Joan at 412-781-4133.

**Valley View Church Town Hall Meeting and Community Day**

At Valley View Church, we believe Jesus has called us to be a community church, to love and serve and work for the renewal and restoration of our neighborhood, Garfield. Therefore, we are hosting a Town Hall style meeting from 7:30 p.m., Thursday, May 10, at Valley View (corner of Aiken and Black). We want to listen to the many concerned voices of our community. Please come and share. There will be light refreshments! Any questions, please call the church at 412-361-0870 or Rev. Chad Collins at 412-708-6158. Also, come and worship with us on Sunday, May 6, at 11:00 a.m. as we listen to God speak to us concerning our community Garfield.

**Earthen Vessels Summer Day Camp**

Seeds of Hope Church, Earthen Vessels Outreach announces the 6th year of Summer Day Camp (located in the Garfield, Bloomfield, Friendship area). Six weeks 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday -Friday June 18-July 28. Camp includes hot breakfast and lunch. Morning program includes Bible, math, reading and computers. Afternoon includes swimming, tennis, soccer, basketball, recreational activities, arts and crafts etc. Examples of some field trips include bowling, Idlewild, Pittsburgh Zoo and Science Museum. Cost is $120- $300 for the entire summer (based on a sliding scale). After-camp academic day care provided $20 weekly. Call Ms. Marilyn 412-414-2993 for registration. Special thanks to the Grable Foundation for their support.

**Volunteers Needed for “Off the Floor”**

Off the Floor Pittsburgh is a ministry dedicated to eradicating poverty in the Pittsburgh area by providing the most basic need of all, food. We offer families of food items and kitchen utensils to families who are eating and sleeping on the floor. St. Andrews Church has a small team of men dedicated to doing an occasional Saturday pick-up and delivery job for this project, but we could use a few more volunteers from the neighborhood because not everyone can make it each time there is a call for our services. Membership in St. Andrews is not required. For more information and/or to sign up for the team, please contact Al Mann, 412-661-5947.

**Friendship Flower & Folk Festival**

Friendship Preservation Group and Friendship Development Associates are once again co-sponsoring the Friendship Flower and Folk Festival (F4) on Saturday, May 5th. For more information, please call Baum Grove (corner of Rooft and Fairmont). Locally grown flowering annuals and perennials, herbs and vegetables will be for sale – proceeds support maintenance of Baum Grove, Friendship’s own greenspace. There will be music, gourmet food, storytelling, and seedlings will be provided. Some seedlings will be provided from last year, but feel free to purchase your own. Why not grow your own fresh vegetables, get a little exercise, and watch Mother Nature do her thing? Call Julie Grove, Neighborhood Environment Chairperson, with questions: 412-660-1210.

**Spring Cleaning in Friendship**

Is the garden ready? Weed and mulch Baum Grove for Friendship Folk & Flower Festival, Saturday, May 5, 8a.m. – noon. Meet at Baum Grove, and please bring gardening tools and gloves. Coffee and bagels for the early birds! Please contact Julie Grove, Neighborhood Environment Chairperson, with questions: 412-660-1210.

**Pittsburgh Dance Arts Summer Classes**

Summer Classes in Dance, Fitness, and Kids Musical Theatre! Don’t miss a beat with ongoing classes throughout the summer. Great time for Beginners to start, Advanced students to work on technique, and everyone to get in great shape physically and creatively. Starting in June, new classes for Beginner Ballet and Super-Fit (part Pilates, part Calisthenics), as well as Tap, Jazz, Pilates, Belly Dance, Kids Musical Theatre. Please go to our website at www.pgh-dance for a complete list of schedules and rates, or call us at 412-681-7523. Conveniently located at 4059 Penn Ave. near Main Street.

**Earthend Vessels Summer Day Camp**

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**Panic-Anxiety / Depression Support Group**

A panic-anxiety / depression support group meets the first Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. at U.C.P. Community Center, 4638 Centre Avenue at Neville Street in Oakland. For information, call 412-255-1155, or just drop by. NO FEE.

**A Flavor of the East End Fundraiser**

East End Cooperative Ministry (EECM) invites the public to the first annual awareness and fundraising event. A Flavor of the East End – which is being held June 2, 2007, from 7 – 10 PM at the Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium – Water’s Edge. The purpose of this event is to raise community awareness about EECM’s mission as well as support its programming. The evening will feature “grazing stations” with a variety of delicious small plate appetizers, lively music by Brad Yoder and Company, fun and furry polar bears, and a silent auction with fabulous items up for bidding! The honorary Co-Chair persons are Mayor and Mrs. Luke Ravenstahl and Mr. and Mrs. Dan Onorato. Sponsored in part by Federal Home Loan Bank, Gateway Health Plan, Giant Eagle Market District, Mellon Financial Corporation, National City Bank, Dollar Bank and Mistick Construction, the evening promises to be a fun filled time. See the new polar bear exhibit while helping the most vulnera- ble members in our community. Tickets to A Flavor of the East End are $75 per person before May 15th and $85 per person after that date. Please join us in our
BULLETIN BOARD

**SONLIGHT ACADEMY SUMMER PROGRAM**
SonLight Academy is a not-for-profit organization that provides childcare for children ages 6 to 12 years old. SonLight Academy’s goal is to provide safe and affordable childcare that is fun and educational. Currently registration are being received for the summer program that begins June 11 and ends August 24. The hours of operation are 6:30 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday thru Friday and the cost is $75 per child per week.

**Glass Action Job Training Opportunity**
Glass Action is a stained glass restoration social enterprise that will employ low-income individuals in the art of stained glass restoration. We will target historic structures in need of stained glass restoration that may not be able to afford going-rate restoration and contract with them on an application-based sliding scale. Glass Action will promote historic preservation, community and economic development and job creation and training. We are issuing a call for applications from ex-offenders who are interested in FT employment with benefits. Prospective employees must have demonstrated a commitment to recycling, employment and teamwork. Basic skills in stained glass restoration are required, though people who are good with their hands and able to learn new skills in manual labor are preferred. Please send resumes, references and cover letters to: Glass Action, Union Project, 801 N. Negley Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15206 Fax: 412-363-1216.

**Garfield Family Support Center**
The Garfield Family Support Center provides free services to parents of young children to keep them abreast of their early childhood developmental expectations, as well as having the opportunity to enhance their parenting skills. The Support Center is a place in the community for parents and children to come together to share, support one another and learn about their community’s resources and special events. The mission of the Garfield Family Support Center is to provide support and guidance to families living in the Garfield community. The Support Center will focus on bringing families together to promote unity, leadership and awareness of the Garfield community. All Garfield residents who have children ages 0-5 years will be offered this free program and a full spectrum of services will also be available to school age children including homework and tutoring assistance. In addition, vocational training, educational programming and recreational activities will also be offered to teens and young adults. The Garfield Family Support Center offers the following services: • Home visits for individual parents w/ Children ages 0-5 years • Child development activities • Family Goal plans • Parent to Parent interaction groups • Parent and child play interaction groups • Child development screenings • Health Insurance assistance • Computer classes for parents and children • Parent and child read to succeed program • Education and Employment and Career assistance • Action Lab • Conference lab for parent and group meetings • Health and Child care information • Food Bank • Family referral services to community • Human and Social services. How do you sign up for these great programs here at Garfield Family Support Center? For more information about the Garfield Family Support Center, contact us at 412-661-9560 or just stop by the Garfield Family Support Center located at 5315 Hillcrest Street in Garfield.

**CELEBRATE LIFE, CELEBRATE ART**
Persad Center hosts its 19th annual Celebrate Life, Celebrate Art benefit auction at the Carnegie Museum of Art in Oakland on Monday, May 14. Presented by title sponsor University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC), the event features both a silent and verbal auction with over 175 pieces of original artwork and special Art of Living packages including theater weekends and spa treatments. The auction serves as Persad’s largest fundraisers of the year and typically draws over 200 attendees ranging from corporate and business leaders to art collectors; gay and lesbian community members; professionals of all ages, and over 200 regional, national and internationally contributing artists. All proceeds from the evening support Persad’s unique counseling, wellness, education and research programs. Among the works to be sold in the verbal auction is Marcel Mouley’s internationally renowned “Nature Morte Aux Deux Instruments,” a colorful lithograph donated by Wentworth Gallery in Florida. Mouley is the last living student of Pablo Picasso and his work is in the permanent collection of 22 museums including the Museum of Modern Art in Paris, Museum of Modern Art in Japan, Museum of Modern Art in Helsinki, Museum of Geneva, and Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris. Additional information can be found at www.persadcenter.org. To purchase tickets to Celebrate Life, Celebrate Art, call 412-441-9786, ext 313 or visit www.persadcenter.org.

**L’VILLE SPRING CLEANING & FLOWER PLANTING**
The Lawrenceville community will celebrate Spring by planting flowers in its three volunteer-maintained community gardens at the 40th Street Bridge, the intersection of 48th and Butler, and the intersection of 57th and Butler. On May 19 from 9 a.m. to noon. The Lawrenceville community will also plant flowers in its Penn Main District Garden at the intersection of Penn Avenue and Friendship Avenue on May 7 from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. Volunteers will meet at 4825 Butler Street at 9 a.m. to receive instructions. On May 19 planting and divide into teams to plant flowers in each bed. The beds will have been tilled and mulched beforehand by the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy. We will also be holding a neighborhood-wide clean up at the same time as the flower planting. Volunteers interested in eradicating litter from the streets of Lawrenceville can meet at the same place and same time as gardening volunteers.

Anyone who is interested in helping with this effort can meet up on the morning of the May 19 event, or email jesse@lawrencevillecorp.com for more details. The annual garden planting is part of Lawrenceville’s Clean Streets program, which is an initiative to keep the streets of Lawrenceville clean and attractive by engaging both businesses and residents. This year, community clean-up days will be held the third Saturday of every month from April through October to pick up trash in high-litter areas. These clean-up days are sponsored by Lawrenceville Corporation, Lawrenceville United, and Councilman Ken Bouchard. The community gardening is a joint effort of Lawrenceville Corporation, Lawrenceville United, and the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy.
her. She told me that although she was not bi-polar, she thought I was speaking just to her that day. She came to me explaining that she literally could not move inside of her home because it was so full of stuff but her challenge was that she was so busy she did not have time to clean the house or purge any of the unnecessary items and this was making her crazy. At our first session together I had her tell me a little about how she spent her day. After listening to her talk nonstop for about 15 minutes about how much she had to do and how none of it could be changed I asked her if she really wanted things to change.

To make the changes we need to learn proper planning of our hours. We MUST take our life off of autopilot. We need to commit time to doing the right things for us and not just the next thing that comes along. Most of all we need to learn to spend our time effectively not just efficiently. To spend your life effectively you must decide, what are your values? What is it that you hold dear?

Once you decide what your personal values are it is time to consciously decide what is right for you to be doing. The next step is to go about your day proactively choosing what the best activities are to keep your goals and values in alignment.

As you take these steps, it can be scary and uncomfortable at first. After all if you want what you have never had, you must do what you have never done. However, as you take the steps they will become more and more comfortable and soon, like my client, you too will be living an effective life that makes you happy and content.

Until next time, I wish you the true riches of life, peace, happiness, and time to enjoy it all.

Carol Birney is a speaker, trainer and home-based business coach. She can be reached at 412-781-8773. To find out how to attend one of her workshops, or to schedule one for your group go to www.universalor.com

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