

the Bulletin

A publication of the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

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*Serving Bloomfield, Friendship, Garfield,
East Liberty, and Lawrenceville since 1975*

Zoning Board green-lights new bank branch for Garfield gateway

By Joe Reuben *Bulletin contributor*

Garfield - Another bank branch is coming to the intersection of Penn and Negley Avenues thanks to a decision rendered on Jul. 28 by the city's Zoning Board of Adjustment.

Following a 3-0 vote, the board granted two variances that First National Bank (FNB) was seeking in order to build a new office, complete with seven parking spaces and a drive-thru window.

The branch office building will occupy only 2,100 sq. ft. of a land parcel that is over 17,000 sq. ft. in size. In meetings this year with representatives of the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC) and the Friendship Community Group (FCG), the owners of the land parcel were asked to consider putting a more substantial build-

See **First National Bank** | page 2



ABOVE: Local musician Ivory Eddins performs at Garfield's National Night Out event on Tuesday, Aug. 2. Eddins became familiar with the acoustics of N. Pacific Avenue as a vendor at the Garfield Night Market. See more of the action on page 10. Photo by Carlee Benhart Kukula.

Local resident's journey proves homeownership has no age limit

By Elizabeth Sensky *East Liberty Development, Inc.*

East Liberty - Joan King's first idea of homeownership came straight from the traditional script: marry a man, settle down, and then buy a house.

"I was raised at a time," King said, "when the assumption was that I would have a husband with money, and we would have a house together. The specifics of that were vague, but that's what women did."

However, as she shared, "That's not how it turned out." Instead, at the age of 65 and with a limited, fixed income, she is now the proud owner of a two-bedroom,

one-bath home in East Liberty's Enright Court.

King's journey to homeownership was unconventional. With a lot of dedication - and some help from ELDI, LifeVenture Real Estate Solutions, the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh (URA), Catapult Greater Pittsburgh, the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh (HACP), and First Commonwealth Bank - she was able to realize her dream.

It all started a few years back when King

See **Homeownership** | page 7



ABOVE: Representatives from the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation and State Rep. Martell Covington's office gather to celebrate the debut of Healcrest Green. Turn to page 12 to get all the details on this protected green space in Garfield. Photo by Madeline Weiss.

- PAGE 8 - *HOW 'LITTLE ITALY DAYS' DISTRACTS
MANY FROM CHALLENGES AHEAD*

*INCLUSIONARY ZONING HITS
ROADBLOCK IN CITY'S EAST END*

- PAGE 14 -

First National Bank *continued from page 1*

ing on what is a very prominent corner – a gateway between various East End neighborhoods.

Brian Gumberg, representing GIG 1 LP [the property's owner], said it was not feasible to build a bigger structure because of what he contended were the site's "limitations."

The seven parking spaces allotted for the bank's customers, Gumberg said, were the most that the site could provide and, if a second or third story were added above the bank, there would not be enough spaces for everyone to park.

Gumberg also noted that he had promised additional parking spaces to NTB [a Penn Avenue tenant adjacent to the site] that had still not been delivered.

A new subdivision of the site was in the works, he said, to fulfill that commitment; this subdivision would further deprive the corner lot of the parking spaces needed for any upper-story tenant(s).

In response to suggestions from community representatives, FNB made a number of changes to the original site plan for the project. FCG representatives expressed concern about the bank's plans to feature

a drive-thru window.

They contended this would add to the number of cars exiting from the site onto Penn Avenue.

Late last year, out of concern for pedestrian safety, the city adopted an ordinance that barred banks and other retailers from installing drive-thru lanes in neighborhood commercial districts. An FNB representative, Charlie Casalnova, said the drive-thru lane was essential to the bank achieving the profit line envisioned for the branch.

At the Jul. 28 hearing before the zoning board, FCG representative Jennifer Haven spoke in opposition to the granting of the variance, saying it would place the project at odds with the new city ordinance. The BGC's Rick Swartz told the board that his group supported the granting of the variance.

The bank submitted a transportation study performed by David E. Wooster & Associates, which concluded that the drive-thru lane would not have a significant impact on traffic in the area surrounding the future branch office.

Some of the changes that the bank did

embrace include more landscaping on all sides of the site, a narrowing of the driveway [from 24' to 13.5 ft. in width] leading out onto Penn Avenue, and decorative metal fencing that will run alongside N. Negley Avenue.

A bike rack and pedestrian bench will be installed in front of the bank, which will face Penn Avenue, and an ATM will be housed in the lobby of the new facility.

FNB also pledged that its existing branch offices in East Liberty and Bloomfield will remain open indefinitely.

In the aftermath of the hearing, representatives from both the FCG and the BGC said that they want to see guidelines put in place for future developments along Penn and Negley Avenues – rules that both groups, as well as other stakeholders in the area, can support.

They convened a preliminary meeting to explore this topic on Jul. 14 at the BGC offices (113 N. Pacific Ave.) in Garfield; a follow-up meeting is set for Thursday, Sept. 8, at 11:30 a.m.

Readers interested in joining these discussions may contact Carlee Kukula at Carlee@bloomfield-garfield.org. ♦




ABOVE: A rendering of the proposed First National Bank (FNB) branch office at the corner of Penn & Negley Aves. Graphic courtesy of FNB.

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Jory Strothers joins 'Team ENEC'



ABOVE: Musician/performer/educator Jory Strothers looks to help people find work in his new position at the ENEC. Photo courtesy of Jory Strothers.

Hey, my name is Jory Strothers and I'm the new employment specialist at the Eastside Neighborhood Employment Center (ENEC, located on the lower level of 113 N. Pacific Ave.) in Garfield.

The best thing about my job is that I get to help other people find jobs.

From my first job with a neighboring nonprofit organization to my work teaching students how to creatively express their feelings, I have always tried to give back to the local community.

I'm 21 years old, born in the Garfield neighborhood and currently residing in the Hill District. It's funny that I'm back in the neighborhood where I was born and raised - especially doing things like performing, creating, and educating. On a new journey, there's an opportunity waiting for me to be an open resource.

I've always believed that, with the right support, you can do any task without difficulty or stress. Being a great friend extends the bridges you build with people, but it's currently not as easy to ask for help - especially if you're a black man in America. Figuring out how to make your dreams come true while living in this harsh reality is something that many people - myself included - have struggled with in these times.

We recently dealt with the COVID outbreak and lockdown. During that time of isolation, I discovered that I thrive in community; it's hard to maneuver as a helping hand when you have to be six feet away. I hope that in my work with the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation and ENEC, I get to learn how to be a stronger vessel for the place I call home and, later on, for the world.

- Jory Strothers, ENEC Employment Specialist ♦

Garfield 'State of the Neighborhood' Meeting

The BGC wants to hear from local residents like you!

Things are changing quickly here in Garfield. We invite you to share your neighborly visions and concerns at the BGC offices (113 N. Pacific Ave.) on Tuesday, Sept. 6, at 6 p.m.

To RSVP for the meeting, email (carlee@bloomfield-garfield.org) or call 412-441-6950 (ext. 117).

the Bulletin

Serving Pittsburgh's
East End neighborhoods
since 1975

with the mission of reporting on issues affecting underserved communities and facilitating local residents' exchange of ideas.

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- Deadline for the October edition is Friday, Sept. 16th -

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Board Meetings are held by the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation at 6:30 p.m. on the second Monday of each month, and are open to the public. For more details, email Pam@Bloomfield-Garfield.org.

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

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Bloomfield Saturday Market celebrates 'Dog Days of Summer'

By Heather Hanus Bloomfield Development Corporation

Insight/Bloomfield – This summer, anyone who visited the Bloomfield Saturday Market was able to enjoy the sight of local produce, the smell of fresh cut flowers, the taste of still-sizzling food, and - of course - the dogs.

The Saturday Market was absolutely teeming with good little canines, all of whom

were remarkably photogenic; it has become a great summer spot for dog- and people-watching alike. On Jun. 18, the market formally celebrated its furry pals with "Dog Day." A sanctuary for older dogs [Senior Hearts Rescue & Renewal] brought a cadre of adoptable, aging friends to Liberty Ave. for the day.

Among the exciting new vendors this summer: a grower called "Pittsburgh Greens" who sell greens harvested very soon after sprouting; Breadcrumb, a purveyor of focaccia, pizza, and sandwiches; Garfield-based Two Frays Brewing, which sells 4-packs of beer to-go; the coffee creators at Redstart Roasters, who roast and brew coffee beans that were grown in a way that does not uproot bird habitats; Millvale-based distillers Lucky Sign spirits; and, most recently, Mexican street food chefs from El Colibri.

These new vendors joined the market during its busiest season on record, with an average of 1,500 customers passing through every Saturday.

Peace of Time Wellness, a returning vendor based in Bloomfield, stands out at the Market in that they do not sell any goods. Instead, once a month, they arrive onsite

to offer education around trauma healing & stress management, as well as occasionally providing free, ten-minute chair massages from a licensed massage therapist.

This year, Bloomfield Development Corporation, the nonprofit owners and operators of the Saturday Market, expanded the number of scholarships - granted to first-time vendors who are Black, Indigenous, or people of color - to three per season. These scholarships, which each fund 75% of a vendor's seasonal fees, promote equity amongst market vendors.

As the season progresses, the market will have no shortage of vendors, music, and special programming.

Mark your calendars for Oct. 8, when West Penn Hospital/Allegheny Health Network will bring Dr. Natalie Gentile to the market to administer flu shots, with no appointment needed.

On Oct. 15, the market will host a blood drive [make an appointment at vitalant.org] to help address the critical plasma shortage. Through the remainder of the season, which ends on Nov. 19, a local group will also be onsite to help register people to vote.


To learn more about all the delicious food, and wagging friends, that the market has to offer, please visit bloomfieldpgh.org/bloomfield-saturday-market. ♦



ABOVE: This pooch savors the smell of foot traffic at the Bloomfield Saturday Market. Photo courtesy of Heather Hanus.



ABOVE: A dog picks up a few items at the market while taking their human out for a walk on Liberty Avenue. Photo courtesy of Heather Hanus.

2022  **2023**

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Garfield Night Market: summer vibes recap

BELOW: Customers flock to the Garfield Night Market for early evening shopping on Friday, Jun. 3. Photo by Andrew McKeon.



ABOVE: A local artist paints a portrait of stormy weather, minutes before rainfall on Friday, Aug. 5. Photo by Andrew McKeon.



ABOVE: Patrons begin arriving at N. Pacific Ave. on Friday, Jul. 1, to take in the summer vibes of the Garfield Night Market. Photo by Paris Wright.

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ABOVE: Frank Kurtik, curator/archivist for Heinz Chapel, will discuss the early history of Saint Margaret Hospital (as pictured above) during a free lecture, hosted by the Lawrenceville Historical Society, on Wednesday, Sept. 21. Kurtik's presentation begins at 5:30 p.m. in the Carnegie Library auditorium (279 Fisk St., Lawrenceville); no reservations needed. Photo courtesy of James Wudarczyk.



Autumn Workshop Schedule

Topics Include:

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- Anonymous, ENEC Client

CCRP student spotlight: Jaden Michalski of Garfield

By Judy Lubarski Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

Perspective/Garfield - Jaden Michalski wants to become a firefighter after he graduates from the Obama Academy of International Studies, where he is now a senior student. The Garfield resident is now returning for his second year with the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation's College & Career Readiness Program (CCRP).

This year, when Michalski asked if he could pursue an internship with a fire department, I thought it would be a great opportunity - we just had to find the right place. Once we contacted the Sharpsburg Fire Department, Chief Louis Costanza was very excited to bring on an intern. He remains eager to help our CCRP student learn the ins-and-outs of firefighting.

For two days every week, Michalski interns with the Sharpsburg FD. After being sworn into service, he now suits up for duty and responds to fire calls with the experts. This opportunity can help jump-start Michalski's career while he's still attending high school.

If you want to learn more about how CCRP can help students achieve their career goals, please contact us. Email Judy@bloomfield-garfield.org or Julia@bloomfield-garfield.org; call 412-441-6950 (ext. 124 & 125). ♦

BELOW: Garfield's own Jaden Michalski suits up for duty while interning with the Sharpsburg Fire Department. Photo courtesy of Judy Lubarski.



October Bulletin Deadline: Friday, Sept. 16th

Bulletin advertising info available at bit.ly/bulletin_ads

To receive a monthly deadline reminder, email Andrew@Bloomfield-Garfield.org

Homeownership *continued from page 1*

was living in an apartment in Wilksburg, and she found out that her landlady would be retiring and selling the property.

"I knew from friends who were in that situation a few years ago that buying was cheaper than renting, and one of those friends is in the same 'fixed income boat' that I am in," she explained. "Unfortunately, I did not come to this realization until the housing market went crazy."

Following an unsuccessful search with a realtor in early 2021, King heard about ELDI's Affordable Homeownership Opportunities program and got in touch with the organization's affordable homeownership consultant, Mary Hester, who founded LifeVenture Real Estate Solutions.

"She was looking for something afford-

able and rode past a unit in Enright Court. We toured the property and she loved it," Hester explained. "It's right on East Liberty Boulevard, and has a private backyard with a fence - it had everything she needed."

As a senior with MS, King also appreciated that the home was modern, compact, and did not have any stairs leading up to the front door.

"This makes a huge difference for me," she noted, "in terms of my disability."

Once King was sold on the house, Hester referred her to First Commonwealth Bank for mortgage pre-approval. King had good credit, so she was approved right away. However, due to her very low income, she was only approved for a fraction of the

home's purchase price.

"That meant a lot of subsidy would need to be obtained in order for Joan to be able to bridge the gap," Hester said.

Hester referred King to the URA; they began searching for possible funding sources. Meanwhile, King was staying with friends, which eventually began to wear on her.

"What was very difficult for me at that point was being in limbo and making the decision to not pursue some other avenue," King explained.

That patience would pay off. In the end, the URA and HACP were able to secure enough grants and subsidies to help King close the gap. She also received a \$7,500 grant from Catapult Greater Pittsburgh's Next Steps Fund to cover the closing and down payment costs.

As a result, she did not have to clean out her 401k and her monthly mortgage payment is less than she was paying at her previous apartment.

Even when factoring in future tax reassessments, her monthly payment should not go above the maximum that she can afford with her fixed income.

"I was in shock," King said. "It really is a huge blessing, and I'm still like 'Why me?'"

As a part of the program, she was required to take homeownership courses that prepared her to become a first-time homeowner. The courses covered topics like mortgage payments and costs, homeowners' insurance, and home inspections.

King closed on her home on March 11, with many of the partners who helped her get there attending the joyous occasion.

Caster D. Binion, executive director of HACP, joined in celebrating the achievement. "HACP is pleased to have been able to support Ms. King in her efforts to attain the dream of homeownership," he said. "We look forward to continuing our work with the URA and partner organizations like ELDI to further expand homeownership opportunities for working class Pittsburgh residents."

Alicia Majors, the URA's homeowner-ship manager, echoed these sentiments: "It's because of the successful collaboration with mission-aligned organizations like Catapult, ELDI, and HACP, that Ms. King and other city residents are becoming first-time homeowners. We look forward to continuing these partnerships to

help more city residents find an affordable home that they can be proud of."

As Joan settles into her new home, she is looking forward to transforming her side yard into a permaculture garden - one of her personal passions - and filling it with native dye plants.

"I'm really excited because, all of my life, I've looked at designing a space," she said. "And now, here's the space."

In an effort to get more involved with the East Liberty community, King said, she plans to volunteer with the Kingsley Association, which is located across the street from her home. She enjoys living in a transit hub with easy access to other East End neighborhoods. Some of her friends have already stopped by to chat on their way to the Home Depot store.

Hester hopes that King's story can serve as an example to others.

"If anyone wants to be a homeowner and build generational wealth, as Joan shows us, there's no age or timeframe that can prevent you from doing this," Hester said. "If Joan can do it, anyone can do it."

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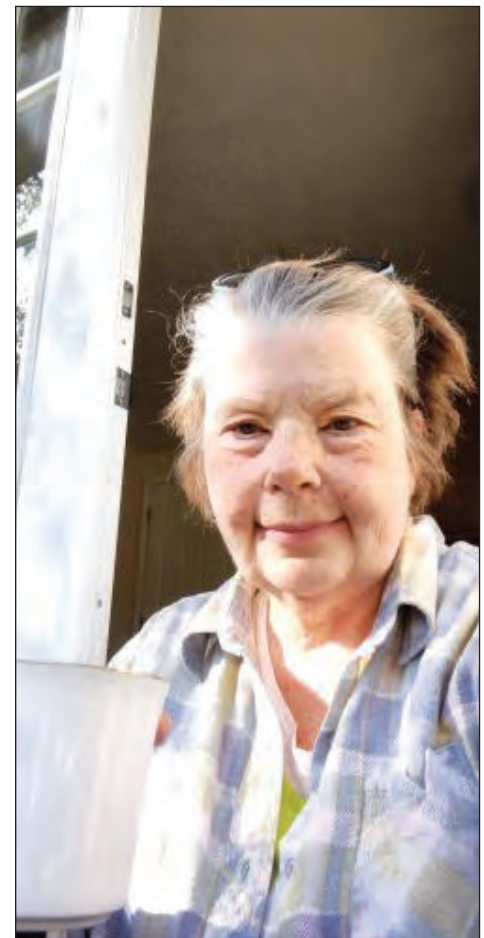
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ABOVE: Joan King enjoys a cup of coffee at her new home in East Liberty's Enright Court. Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Sensky.



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Neighborhood FOCUS

Bloomfield's Little Italy Days: big party with bigger challenges in store

By Alan Guenther *Bulletin contributor*

Perspective/Bloomfield - During an otherwise happy festival known as “Little Italy Days,” there were also signs of unrest and troubles to come in Bloomfield.

Festival organizers estimated more than 100,000 revelers flooded Liberty Avenue over the four days of festivities. Some vendors were local, but many were not. They hawked everything from “alligator sausage” to turkey legs and funnel cakes. The local bars were packed. Bar owners and pizza places reported happy customers and record profits.

David Lemak, owner of Pure Greens (4615 Liberty Ave.), said business was brisk. Little Italy Days provided “good exposure” for his new shop, which sells “lighter, healthier food.” But some local business owners were not so happy with the festival, complaining that it attracted out-of-town merchants to compete with their brick-and-mortar establishments.

Gina Merante [pictured on next page], owner of Linea Verde Green Market, Sau-salido, and Thyme Machine, closed her three stores and posted signs calling the festival “Little Idiot Days.” Her sentiment was shared by Melissa Ciccocioppo, a barista and jewelry-maker at YINZ Coffee, which stayed open.

“We all dread this weekend every year,” Ciccocioppo said. “It scares the regular

customers away.”

Some local newspapers and TV stations reported the festival was celebrating its twentieth year. But Little Italy Days has been two very different festivals over the years. A small festival was started in 2002 to benefit local merchants.

In 2012, Sal Richetti bought the rights to the festival and began producing his own event. Under his leadership, the event has grown exponentially and now attracts more than 100 vendors each year.

The price to participate can be substantial. Craft vendors must pay \$450 to set up a small table. The price can escalate to \$1,895 for a vendor to rent a 10-foot by 20-foot-wide food concession stand in the “super premium” area from Pearl Street to Mathilda Street.

Attendees Allan Willinger and Jo Schlesinger said they enjoyed the festival, as Schlesinger showed off a plate of take-out food and Willinger held up a foil-wrapped turkey leg. “I rarely come to Bloomfield,” Willinger said. But he made an exception for the festival, saying the food was “scrumptious.”

Further down the street, Caliente’s stand featured a cardboard cutout of Michelangelo’s statue of David, adorned with a strategically placed slice of pizza. Next-door,

- continued on next page -

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BELOW: Caliente Pizza & Drafthouse beckons festivalgoers with a hot & fresh take on classic art. Photo by Alan Guenther.



- continued from previous page -

Jerome Vielman, who drove up from Louisiana, sold alligator sausage on a stick. "Alligator sausage," he said, is "80 percent alligator mixed with pork," and heavily spiced, possibly to distract customers from what they are eating.

The feud between those who love the expanded festival and those who yearn for the return of the smaller, more local event has grown toxic. For example, a Facebook page for local merchants and residents, called the "Bloomfield Buzz," had to shut down its comments section. "Many people are extremely passionate about their views," said Bloomfield Buzz administrator Jason Bailey, "and this topic has nearly destroyed this group multiple times."

Throughout the festival, the contrast between the revelry and the changing conditions within the Liberty Ave. community were quite evident. On Cedarville Street, outside Pleasure Bar, politicians played nighttime bocce for the TV cameras on Thursday, Aug. 18. But just two blocks away, the Immaculate Conception Church [known as "The Mac" to locals] sat vacant, closed by declining attendance at Mass. If an appeal to reopen the church fails, what will happen to that site, one wonders. Residents are also concerned with the recent Diocese announcement that, on Sept. 5, the nearby St. Joseph Church will close temporarily for repairs.

On Liberty Avenue, behind a vendor advertising "bakin' cajun shrimp," Donatelli's Italian Food Center was closed. A poster in the window thanked customers for 90 years of patronage. Owner Russ Donatelli has said he closed his restaurant on Aug. 6 because he could not find a buyer. Many neighbors have asked what will happen to this longtime anchor storefront.

Near Liberty and Ella Streets, festivalgoers paid to park at the Community Market lot. But those parking spaces might disappear by next year, as Echo Realty and Giant Eagle plan to tear down the store, formerly home to the Shur-

'We all dread this weekend every year. It scares the regular customers away.'

- Melissa Ciccocioppo, YINZ Coffee Bloomfield

Save grocery store. In its place, the developers have promised to build a new grocery and more than 200 apartments. They have pledged that between 10 and 20 percent of the units will meet low-income "affordable housing" requirements.

But with rents skyrocketing, will any of Bloomfield's current residents be able to afford new apartments that are rented at market-rate, whatever that turns out to be? And how will the area's narrow streets handle increased traffic? Or will the proposed new apartments, shops, and stores give the area fresh energy?

While many thousands enjoyed Little Italy Days - now that the big party is over, the hard work of defining Bloomfield's future lies ahead. Big changes are coming to Donatelli's, The Mac, and the Community Market, and no amount of alligator sausage can gloss over the challenges in store for Pittsburgh's Little Italy. ♦



ABOVE: Gina Merante, who owns three small businesses in the heart of Bloomfield, stands by her decision to close up shop during Little Italy Days. Photo by Alan Guenther.

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ABOVE: Garfield's National Night Out festivities enhance the Tuesday night routine, pairing good food with al-fresco guitar on Aug. 2. Photo by Carlee Benhart Kukula.

'Vintage' senior center supports active aging in East Liberty

By Tom Sturgill *Vintage Senior Center*

East Liberty - September is "National Senior Center Month" and, after reopening from COVID-19 closures over a year ago, local centers are now alive and well.

Vintage (421 N. Highland Ave.), an East Liberty center for active adults, stayed busy during the closure by providing frozen meals to participants in need and making wellness calls for connections to community resources.

Here at Vintage, we assisted seniors struggling with technology and digital connectivity at a time when virtual gatherings and shopping became vital. We also helped seniors get vaccinated and boosted by providing coordinated appointment assistance and connecting folks with local vaccination clinics.

A year after reopening, we serve an average of 110 seniors a day, and thousands of seniors a year - many of whom travel from all over the city's East End, as well as other parts of the county. Vintage provides a safe, welcoming environment for activities like group computer classes and one-on-one technology coaching.

We also host "SilverSneakers" events - along with activities like yoga, tai chi, line dancing, quilting, watercolor painting, card playing, and billiards. Vintage can help all seniors in their quest for active aging. Call 412-361-5003 (ext. 104) to learn more. ♦

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5th Annual History Event "Music of Lawrenceville" September 18, 2022 ~ 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.



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237 37th Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15201
Phone: 412-621-2720

1:30 p.m. - Known as the father of American music, Lawrenceville native Stephen Foster is the focus of our first two presentations. A few of his most popular songs will be performed by The Wayward Companions, a small group of musicians in 19th century period dress.

2:30 p.m. - As Project Coordinator at the Center for American Music, University of Pittsburgh Library System and Artist Lecturer at Carnegie Mellon University, Dr. Christopher Lynch has vast experience with the Foster Museum and Archives. Such knowledge is sure to please our audience.

3:30 p.m. - Another famous musician born in Lawrenceville, Billy May, a composer, arranger, trumpeter, and band leader was a two-time Grammy Award winner and an inductee in the Big Band and Jazz Halls of Fame. Mike Plaskett, producer and co-host of the Rhythm Sweet & Hot show on 90.5 FM WESA has worked in radio and television since 1958. His background provides the expertise to introduce us to May - his music and his life.

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Face Masks recommended, follow CDC guidelines.

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KST's Alloy School encourages neighbors to explore theater & dance

By Arinola Bejide *Kelly Strayhorn Theater*

Insight/East Liberty – The Kelly Strayhorn Theater's (KST) Alloy School invites local youths, adults, and families to express their individuality, gender expressions, and culture through movement.

The Alloy School offers an opportunity to tap into your body's creative side - all year long - with dance and movement in a non-competitive environment, one that is welcoming of all skill levels. This includes a four-week session in the summer, an eight-week session starting in the fall, and an eight-week session each spring. One of The Alloy School's main goals is to create a safe space where we can build relationships within the community and educate via multiple art forms. The school provides a comfortable and engaging space for discovery, creativity, socializing and expression.

Every Saturday during the summer months, professional teaching artists guide and instruct 50-minute sessions at KST's Alloy Studios (5530 Penn Ave.) in Friendship. From toddlers to seniors, all are welcome to engage.

Classes this summer include "Creative Play: Water World" with Taylor Couch, for ages 6 and under; "Jazz Ballet" with LaTrea Rembert, for ages 6 to 14; "Hip Hop" with Aubrey Lutrell, for all ages; "Capoeira" with José Pérez IV, for ages 10 and up; "West African Dance & Drum" with Ebony Castaphney, accompanied by Yamoussa Camara; and "DanceFit" with Ethan Gwynn, for ages 18 and above. Every class is carefully formulated to teach some new dance moves while simultaneously educating participants about the significant cultural roots of these different styles.

At the conclusion of each session, participants have an opportunity to showcase everything they have learned to a live audience on KST's main stage (5941 Penn Ave.) in East Liberty. During the showcase, each class not only performs, but also presents a brief recap of their experiences learning dance at The Alloy School. The teaching artists invite the audience to be interactive and help create a vibrant collective experience. A celebratory "Let's Move! A Family Dance Party" ends things on a festive note with family-friendly beats and community crafts in the KST lobby.

"We're breaking down the stereotypical perception of what theater is by breaking down



ABOVE: Dancers of all ages perform at KST's Alloy School Showcase & Family Dance Party. Photo courtesy of Arinola Bejide.

the fourth wall...inviting people in and making it a collective experience," Simon Phillips, education coordinator at The Alloy School, explained. "The learning that occurs, the fun that we have - it's not only important to the community members in the audience. It's also important for the community members that participate in the school's [educational activities]. By engaging in these sessions, they are exposed to the many benefits of dance & movement, and different styles that are mediums of self-expression."

Registration starts at \$10 /class. To watch the showcase, you can "Pay What Moves You" anywhere from \$5 - \$20. For more information, visit kelly-strayhorn.org or contact Simon Phillips at simon@kelly-strayhorn.org and 412-363-3000 x312. ♦

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Healcrest Green makes Garfield debut

By Madeline Weiss Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

Insight/Garfield - On Aug. 12, the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC) celebrated the acquisition of the Healcrest Green site by Allegheny Land Trust, as well as the hard work neighbors have done to build a walking trail for everyone to enjoy. There is a lot that still needs to be completed at Healcrest Green, like building some benches and tables, working on invasive species management, and doing lots of planting. But the space remains open to the public and ready for action.

Garfield residents who attended the celebration were able to check out the scenery along the new trail and have some burgers & hot dogs - cooked by our esteemed ENEC Coordinator, Paris Wright. We also said a heartfelt goodbye to our superhuman intern, Lauren Chin, who worked [tirelessly] with the BGC over the summer.

By this time next year, we hope to have vegetables planted in a small teaching garden, new trees and native plants in the ground, and some more gathering/picnic areas where people can relax and socialize.

In partnership with the Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania, the BGC will plant a pollinator garden in early October. We'll also host a tree planting with TreeVitalize, and undertake knotweed management - in addition to building beds and prepping the land for perennials to come up next spring. The BGC will post more details about these efforts on Facebook, via our website [bloomfield-garfield.org], and on local flyers.

While we have much to do at Healcrest Green, our success so far bodes well for future conservation of land that can remain permanently undeveloped and public. Please stop by the site (at the corner of N. Pacific Ave. & Hillcrest St.) for a breath of fresh air, a bit of shade, and plenty of inspiration for future projects in the neighborhood.

To get updates about events, workshops, volunteer opportunities, and Greenzone Committee meetings, please sign up at forms.gle/VJXCC6CwGP1BZGAcA. ♦



ABOVE: Garfield Greenzone supporters gather on Aug. 12 to celebrate the construction of a new trail at Healcrest Green. Photo by Madeline Weiss.

MATCHING GRANTS FOR LOW-INCOME HOMEOWNERS

The Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC) has a limited amount of funding that it can use to help homeowners [earning less than \$50,000 annually] make some much-needed repairs to their properties.

Each homeowner is asked to pay what they can towards the cost of the repairs. That contribution needs to be a minimum of one-third of the cost. The BGC can cover the remainder with a grant of up to \$1,200, paid to the contractor that the homeowner selects to do the work. Homeowners have used the funds to stop roof leaks, replace windows, fix steps, repair furnaces, and tighten up holes in foundation walls.

Participation is limited to homeowners living in the city's Garfield, Bloomfield, and Friendship neighborhoods. To obtain an application for the matching grant program, please email the BGC's Rick Swartz (ricks@bloomfield-garfield.org) or call 412-441-6950 (ext. 111).



LOCAL REAL ESTATE BLOTTER

- *Bloomfield, Friendship, Garfield, East Liberty, Lawrenceville, & Stanton Heights* -

Real Estate Sales for the month of June 2022

Compiled by Lillian Denhardt, Residential Realtor

Bloomfield

Allison M Fromm to David John Jr & Franceska V Barton at 424 S. Pacific Ave. for \$671,000.

Allyson Garcia to Michael Scalise at 127 Pearl St. for \$356,500.

Allyson K Paracat to Dana L Townsend at 4080 Howley St. for \$303,000.

Christopher J & Stephanie A Albert to Suzanne Templer at 212 S. Millvale Ave. for \$715,000.

Derek A Cornman to Nicole Marie Van Wagenen at 206 Taylor St. for \$400,000.

Edward Ross to Jonathan McCreary at 4625 Friendship Ave. for \$290,000.

Emidio Deiullis to Vicki & Christos Rigas at 420 S. Aiken Ave. Unit B1 for \$193,555.

Gerard & Denise McGrogan to Peanut Capital LLC at 230 Morewood Ave. for \$260,000.

Hao LLC Wing- to 412 Iron Triangle LLC at 5156 Cypress St. for \$420,000.

Jeffrey & Willow Moskyok to David A & Abigail R G Verret at 224 S. Millvale Ave. for \$560,000.

Jessica L Klein to Jeffrey Nisenoff at 115 Gross St. for \$345,000.

Jonathan Greene to 44 Wakefield LLC at 0 Lorigan St. for \$70,000.

Mafalda R Degrazia to Eleni Rokou at 237 Pearl St. for \$310,000.

Mathew Rosenblum to Harry F & Frankie Jo Kunselman at 4422 Milgate St. for \$240,000.

Phyllis Easley to Ryan M & Christine R Hrobak at 228 Edmond St. for \$320,000.

Rachel Elizabeth Gartner to Nora Zidian at 4046 Cabinet St. for \$328,000.

Robert A & Yolanda Bibee to Jawad Raouf Belkhir at 333 Cedarville St. for \$320,000.

Vincent Celender to Hollis Homes LLC at 4072 Woolslayer Way for \$110,000.

Vmrn LLC to Mark David Samber at 232 S. Millvale Ave. for \$669,000.

Waverty Properties Ltd to Dechen Lin at 403 S. Atlantic Ave. for \$507,000.

Friendship

L Gwen Dakis to Megan Mulert at 334 Stratford Ave. for \$525,000.

Garfield

East Liberty Development, Inc. to Ericka Jones at 4752 Kincaid St. for \$120,000.

Elizabeth Pantalone to Christian & Julie Knight at 5110 Dearborn St. for \$366,000.

Fadi Marwan Aboud to Thuong Linh Huynh

Nguyen at 5171 Kincaid St. for \$539,000.

JTA Enterprises LLC to Credere Investments LLC at 0 Jordan Way for \$500.

MNM Realty LLC to Alicen Mccambly at 5405 Black St. for \$450,000.

Urban Redevelopment Authority Of Pittsburgh to Christian Stamler at 0 Kincaid St. for \$9,000.

East Liberty

6290 Broad Street Realty LLC to Stella Property Group LLC at 6314 Broad St. for \$350,000.

Araucaria Properties LP to Stephen & Victoria R Kauffman at 5470 Hillcrest St. for \$385,000.

Larry E Davis to Kim Armstrong at 944 N. Sheridan Ave. for \$1.

Lorde J & Lenora J Thomas to Hiland Park Capital LLC at 6317 Saint Marie St. for \$193,980.

Margaret Ann Jones to Daniel Y Gorchynsky at 224 S. Saint Clair St. for \$215,000.

Mccoy Trust to Paul Jacob Joudrey at 542 N. Sheridan Ave. for \$769,017.

Monica T Jones to 612 N. Saint Clair St. LLC at 612 N. Saint Clair St. for \$273,414.

Rachel Ann & Justin Cornelius Coaxum to Kelsie A & Brock A Karolcik at 6320 Saint Marie St. for \$500,000.

Samantha Mccarley to Prafful Patel at 315 N. Beatty St. for \$470,000.

Lawrenceville

1301 Grandview I LLC to Luis De Jesus Fernandez at 276 38th St. for \$490,000.

3811 Associates to 24 Katz Crew LP at 3517-3519 Butler St. for \$2,745,000.

3811 Associates to 24 Katz Crew LP at 3613 Butler St. for \$2,745,000.

Alan J & Lauren Morris Mabry to Abigail Hines at 3455 Ligonier St. for \$451,000.

Associated Buildings LLC to Casey Mrazik at 5401 Berlin Way for \$278,500.

Brian T & Milica Peltz to Benjamin Ross Gilstad at 4218 Post St. for \$365,000.

Casey Patrick Mullen to Neuman Investing LLC at 4215 Geneva St. for \$225,000.

Chester Plonski to Sbs III LLC at 324 44th St. for \$410,000.

Colby-Vinekar Trust to Evelyn Atwater at 3936 Clement Way for \$339,000.

Curtis A & Catherine L Fello to Megan Eberle & Connor Haakon Hegg at 5200 Duncan St.

for \$260,000.

Daniel D & Phyllis I Renda to Abbe Depretis at 421 42nd St. for \$255,000.

David Merzin to Bosphorus Properties LLC at 3818 Butler St. for \$370,000.

Donna Jean Vareha to Alloy Real Estate LLC at 123 45th St. for \$181,600.

Gary M & Bette B Cocco to Priyan LLC at 289 40th St. for \$525,000.

Ivan S Devoren to Brendan Seamus Ahern at 715 52nd St. for \$475,000.

J2 Home Improvements LLC to Justin William Schneider at 5231 Holmes St. for \$455,000.

James A Marchione to West Deer Manor LLC at 227 45th St. for \$327,000.

James Bowen to Thomas Lorenzi at 5110 Keystone St. for \$345,000.

John W Jr & Mary Ann Lasky to Farshid Momayezi at 243 45th St. for \$705,000.

Jordan Knight to Heejae Kang at 3646 Mintwood St. for \$510,000.

Kahner I LLC to Lin Brothers Properties LLC at 5206 Butler St. for \$895,000.

Landevco LP to Pressure Chemical Co at 3419 Spruce Way for \$477,500.

Lawrenceville Lofts LLC to Angelo E & Catherine Belluccia at 3725 Butler St. Unit 508 for \$935,000.

Lawrenceville Lofts LLC to Morgan Mari Perry Newman at 3725 Butler St. Unit 307 for \$509,000.

Lawrenceville Lofts LLC to Ryan C Leckie at 3725 Butler St. Unit 306 for \$315,000.

Lawrenceville Lofts LLC to Trevor Hickey at 3725 Butler St. Unit 308 for \$449,000.

Lawrenceville Lofts LLC to Zachary Little at 3725 Butler St. Unit 506 for \$875,000.

Leslie Lewandowski to Sonya L Kohnen at 413 42nd St. for \$272,500.

Lucas Miller to Northbrook Holdings LLC at 219 Main St. for \$525,000.

Lynn Sullivan to Kelly Haller at 174 43rd St. for \$776,000.

Mark Martin Matthews to Shawn M Cregan at 3613 Charlotte St. for \$215,000.

Matthew & Julie Destefano to Abby Olsen at 271 45th St. for \$691,950.

Michael T Kappler to Megan Terrell at 5172 Carnegie St. for \$335,000.

Milestone Custom Homes LLC to Marlee Hartenstein at 143 46th St. for \$745,000.

Paul Soha to Kevin M Kean at 3614 Mintwood St. for \$310,000.

Ruth K Landau to Pressure Chemical Co at 115 34th St. for \$477,500.

Ryan C Mcnamara to Alyssa Desimone at 187 45th St. for \$465,000.

Sarah Lemanski to Kimberly E Palmer at 4932 Hatfield St. for \$350,000.

Siri & Nitant Sethi to Michael A & Maxine B Stevens Family Revocable Trust at 3411 Butler St. for \$707,649.

TS Real Estate Group LLC to Jiashen Tian at 3926 Mintwood St. for \$425,000.

VP Management LLC to Marc Patti at 4207 Bessemer St. for \$150,000.

Will S Lindquester to Robert E Marshall at 3951 Howley St. for \$505,000.

Zachary J Grieco to Kelly Lynn Bethke at 170 Lodi Way for \$340,000.

Stanton Heights

Alfonso Jr & Robin L Everett to Matthew Johnston at 1404 Hawthorne St. for \$275,000.

Amy & Derek S Wickman to Samuel Arthur Cobbett at 1120 Oglethorpe Ave. for \$210,000.

Barry Gene Baldwin Jr & Cheyenne Moore to Robert L Naugle at 1121 Normahill Dr for \$167,500.

Linda Laura & Gregory Paul Maynes to Rothenberg Revocable Trust at 156 56th St. for \$720,000.

Norman G & Diane Lynn Auvil to Nezhir Ergin Ozkucur at 1130 Downlook St. for \$357,500.

Reyi A Negron to Thomas Keady at 1453 Woodbine St. for \$320,000.

Yuk Fong Lee to Breanna Kebort at 5239 Stanton Ave. for \$475,000.

This column, which uses data from Allegheny County's online portal, contains occasional errors. If something looks off, please let us know. Feel free to call with questions, or just to chat, about real estate in your neighborhood. Contact Lillian at lillian@agent-lillian.com or 412-335-6068. ♦

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Local groups make case for inclusionary zoning & affordable housing

A Message from Lawrenceville United, Bloomfield Development Corporation, Polish Hill Civic Association, Hill District Consensus Group, and the Fair Housing Partnership

Lawrenceville - Pittsburgh is facing an escalating crisis in housing affordability. In response, the City [of Pittsburgh] passed an inclusionary zoning ordinance this spring. The ordinance requires new, large developments to set aside units that are affordable to working-class residents in city neighborhoods, where housing costs are increasing rapidly.

The Builders Association of Metropolitan Pittsburgh, a special interest group that has fought a number of fair and affordable housing policies, is seeking to block this law in federal court; they filed a lawsuit to that effect on May 12.

Today, the people of Pittsburgh are fighting back.

Organizations representing neighborhoods where housing costs are soaring filed a motion to intervene in the case and defend inclusionary zoning, affordable housing, and diverse communities.

The organizations seeking to intervene in the case - Lawrenceville United (LU), the Bloomfield Development Corporation, the Polish Hill Civic Association, the Hill District Consensus Group, and the Fair Housing Partnership - are represented by: the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, Community Justice Project, and the Public Interest Law Center.

LU, a nonprofit community organization representing residents in one of Pittsburgh's most gentrifying neighborhoods, led a grassroots campaign [beginning in 2018] to adopt inclusionary zoning after multiple studies of Pittsburgh's housing needs identified it as a proven policy to help create mixed-income communities.

According to a 2021 report by Grounded Solutions, over 700 municipalities have established inclusionary housing programs.

"This ordinance came from a grassroots effort of residents coming together to shape the future of our community," Dave Breingan, LU's Executive Director, said. "Inclusionary zoning is a tried-and-true tool to help us maintain a diverse, mixed-income community, and this ordinance is an example of democracy in action. We are proud to join the

City of Pittsburgh in defending this legislation from special interest groups that have repeatedly shown their hostility to the self-determination of our communities and the needs of working-class families."

"The Hill District Consensus Group is dedicated to dismantling racial inequities, repairing harms, and restructuring systems to ensure equitable housing and life outcomes for those that have been systematically oppressed by the 'status quo,'" Carol Hardeman, Executive Director of the Hill District Consensus Group, explained. "We are also committed to supporting like-minded organizations that are at the forefront of advancing affordable housing standards for all people."

The organizations who filed the [Aug. 16] motion to intervene in the lawsuit work to promote affordable housing and inclusive neighborhoods.

They include representatives of the communities who will benefit from the inclusionary zoning ordinance, and organizations who advocated for the passage of the law.

The ordinance currently covers Lawrenceville, Bloomfield, and Polish Hill, and requires that any new construction - of 20 units or more - set aside at least 10% of units to be rented or sold at below-market prices for 35 years.

The federal case challenging the ordinance claims that it violates the federal constitution, and the Pennsylvania constitution, and that it could impact similar efforts to promote affordable housing, and economically & racially diverse neighborhoods, through inclusionary zoning nationwide.

Studies of inclusionary housing policies have shown that they do not stop housing production, and multiple new housing projects have successfully moved forward since the ordinance was established in Pittsburgh.

"We cannot stand idle while racial and economic segregation accelerates," Mary Beth Schluckebier, Staff Attorney at the Public Interest Law Center, said. "Our clients are standing up for a future where their communities can be home to all, not just the fortunate few who can keep up with skyrocketing housing costs."

In Pittsburgh, 40% of residents are cost-burdened - spending more than 30% of their income on housing - and one in four are paying more than half their income on a place to live, according to Regional Housing Legal Services.

The City has an estimated shortage of 8,200 housing units that are affordable to households with incomes at or below 30% of AMI.

"Over the past two decades, Pittsburgh has lost thousands of units of affordable housing, particularly in developing neighborhoods. Market-driven housing development has pushed rents higher throughout the City, and lower-income Pittsburghers are finding it harder and harder to remain in their neighborhoods. The City's Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance is an important tool to combat these trends, and the City has clear legal authority to enact and implement the Ordinance," said Kevin Quisenberry, Litigation Director at the Community Justice Project.

In the past decade, this crisis and its effects have accelerated. Between 2010 and 2019, a University of Pittsburgh study of Census data found that the city lost 10,660 Black residents - a 13.4% decline. In Polish Hill, the median home price tripled from \$70,000 to more than \$210,000 between 2015 and 2018.

Lawrenceville's ZIP code saw the second-fastest increase in housing prices in the entire United States between 2010 and 2019, according to a report from Business Times (as noted by the Pittsburgh Independent).

"It is becoming increasingly difficult for working class families to afford a home in communities across the country," Thomas Silverstein, Associate Director of the Fair Housing & Community Development Project at the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, said.

"We're proud to stand with the people of Pittsburgh," he continued, "to protect affordable housing in their neighborhoods, and are confident that the Court will recognize the Builders Association's shameful attempt to drive low-income communities, and communities of color in particular, from the city as such."

Read the full statement, including all linked content, at [LUnited.org](https://lunited.org). ♦

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ECS strengthens community partnerships in wake of COVID pandemic

By Deana Callipare *Environmental Charter School*

Insight/East End - This summer, the Environmental Charter School (ECS) attracted a diverse group of students from across the city to participate in "Camp Dragonfly," which administrators hope is the first of many summer camps.

In partnership with the YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh, the ECS district hosted six weeks of outdoor fun & learning activities for not only its own students, but also children living anywhere in the Pittsburgh area.

The camp represents one of the many ways that ECS plans to help rebuild an East End sense of community, partnership, and connectedness in response to the pandemic.

ECS promotes collaboration and, thanks

to several pre-pandemic partnerships, its students often learned by going out into the community to help solve real-world problems.

These interactions all came to an abrupt standstill about 30 months ago - when everything changed.

"Our students could barely interact with one another, let alone the local community members, but we must learn to co-exist with COVID-19," Dr. Amanda Cribbs, ECS Superintendent, said. "Hosting Camp Dragonfly was a great start to slowly integrating back into the community and providing our students the opportunity to interact with other children."

This summer, YMCA Camp Dragonfly hosted 60 children; 22% of them came

from the larger community.

The shared goal was to create a camp that reflected YMCA and ECS' commitment to out-of-doors learning, and to foster youths' curiosity around the natural environment while strengthening their social and emotional skills.

"Our district hosts various events with the growth, development, and engagement of our students as a top priority," Kristan Abeshouse, ECS manager of partnerships, family engagement, and student experience said. "However, as supporters of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, we always ask ourselves, 'how can this program reach outside our walls and benefit the greater community?'"

The district remains dedicated to ensuring a sustainable community through its work with partners like the YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh and Venture Outdoors - both of which provide ECS with afterschool programs for students in grades K-5 -and Community Kitchen, which provides food service for the district.

To further its commitment to helping students mentally and academically recover from the pandemic, ECS has enhanced its enrichment programs by investing in music, health, P.E., foreign languages, gardening, cooking, and more.

The district is also developing some of its outdoor learning spaces, which can double as an area for local residents to enjoy.

According to Cribbs, "one big question remains: 'what can we do as a community to ensure our students, our young community members, are successful and prepared to enter the post-secondary school world?' We all play a role in this work, and ECS plans to be heavily involved for both our own families and those in the surrounding community."

This year, the district plans to enhance its students' community partnership experiences during the school day. While participating in more local community events this year, ECS will continue providing quality programming for children living in the Pittsburgh area.

To learn more about the schools, please visit ecspgh.org. ♦



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BOOM Derby Car drives change, rallies around Garfield

A Message from BOOM Concepts

Garfield - BOOM Concepts is excited to partner with Most Wanted Fine Art (MWFA) to create its latest public art activation. Through its “Activist Print” temporary public art program, the BOOM team took a new approach to the public space for this special project.

Recognizing that artistic excellence comes in many forms and disciplines, the Derby Car Project engages a visual artist, a mechanic, and a derby driver to present a project that is completely authentic to American derby car culture.

The activism of this project is underscored not only by the aesthetics of a Black artist designing the car, but also by the concept of Blackness and Black identities represented in critical team roles - driver and mechanic. In a field where non-white drivers are seldom seen, the BOOM Derby Car has been able to assemble a Black core team that delivers traditional derby excitement at every race it enters.

Renowned artist and muralist Camerin “Camo” Nesbitt served as the derby car’s lead artist. While the family duo of Ty McClelland and SHOK handles all the driving, 14-year-old super-greaser Jake Birkner will work as the lead mechanic for this traveling derby team.

As a lifelong resident of the Garfield neighborhood, McClelland brings a sense of community pride to his derby car driving. His input was essential to incorporating some of the Garfield history, icons, and slogans into the vehicle’s design.

BOOM and MWFA have sponsored the BOOM Derby Car team to compete in three demolition derbies this year, including the River City Rampage (Henry, IL), the Ohio State Fair (Butler, OH) and the Iron City Nationals (New Alexandria, PA).

The Iron City Nationals will also host a “MWFA Stock-car Challenge” as one of its special heats on Sept. 10.

BOOM Concepts gives thanks to Jason Sauer, MWFA Car Club, the New Alexandria community, and the nationwide derby car community for supporting this project. Learn more about the BOOM Derby Car project at boomuniverse.co. ♦



ABOVE: Camerin ‘Camo’ Nesbitt, an artist from Homewood, spraypaints eye-popping designs onto the MWFA x BOOM Derby Car. Photo courtesy of BOOM Concepts.

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