

the Bulletin

A publication of the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

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East Liberty, and Lawrenceville since 1975*

'Progressives must act together before we all lose May 16 county election'

By Alan Guenther *Bulletin contributor*

Op-Ed

Pittsburgh - Here's a direct message to the four progressive candidates who want to replace outgoing Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald: We see you; we hear you and love your ideas, but at least three of you need to get out of the race.

Considering the Mar. 22 deadline to withdraw from the ballot in the Democratic primary election, it's just simple math. There are only so many progressively-minded voters in Allegheny County.

As you drive out of the city, you see the Trump signs start to sprout like fungus,

See **County Election** | page 2



ABOVE: Kids turn their kinetic energy into learning opportunities at Assemble (4824 Penn Ave.), where 'Makey-Makey' games teach the fundamentals of electricity and teamwork. See page 5 to learn about Garfield's free afterschool program. Photo courtesy of Dale Gaddes.



ABOVE: Greenhouses and 'greengrocers' in Larimer could jumpstart the local food economy. Read more at right. Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Sensky.

'Food21' works toward resilient food economy in Larimer

By Elizabeth Sensky *East Liberty Development, Inc.*

Larimer - Joe Bute is on an ambitious mission to transform Pittsburgh's economy. Not through the now-preferred route of "eds and meds," but rather, through something a little more tangible and familiar to us all: food.

His nonprofit organization, Food21, sees food as a vehicle to create new jobs and development, drive clean energy solutions, and improve access to fresh, nutrient-rich produce across the greater Western Atlantic Food Shed (an area spanning from Pittsburgh to Columbus, Ohio).

With sustainability as a core focus, Food21

first took inspiration from the Dutch people and their cutting-edge approach to controlled-environment agriculture. Bute and his partners thought this approach could also work in Pittsburgh, so they teamed up with People's Gas to explore the idea.

After researching the market and opportunities available, they settled on three areas of focus: fostering sustainable, local, food value chains; becoming an information hub for food economy data; and empowering local food entrepreneurs to succeed.

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*BGC NOW HIRING GARFIELD
GREENZONE COORDINATOR*

*GARFIELD COLORING BOOK
CONNECTS KIDS, LOCAL ARTISTS*

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County Election *continued from page 1*

and you realize there are lots of people out there with very different values, hoping to preserve a *status quo* that many believe has hurt a lot of people.

Sara Innamorato, Michael Lamb, Dave Fawcett, and Liv Bennett - I am talking to you. You're good people, but you can't all win. The day after the primary election on May 16, your label won't be "progressive." It will be "loser."

If you don't win, you are paving the way for a stale, Democratic Party machine-endorsed candidate like John Weinstein. I don't know Weinstein well. Maybe he has great ideas, yet he's not sharing them. An introductory campaign video [that has since been removed from the Weinstein website] showed him cradling kittens while surrounded by smiling children.

On his campaign's site, Weinstein, 59, refers to his tenure serving as the county treasurer since 1999. He says that he made it possible to pay for dog licenses online - quite the credential for a candidate for Allegheny County Executive.

Weinstein - who has collected more than \$481,000, mostly in large donations from big labor organizations - is clearly employing the frontrunner strategy of trying to offend no one and say nothing in order to get elected. Remember, if he promises nothing, that may be exactly what he delivers. Weinstein talks about "ending the divisiveness," which

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ABOVE: Eliza Gonzalez (left) presents a selection of August Wilson Archive items - that she curated for display - at the City-County building on Feb. 6. As a student in the BGC's College & Career Readiness Program, Gonzalez embraces every opportunity for professional growth. Photo courtesy of Judy Lubarski.

BELOW: John Weinstein, shown here in a campaign video with kids and kittens, is riding big campaign donations into the May 16 race to replace outgoing Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald. 'Cat's meow' screenshot courtesy of Alan Guenther.



is how someone who's been in power since the turn of the century talks about people who want county government to change. Those of us who want reforms, I guess, are just troublemakers in Weinstein's world. We want open and transparent government, we want police to be prosecuted when they use excessive force, and we want to improve the unspeakably cruel conditions at the Allegheny County Jail.

Most of us want fair rents and reasonably priced homes. One of Weinstein's biggest supporters, Phil Ameris, president of the Laborers District Council of Western Pennsylvania, said Weinstein will represent more than "a select few neighborhoods," according to a recent story in *Public Source*. He added, "I don't think people in the South Hills are interested in affordable housing."

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Now Hiring: Garfield Greenzone & Service Project Coordinator

A Message from the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

Garfield - The Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC) is seeking a qualified, experienced person to help coordinate various projects & programs in the Garfield Greenzone and Penn Avenue corridor; 30-35 hours per week. Compensation: \$22.00 per hour, with benefits.

Goal: The Garfield Greenzone & Service Project is intended to bring area residents into greater contact with their environment and natural spaces. Through various projects and programming, neighbors can enjoy new walking trails, plant gardens, participate in organized or informal recreation, and preserve green space throughout Garfield for future generations to use.

The initiative also provides a pathway for non-violent offenders to avoid incarceration by diverting offenders into community service projects - enabling them to receive training in landscaping and hone skills that could lead to actual jobs.

Job Description: This staff person reports to the BGC's Chief Operations Officer, and works with the BGC's Community Engagement & Planning Specialist to organize events and meetings, and assist with related public safety issues.

This includes working with the district magistrate system to identify individuals whom the court assigns to perform community service projects with the BGC rather than pay fines or receive jail time.

Roles & Responsibilities

- Pursue projects and implement programs that are in accordance with the Garfield Greenzone plan, and involve various individuals, organizations, and private and public agencies in executing this objective.
- Assist senior BGC staff in identifying and applying for grants, corporate sponsorships, and other sources of support needed to implement, manage, and sustain Greenzone projects and programming.
- Identify and collect pertinent data on parcels that could be eligible for acquisition by the BGC or other entities that would expand on the local community's conservation efforts.
- Develop educational programming & curricula related to conservation/management of urban, open spaces - and share this work with community members, community service participants, and students.
- Assemble volunteers, as needed, from across the community to help implement various aspects of the Greenzone Initiative, including trail-building, clean-ups, invasive species removal, tree plantings, and other beautification projects.
- Research environmental justice concepts, and find ways to integrate them into Greenzone work.
- Track the progress of the Initiative to ensure goals and objectives are being met; periodically analyze the metrics of success and accountability.
- Create and collect content, reports, visuals, and other communications materials across a variety of platforms; assist the BGC Board of Directors in gauging the success of the Initiative and in presenting those accomplishments to funders and the larger community.
- Be an ambassador/advocate for the organization at all times, engaging the public and local media to help broadcast the BGC's efforts to key audiences and constituents.
- Prepare individuals assigned by the district magistrate's courts [under the 1520 Alternative Adjudication Program] for the training and work experiences they will receive through the program.

Send resumé & cover letter to COO Pamela Schön (pam@bloomfield-garfield.org); references furnished upon request. The BGC is an Equal Opportunity Employer. ♦



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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 April edition is Friday, Mar. 17th -

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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; these monthly meetings 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-Garfield.org

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Let's talk housing: Garfield community meeting set for Mar. 23

By Rick Swartz *Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation*



ABOVE: Four new homes proposed for construction on parcels facing onto N. Aiken Avenue in Garfield. Graphic courtesy of Split Rock Real Estate.

Garfield - Valley View Presbyterian Church will host a community meeting on Thursday, March 23, for residents to discuss the changes that have taken shape in Garfield's housing market - changes that have become more evident to neighbors over the last five years. The church is located at the corner of Black Street and N. Aiken Avenue in Garfield; a light dinner will be offered at 5:30 P.M. before the meeting gets underway at 6:00 P.M.

This neighborhood-wide summit comes in the wake of proposals advanced by four different private developers over the past year, all with the intent of bringing market-rate, for-sale homes to the neighborhood. Each development will seek to sell either townhomes or detached units for prices that could range from \$500,000 to \$650,000 or more.

"With the vacant land we have available, it's possible that what we're seeing is just the tip of the iceberg," Chad Collins, the pastor at Valley View, speculated recently. "We thought now would be a good time to gather neighbors together and try to see what the larger picture holds for the community."

Affordably-priced housing is also in the wings for Garfield, as several different nonprofits are looking to build new housing that would be subsidized, either as rentals or for-sale units, for those considered "low- or moderate-income."

Together those projects, which have been profiled in recent issues of *The Bulletin*, could produce as many as 30 new homes by 2024. While that may be reassuring to many in the neighborhood, the question still remains how long that type of development will be

able to continue in the face of market-driven forces.

"We realize that nothing ever remains the same, that major change can always be right around the corner," said Garfield resident Peg Wilson. "If change is to come in the form of expensive homes to buy or rent, then we'd like to know if there are other ways for Garfield to benefit from these developments. For instance, why can't local subcontractors be hired to do some of the work on them? Can a house or two be made affordable to someone who makes less than \$60,000 a year?"

Wilson noted that developers she has met recently, at meetings sponsored by the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC) or city planning, don't seem inclined to extend themselves too far in meeting such objectives. "Certainly, if you're going to build four homes in our neighborhood, why can't you take the profits from three market-rate units, and use them to reduce the sales price on the fourth home?" she asked. "Why can't that be possible?"

In 2020, Module Design LLC brought forward a plan to build ten townhomes in the 5100 block of Rosetta Street in Garfield, using nine city-owned land parcels. Initially, it was not clear to residents if any of the units would feature reduced sales prices that would make homeownership affordable to lower-income households.

Brian Gaudio, the CEO of Module, worked with the BGC to find a way to reserve at least 25% of the homes for sale to buyers whose budgets could only afford a maximum monthly mortgage payment of \$1,400 per month or less.

In the end, Module brought the nonprofit City of Bridges Community Land Trust in as a partner in the Rosetta Street project, and it now appears that four of the homes will meet the "affordability" test. City of Bridges will need to round together the subsidies necessary to reduce the construction costs on these homes, something that Module was having a difficult time doing as a for-profit developer.

The two firms are now poised to collaborate on building two more affordably-priced

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Tany Haynes brings passion, dedication to Assemble afterschool program

By Dale Gaddes *Assemble*

Insight/Garfield - Now in its 11th year, Assemble's free afterschool program [held at 4824 Penn Ave.] has become a staple for many local families. Monday through Thursday, kids can drop in from 4-6 p.m. to participate in fun, hands-on STEAM activities (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Math) and Maker learning projects.

This year comes without precedent as Assemble welcomes its first Afterschool Coordinator: Tany Haynes. Haynes came to Assemble two years ago, starting out as a part-time teacher.

Yet three years ago, right after moving to Pittsburgh, she already knew that it was where she wanted to work. "As soon as I saw Assemble and the position, and researched what they stand for, I was like, 'That's my job. That's where I want to work,'" she explained. "I mean, to the point where I would pass Assemble and point out, like, 'I'm gonna work there.'"

Exhibiting a passion and dedication that is clear to anyone who meets her, Haynes quickly rose to a leadership position. In this new role as Afterschool Coordinator, her duties entail registration, deciding the themes of the programs, creating curriculum, deciding on guest artists and teachers, coordinating field trips, and teaching programs.

To hear Haynes speak of the program is to get an idea of just how much she loves the kids that she works with, and the sense of community they create every day in Garfield. "I've always worked with children, but I never got to create a program like this," she said. "I'm very excited to have that responsibility - and it's going to be challenging, and it's a little scary - but I'm very excited to see what could come of it."

Haynes believes in letting the afterschool kids try new things without jumping in to "fix" anything or show them exactly how to do something. "I try to encourage them, but not correct them. I tell them they can figure it out, and I give them space to have that learning moment," she said.

When her young participants are given space to try things out themselves, Haynes notes, they build confidence in their abilities. This confidence can then translate into many other parts of their lives, well beyond the walls of Assemble.

She recently enjoyed an opportunity to attend the EMPOWER conference, hosted by the Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool/Youth Development Network in Lancaster, PA. "It was really great to

connect with other OST (Out-of-School-Time) teachers," Haynes recalled. "It's a field that is often undervalued, so it was impactful to be reminded just how important these spaces are that we create outside of school."

For many afterschool participants, Assemble is the only place where they can come to really just be themselves, try out new things, and learn STEAM concepts in a hands-on, exploratory way.

It is now clear to see - more than halfway through her first year as Afterschool Coordinator - that this role is a perfect fit for Haynes. The program is thriving in the 2022-2023 school year with projects like "Makey-Makey" game creation, which has been one of her personal favorites.

Makey-Makey is a tool that teaches kids about electrical conductivity using a circuit board, alligator clips, and a USB cable, as well as everyday objects like bananas and Play-Doh. During one winter afternoon, Girls Maker Night participants created their own game and had a blast while learning about conductivity - a dream moment for Assemble afterschool.

Haynes looks forward to many more hands-on projects, and having the opportunity to make a real impact in the local community. Assemble afterschool is free and open to all kids in grades 1-9, so if you know someone who might be interested, please encourage them to stop by 4824 Penn Ave. in Garfield.

To learn more about Assemble's afterschool programs, and to register, please visit: assemblepgh.org/programs/assemble-afterschool. ♦

BELOW: Assemble Afterschool Coordinator Tany Haynes waits for her students to arrive. Photo courtesy of Assemble.



Food21 continued from page 1

The organization has launched projects all over the Pittsburgh region, partnering with everyone from members of Pittsburgh's craft beer community to the folks who launched Catapult Greater Pittsburgh's culinary incubator.

Since late 2019, Food21 has focused its attention on Larimer. The work began as a way to explore food-based opportunities in the community with the Larimer Consensus Group (LCG), and has since evolved into working with Flourishing Communities - a community organization from Sixth Mount Zion Baptist Church.

This newly-formed organization looks to repurpose the Larimer School's gym and auditorium into a community event center and celebration hall, complete with a full-service catering kitchen and engagement center.

Since the beginning of 2022, Bute and his colleagues have also worked with Flourishing Communities to plan a prototype of a new urban greenhouse and "greengrocer" nearby that can supply fresh produce to the community, year-round.

In conversation with East Liberty Development, Inc. (ELDI), Bute explains how he came to this transformative work, why food can be such a powerful tool for community development, what's in store for Larimer, and much more.

[The following conversation has been edited for space. Visit eastliberty.org for the full transcript.]

ELDI: Can you share a little background about yourself and how you got into this work?

Bute: "For the first 20 years of my professional life, I was in community development, working mostly in Chicago, with some years in the Bay Area. In 1989, I got recruited to run a development corporation on the north side of Pittsburgh called North Side Civic Development Council. After that, I worked with the Steel Valley Authority and launched what is now called the Strategic Early Warning Network - a way to head off plant closures and job losses in the State. After about six years, I left that world for private investment banking. Around 2010, I started thinking about how I had these life experiences - 50% in the world of community development and organizing and 50% in the world of business finance - and how I should find a way to put those two things together. That was the origin of Hollymead Capital, my private consulting company...

...Then, in 2017 I met a gentleman named Barry Kukovich who is now on our board. Barry was working for People's Gas at the time. He read the National Geographic article about the Dutch approach to agriculture and wanted to figure out how to get his company involved in the food economy. I told him that energy is a fundamental ingredient to building a successful

regional food system, and you have to view the food economy holistically, just like the Dutch do. He said, "That's great. Why don't you come in and tell that to my boss?" That led to us writing a white paper on the topic for People's Gas in 2018 about food production and enterprise and how that works in neighborhoods and communities. At the end of 2018, we launched Food21 of Pennsylvania and People's Gas underwrote its startup."

ELDI: What is the connection between food and community development?

Bute: "The idea is that food, whether it's in food entrepreneurship and food businesses, or it's in restaurants and manufacturing, is a great doorway for a whole lot of folks to get jobs and go to work. We live in Pittsburgh, and if you've talked to the folks downtown at the Allegheny Conference, it's all about 'eds and meds.' And then they're scratching their heads trying to figure out why nearly 40% of Black women in Pittsburgh are living in poverty. Why are these communities having such a difficult time economically? Well, because the jobs and investments that you're pouring into these industries don't create livable wages or job opportunities for a whole lot of people in the community. The data overwhelmingly shows that the majority of people that work in these jobs in the food industry are disproportionately coming from minority women households - and it's much more flexible work. It creates greater diversity, and it's also culturally significant..."

ELDI: What are the Dutch doing right that you believe we should apply to Pittsburgh?

Bute: "The Dutch were so inspirational for us because they saw the interconnectedness of everything. They didn't set out to become the world's biggest cucumber producer or the world's biggest hog producer. They approached food as an ecosystem, because their participation in the international food economy is dependent on every one of those elements. Now they're one of the leading dairy nations, not to mention meat and vegetable producers, in Europe..."

...Right after the Second World War, 60-70% of what you ate in most cities across the United States came from within about 200 miles of where you lived. Now that number is 2,000-3,000 miles on average according to the USDA, so we have a long way to go before we knit back together a resilient and sustainable food economy. That's one of the things that the pandemic really exposed - what happens when you depend on a global supply chain, which everybody thought was very resilient and robust..."

ELDI: What is Food21 working on in Larimer?

Bute: "We're working on a greenhouse project with Sixth Mount Zion Baptist Church on Larimer Avenue together with Local Dutch, an indoor growing and controlled agriculture company. What they figured out was we need to develop hydroponic growing systems that have a very small footprint and don't require a lot of advanced technology to make them work. These systems generate fresh, year-round produce of all kinds of varieties and provide that to the community through a retail outlet built on-site. So, this is a greengrocery with a greenhouse attached to it, with on-demand growing of around 150 varieties of produce.

Somebody can come in and say, 'We really want green onions.' The technology allows you to plant those green onions and harvest them in three weeks. The greenhouse creates 20 jobs, takes up a half-acre of space, and provides somewhere between 200,000 to 300,000 pounds of fresh produce every year in that one facility. To put that in perspective, two Grow Pittsburgh garden sites produce around 28,000 pounds of produce a year, according to their 2020 annual report."

ELDI: Why Larimer?

Bute: "There are a couple of reasons. Larimer is an easily overlooked community. It's been overlooked for years, not just by the city but also by the foundations and the state. They let the entire Larimer Avenue commercial district collapse, but then with all the community organization and effort that went into the Choice Neighborhoods Grant, they received a huge infusion of capital to build new affordable housing. However, they still didn't really have a strategy for the commercial district. This work helps address that... Larimer is not the end of something. It's the beginning of something - and it's really important to look at how you build a resilient community. That's really at the heart of this story, particularly after the pandemic. You can talk all you want about housing, but if folks don't have access to food on a regular basis, and they don't have a way to keep that income in the community to support them from a financial standpoint, it's problematic. This is just one more way to close the loop in terms of the outflows of cash and the opportunity for jobs and career development in this community. Those are all connected pieces." ♦

Call for Interest: Board of Directors & Committee Members

Deadline: March 15, 2023

Lawrenceville Corporation is looking for stakeholders to become more engaged in the organization as volunteers and members.



More information can be found at lvpggh.com/about/get-involved

Residential development underway in Polish Hill, applications now open

A Message from City of Bridges Community Land Trust

Polish Hill - Last October, City of Bridges Community Land Trust (CBCLT) began construction on a long-awaited affordable housing development that will create 4 new permanently affordable homes.

The Polish Hill project site, known locally as the “Fire Site” - where many of the previous structures at Brereton and Dobson Streets were destroyed by arson in 2007 - was previously owned by the Urban Redevelopment Authority’s (URA) Pittsburgh Housing Development Corporation.

The first four homes are now expected to be move-in ready early this summer.

These four homes represent the first phase of a development that will eventually bring a total of eight new homes to one of the neighborhood’s key intersections.

This project is the culmination of a process that began over four years ago to create a community-endorsed design and secure the necessary funding.

“The neighborhood has worked toward a community-centered development at this site for more than a decade,” CBCLT Executive Director Ed Nusser said, “and we are proud to help activate residents’ vision for their community.”

Since 2015, the median price of homes in Polish Hill has more than tripled to nearly \$300,000 - a cost entirely out of reach for most residents.

And since the 2007 fire, Polish Hill residents have advocated for this site to be rebuilt via community-led development and coalesced around the idea of permanently affordable home-ownership.

Two of the project’s homes will feature two bedrooms and two bathrooms apiece, with an additional two homes featuring three bedrooms and two bathrooms apiece.

The 2-bedroom homes will be each sold for \$135,000 and the 3 bedroom homes will each be sold for \$150,000; to qualify potential buyers must earn less than 80% of Area Median Income (between \$53,100 - \$75,850 annually depending on household size).

Additional down payment and closing cost support may be available for buyers from various public partners as well.

These homes will also be crafted for long-term sustainability, featuring environmentally-friendly features that CBCLT builds into all of its homes, such as Energy Star-rated appliances and energy-efficient



ABOVE: Polish Hill’s ‘Fire Site’ homes are being constructed on land that was destroyed by arson in 2007. Graphic courtesy of CBCLT.

windows.

The new homes will remain affordable in perpetuity as a feature of the land trust model, ensuring that when an owner moves on and sells their home, they will sell to another low-to-moderate income household. This allows the seller to build wealth while also helping the neighborhood remain affordable.

Additionally, two of the homes will be made a priority for low-to-moderate income populations who experience compounded housing injustice and discrimination - in-

cluding individuals with mental, physical, or developmental disabilities; individuals fleeing domestic abuse, or in addiction recovery; or HIV-positive individuals.

Construction is led by Shape Development, with project financing provided by First Commonwealth Bank, the Neighborhood Community Development Fund, the URA, Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh, and The Hillman Foundation.

To learn about eligibility requirements and apply for these homes, or any CBCLT homes, please visit cityofbridgesclt.org. ♦

COMMUNITY MEETING TO DISCUSS GARFIELD'S HOUSING FUTURE

WHEN: THURSDAY, MARCH 23, 6 PM
(Pizza & soft drinks at 5:30 PM)

WHERE: VALLEY VIEW PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
(601 N. Aiken Ave., corner of Black St.)

AGENDA: REVISIT GARFIELD'S 2030 PLAN
(The plan set goals and objectives for how Garfield should be redeveloped over a 20-year period)

Check out Garfield's 2030 plan by visiting the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation website (bloomfield-garfield.org)



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Neighborhood FOCUS

Conservatorship helping Bloomfield retain affordable housing options

By Christina Howell Bloomfield Development Corporation

Bloomfield - At the corner of Lorigan and Pearl Streets sits a long-abandoned eyesore house that has become a safety issue for the neighborhood.

Most recently home to vermin, the property at 4701 Lorigan St. once housed a family and even operated as a corner store back when Lorigan Street was the center of commerce for the Bloomfield's Italian immigrants.

In early 2021, Eric Vandestendael, a locally recognized expert in conservatorship [a relatively new legal path to improving blighted residential properties], reached out to inform BDC of a legal action occurring in Bloomfield. Oceanview LLC, which owns a rental house on Lorigan Street, had filed a conservatorship petition with the Allegheny County Common Pleas Court to become the conservator of 4701 Lorigan. This company is owned by an individual who has filed for conservatorship on many properties across the city.

The conservatorship law was created in the spirit of giving communities a pathway to deal with blighted & abandoned houses and the tax, utility, and other liens that have accumulated as a result of neglect.

Homeowners might walk away from their homes for various reasons so, in order

to qualify for conservatorship, a property needs to be tax delinquent for at least two years - and be considered blighted, which usually means "unlivable" in some capacity. Although buying a deteriorating house [to be repaired or replaced] may be financially feasible for some investors/developers, often the amount of back taxes and liens make it impossible for an average person to purchase such properties.

Conservatorship creates a pathway for the property to be rehabilitated, and for those taxes and liens to be wiped from the books. After a period of stewardship to stabilize a house, the judge can decide whether the conservator is meeting their obligations.

If so, the judge will entertain a motion to sell the house to the conservator for what is deemed to be its fair market value; an appraisal must be ordered to set that value. Any proceeds resulting from the sale of the property to the conservator must be forwarded to the prior owner, minus all fees and costs paid by the conservator.

Clearly, this process can prove lucrative. As property values across the city rise, many companies are attracted to conservatorship as a way to gain ownership of homes inexpensively - and then either flip them for a large profit, or turn them into rental units.

Media members have labelled some of these companies as "predatory conservators" due to the fact that they are exploiting a grey area in the law. The law requires that a person or entity meet certain qualifications in order to file for conservator-

- continued on next page -

COMPUTER CLASSES

The Eastside Neighborhood Employment Center is hosting Basic and Beginner Computer Skills classes.

Every Tuesday and Thursday
10:00am - 11:00am (Basics)
& 2:00pm - 3:00pm (Beginner)

BASIC COMPUTER TOPICS

- Parts of the Computer
- Navigating PCs and Mobile Devices
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- Basic internet browsing
- Basic Email usage
- Creating, saving, and printing documents

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- Security risks
- PC & Mobile Device Settings
- Using Social Media Networks
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ABOVE: The neglected exterior of 4701 Lorigan St. Photo courtesy of Christina Howell.

BELOW: Renovation of the property at 4701 Lorigan St. will be stewarded by City of Bridges Community Land Trust. Photo courtesy of Christina Howell.



'If all moves according to plan, City of Bridges will stabilize the property from further deterioration...'

- continued from previous page -

ship, and one of those criteria is the operation of a business or owning a principal place of residence within 2,000 feet of the property in question. Predatory conservators exploit that particular requirement by arguing that simply owning a rental property within 2,000 feet of the blighted property qualifies as operating a business.

Any individual may own multiple LLCs that file for conservatorship on many properties throughout the city at once; one such individual has filed conservatorship petitions on more than 50 properties through his various companies. In most cases, these LLCs may be awarded conservatorship by the courts if the properties have met all other requirements.

Once made aware of the particular conservatorship pending in Bloomfield, BDC decided to intervene in the case by trying to turn the property into a long-term affordable home. The organization secured *pro bono* representation from the Frost, Brown, Todd legal firm and consulted heavily with Mr. Vandestendael to learn about the options for proceeding.

Filing a petition with the court, BDC stated that it is, in fact, a business operating within 2,000 feet since it operates the Bloomfield Saturday Market program within 1,900 feet of the Lorigan Street property.

By meeting that and other criteria, BDC was able to prove that it qualifies to intervene. Because the group does not develop properties, but instead helps facilitate their development, it engaged City of Bridges Community Land Trust (CBCLT) in filing a petition to be appointed as conservator of the by Common Pleas Court.

Fast forward more than a year, through lots of waiting and learning, and the case

finally went to court for a hearing that resulted in City of Bridges being appointed as conservator.

If all moves according to plan, City of Bridges will stabilize the property from further deterioration and, within a year's time, return to court to seek title to the property. If successful, CBCLT will then undertake the renovation and re-sale of the property using its land trust model.

Under that model, the future homebuyer receives title to the house, but the land remains under the ownership of CBCLT. This limits the future re-sale price of the home for the new owner. By next year, 4701 Lorigan will be completely gutted and renovated, ending up with a nearly brand-new, 2-bedroom home, and will sell for approximately \$130,000. This sales price is made possible by subsidies that City of Bridges will seek from public and private sources to reduce the renovation cost.

The land trust organization has renovated and sold properties throughout Pittsburgh, creating housing that remains affordable for the long-term, and putting homeownership within reach of working class families. For those interested in purchasing the property once renovations are finished, please contact City of Bridges at cityofbridgesclt.org. ♦

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Reach out to BGC in 2023!

By Carlee Benhart Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

Insight/Garfield - Here at the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC), we're expanding our efforts to engage neighbors in 2023. You'll see us connecting local residents with grants, loans, and services; advocating for your interests at every level of government; helping you fill out permits; and helping our friends and neighbors thrive this year.

If you're a restaurant/bar/cafe owner whose Penn Ave business existed before 2020, please contact me to apply for the Urban Redevelopment Authority's (URA) Outdoor Dining Grant. We're looking to help distribute \$30,000 of grant funding to help your food or beverage business remain resilient to all kinds of public health and economic situations. If you're looking to start a small business or need help with permitting, contact me.

If you want to renovate your home or business, we can see if you're eligible for grants or loans from the URA. If you have a question about the upcoming Penn Avenue reconstruction project, please contact me or attend one of our upcoming meetings at the BGC activity center (113 N. Pacific Ave.); meetings are scheduled for 11 a.m. on May 1, Aug. 3, and Nov. 2. Everyone is also welcome to attend our State-of-the-Neighborhood meetings on May 16, Sept. 12, and Dec. 12 - held at 6 p.m. at the same location.

Finally, this year marks not only 10 years of the Garfield Night Market, but also 25 years of Unblurred festivities. Celebrate with us every First Friday from 3-10 p.m.

Questions? Email carlee@bloomfield-garfield.org or call 412-441-6950 ext. 117. ♦

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Public transit advocates point to data, urge City Council to support high quality, accessible service

A Message from Pittsburghers for Public Transit

Perspective/Pittsburgh - Transit moves us. In the City of Pittsburgh, tens of thousands of residents - and the businesses they work for and patronize - rely on affordable, timely transit service.

Transit should be considered as vital to the city as other public utilities. However, over the past year, transit service in the Pittsburgh region has taken a significant turn for the worse.

In 2022, Pittsburgh riders experienced a dramatic increase in overcrowded, chronically late, and canceled buses & trains.

Service data confirms transit riders' poor experiences: last year, 38 out of 105 Pittsburgh Regional Transit routes were below 50% reliability for at least one month. Transit must be reliable in order to be useful - if riders have less than 50% certainty that a bus or train will show up as scheduled, they will stop using the transit system.

On Wednesday, Feb. 8, Pittsburghers for Public Transit (PPT) hosted a press conference downtown at the City County building to release its new report, *Representing Our Routes: The State of Public Transit and How the City of Pittsburgh Can Improve It*.

During the press conference, researchers shared broad trends from the report around local transit service reliability and key transit destinations, and transit riders from different Council districts gave testimony about their experiences using public transit in 2022.

PPT member and transit rider Lorena Pena understands how unreliable service can complicate her daily schedule.

"Last year, when the Red Line train was not working, I struggled and my community struggled just to get around. We did not know when the shuttles were coming because they did not run on the same schedule as the train," she explained. "Instead of waking up for work at 5:15 a.m., I had to set my alarm for 4:00 a.m. just to ensure that I would arrive at work on time."

PPT has also identified ways for City Council Members to support high quality, reliable transit in their districts, and enact policies laid out in the Pittsburgh 100 Day Transit Platform, now adopted into Mayor Gainey's Transition Plan.

City Council representatives, together with Mayor Gainey's administration, have an important but often overlooked role to play in ensuring accessible, quality public transit across all City neighborhoods.

As Councilwoman Barb Warwick noted to PPT, "Forty-four percent of residents of District 5 are transit-dependent. Public transit is a top priority for me because all residents must be able to connect to the jobs, education, healthy food, and health-care they need. Public transit should be as dependable, accessible, and safe as any other utility - like water or electricity."

For more info, please visit pittsburghforpublictransit.org. ♦

Valley View Church hosts annual fish fry

Are you looking for a great fish dinner and/or sandwich during the season of Lent? Search no more, because Valley View Presbyterian Church is the place for you!

Our annual Fish Fry will be held every Friday, beginning Mar. 10 and continuing through Apr. 7 (Good Friday). Valley View church is located at 601 N. Aiken Avenue in Garfield.

Our regular hours of operation will be Noon to 7 p.m. For ordering information, please call 412-361-0870.

April Bulletin Deadline: Friday, Mar. 17th

Bulletin advertising info available at bit.ly/bulletin_ads
To receive a monthly deadline reminder, email Andrew@Bloomfield-Garfield.org

Lawrenceville neighbors welcome return to in-person ‘Happenings’

By Dave Breingan *Lawrenceville United*

Perspective/Lawrenceville - As a local community development professional once observed, the motto of Lawrenceville could be summarized as “always be convening.”

Whether the topic is affordable housing, or improving parks, or dealing with litter, or vetting new liquor licenses coming to Butler Street, Lawrenceville residents and stakeholders have a proud tradition of getting together to tackle, and debate, the most pressing issues in the community - typically over some pizza and neighborly conversation.

The latter part of that tradition was yet another thing disrupted by the pandemic, forcing these important gatherings out of our local church & library basements and onto home computers & cell phones.

After nearly three years of managing online meetings, gently reminding folks how to mute and unmute themselves, and dealing with the occasional “Zoom bomb” disruption, nonprofit neighborhood organizations Lawrenceville United (LU) and sister organization Lawrenceville Corporation (LC) are returning to monthly, in-person, community meetings.

However, they are also preserving online access for people who prefer the safety and convenience of tuning in at home amid the unceasing COVID-19 health crisis.

The Lawrenceville “Happenings” - open, public meetings hosted on the second Thursday of every month - are intended to be all-purpose, community meetings that provide neighbors with important updates. The first Happening of 2023 was held on the evening of Feb. 9 at the Persad Center in Upper Lawrenceville.

The meeting covered myriad neighborhood concerns and items of interest to Lawrenceville community members.

Among the topics addressed: staffing updates at LU and LC; a presentation from Gisele Betances, from the Office of Mayor Gainey, on the City’s Snow Angels program; updates on Arsenal Park’s redevelopment and public art project; a preview of new measures to improve mobility infrastructure and manage parking demand; development updates; upcoming events; and a robust discussion about the impact that short-term rental units have

on public safety and housing affordability, and ways to influence policy around this issue.

The meeting locations will rotate each month between the three areas that comprise Lawrenceville (commonly known as the 10th, 9th, and 6th Wards) to provide ease of access for all neighbors.

The next Happening is scheduled for Thursday, Mar. 9, at 5:30 p.m. inside the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh’s Lawrenceville branch (279 Fisk St.). The March meeting will focus on the annual tradition of reviewing crime in Lawrenceville.

The Pittsburgh Bureau of Police will be in attendance to present crime statistics from 2022, and analyze how the data compares to recent trends; representatives from Zone 2 Police, which covers the Lawrenceville neighborhood, will be on hand to share updates and answer any questions about public safety.

Free food will be provided, and childcare is available by advance request. The meeting will also be live-streamed on LU’s Facebook page: participants engaging this way are encouraged to utilize the chat function to ask questions and make comments that will be read aloud - in person, in real time.

Neighbors who are especially interested in weighing in on new development projects and liquor licenses in Lawrenceville are welcome to gather at a separate meeting [co-facilitated by LU and LC].

The Lawrenceville Community Development Activities meeting, which is reserved for the 4th Thursday each month, will only convene whenever a new project lands on the agenda.

To learn more about these standing community meetings, or to offer input on future topics, please follow LU on social media, visit LUnited.org, or contact the organization at 412-802-7220 and info@LUnited.org. ♦



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County Election *continued from page 2*

Out where the Trump signs cast a pall over the landscape, people may not want affordable housing, but many of us who reside in Bloomfield, Garfield, and Lawrenceville still do.

Campaign finance records show Weinstein entered the race well ahead of others in campaign funds, dwarfing the \$101,000 Innamorato had in her account. Lamb, 60, the current Pittsburgh controller, entered 2023 with \$168,000 on hand, including a personal loan he made of \$30,000, and another \$30,000 left over from an earlier campaign. Bennett raised \$4,000 last year and entered 2023 with just \$2,500.

Can you see now how combining forces to be able to counter Weinstein's money makes sense? According to the latest available campaign finance records, Weinstein can outspend the 36-year-old Innamorato by nearly 5 to 1.

In a low-turnout election, money is important because it can buy television campaign commercials and finance a get-out-the-vote effort.

If the progressives don't get their act together and win the most important and powerful position in county government, their ideas won't matter. Lamb's promise to make the first two years of community college free won't see the light of day. Bennett's skills as a community organizer with a distinguished record of providing health care services in low-income neighborhoods will go unrecognized. Innamorato's support from Mayor Ed Gainey and U.S. Rep. Summer Lee won't mean much if she doesn't win.

Perhaps the wild card in this race is Fawcett, a 64-year-old former Republican attorney from Oakmont. Fawcett has said he left the Republican Party when it was radicalized as the party of Trump, George Santos, and Marjorie Taylor Greene.

As an attorney, Fawcett partnered with the American Civil Liberties Union to end the solitary confinement of pregnant women in the Allegheny County Jail. He entered 2023 with \$308,000 in campaign funds, which includes a whopping \$150,000 loan that Fawcett made to his own campaign.

I can't even imagine forking that over. But if the progressives get together for breakfast to find a way to win this race, they should make sure Fawcett picks up the check.

[Alan Guenther is a frequent Bulletin contributor who lives in Bloomfield. He can be reached at guenthera30@gmail.com.] ♦

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LOCAL REAL ESTATE BLOTTER

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

Real Estate Sales for the month of December 2022

Compiled by Lillian Denhardt, Residential Realtor

Bloomfield

Cyril L Jr. & Lois Obermeier to MR Cedarville LLC at 346 Cedarville St. for \$130,000.

Delta Management LTD to Maxim J Nickel at 209 Morewood Ave. for \$65,000.

Jack A Palermo to James Peter Ingold at 4550 Penn Ave. for \$240,000.

James M & Lana M Celender to Halle Anna Mignogna at 4094 Howley St. for \$265,000.

Jordan Stone to Ashley Patrick Guillaume at 4020 Penn Ave. for \$280,000.

New Direction Fbo Michael Delecce to Jasp Holdings LLC at 601 Gross St. for \$235,000.

Robert S McSorley Jr. to Aragorn Properties LLC at 4805 Friendship Ave. for \$470,000.

Sergio & Joanne Pampena to Sergio Jr. & Chelsea Pampena at 5216 Harriet St. for \$1.

Friendship

East Liberty Development, Inc. to Chloe DiPasquale at 513 N. Saint Clair St. for \$725,000.

Garfield

BFB Enterprises, Inc. to Jeffrey & Myhia

Porter at 436 N. Fairmount St. for \$164,000.

Cab II LLC to Kelsey Dimond at 5462 Black St. for \$599,999.

Cumaru Properties LP to Philip A Baker at 5131 Broad St. for \$340,000.

Irish English LLC to David Bromberg at 5531 Columbo St. for \$588,244.

Katherine CR & Craig J Sewall to Denise Mervis at 5544 Columbo St. for \$221,000.

Pittsburgh Glass Center to PGC QALICB at 5472 Penn Ave. for \$1.

East Liberty

Bessie Smith to Michael J Kelly at 5716 Rural St. for \$30,000.

Costello Real Estate Development LLC to John McCarthy at 300 N. Saint Clair St. for \$750,000.

Dustin T Ferrero to Titus James Smith at 5811 Rippey St. Unit A for \$324,000.

Emerald on Centre Apartments LP to PGH Apartments LLC at 5765 Centre Ave. for \$1.

Lawrenceville

Arianna H Johnson to Samuel P Hedin at 618 Kendall St. for \$140,000.

Farzad Ghaznavi to Aditya Acharya at 5267 Holmes St. Unit 202 for \$266,000.

Harry M Geyer IV to Michael J & Diane Stewart at 5176 Carnegie St. for \$219,000.

John C Hrabowski to Sarah Victoria Chappel at 131 43rd St. for \$254,000.

Jtr Development LLC to Benjamin Littmann at 147 43rd St. for \$395,000.

Lawrence M & Carol A McManus to Zachary T Luniewski at 5235 Stanton Ave. for \$255,900.

Loresch John Schneider Foundation to JSJC Real Estate Holdings LLC at 3701-3711 Char-

lotte St. for \$10.

Lynne K Sunderman to Rounded Triangle LLC at 3601 Mintwood St. for \$390,000.

Mariana Luisa Padias to Heather Rowe at 820 McCandless Ave. for \$250,000.

Michael T Dieschbourg to 137 43rd LLC at 137 43rd St. for \$775,000.

Peter J Lemaster to Jason Sebak at 3608 Smallman St. for \$525,000.

Richard & Geraldine Borczyk to Weinan Pan at 216 42nd St. for \$90,000.

Ronald S & Martha C Coleman to David B Gough at 270 Main St. for \$420,000.

Samantha I Gulick to Jordan Bender at 5408 Carnegie St. for \$280,000.

William A Mastro Jr. to Reddinger Miller Holdings LLC at 5315 Wickliff St. for \$150,000.

William Paul & Helen George to Keen Origins LLC at 5185 Stanton Ave. for \$165,000.

Stanton Heights

East Liberty Development, Inc. to City Of Bridges CLT at 209 Schenley Manor Dr. for \$98,000.

Fifth Avenue Property Group LLC to Isidora B Concha-Loyola at 4728 Stanton Ave. for \$165,000.

Frank L Kline to Stream Four LLC at 4235 Upview Ter for \$140,150.

Johnnie & Geraldine L Monroe to Millicent M Ellard at 1156 Brintell St. for \$320,000.

Judith A McGeorge to Philip Lawson at 1347 Simona Dr. for \$160,000.

Karen M Shapiro to Yingjian Li at 4350 Coleridge St. for \$100,000.

Megan J Krider to Rachel Lauren & Ezra A

Shapiro at 4340 Stanton Ave. for \$374,000.

Robert K & Arlene Allen to 2019 Brian R Allen & Michael Wilson Revocable Trust at 1364 Simona Dr. for \$84,500.

This column, which uses data from Allegheny County's online portal, contains occasional errors. If something looks off, 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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Garfield Housing continued from page 4

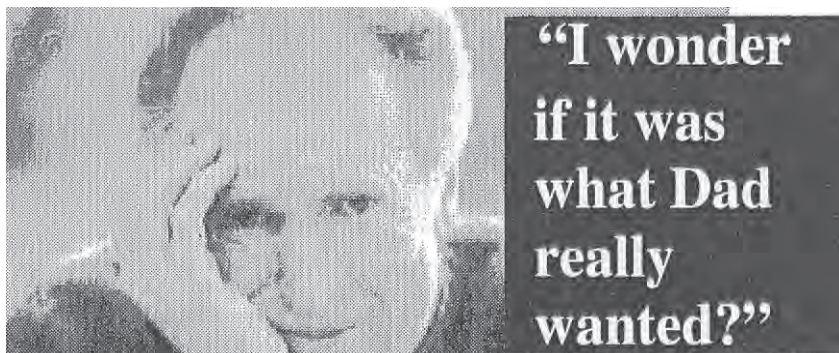
homes, located on two city-owned lots in the 4900 block of Broad Street.

But this will not be the case with four homes destined for the 500 block of N. Aiken Avenue, to be built by a group known as "Split Rock Real Estate." Neither will Penn House Co., a developer of four new townhomes at the corner of N. Aiken Avenue and Columbo Street, be making any of those units affordable in price.

And a third project, in the 400 block of Wicklow Street near Columbo, will see five townhomes built - all featuring market-rate, for-sale units.

"Garfield has prided itself that most of the new or renovated housing that's been done since the early 1980s has been affordable in nature," said Gary Cirrincione, a Hays Street resident. "But that's changing, and now developers with no real ties to the community are looking to squeeze in as many homes as the city's zoning regulations will allow. Is there no way for the city to protect Garfield from being overrun by such development in the years to come?"

While community meetings don't necessarily produce instant solutions, Pastor Collins acknowledged it will be a moment for "a reset, to see if there isn't more advocacy that we should be doing with city officials around reserving more vacant land or vacant, city-owned houses for affordably-priced housing. How the city manages to do that, I'm not quite sure." ♦



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Garfield Coloring Book: local artists give shape to kid collectible

A Message from BOOM Concepts & the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

Garfield - BOOM Concepts and the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC) are proud to publish a coloring book in tribute to our neighborhood.

This new collaboration highlights artists who live, work, and play in Garfield. The book showcases different styles, mediums, and creative imagery.

Featured artists include: Danielle Robinson, Atiya Jones, Quaishawn Whitlock, Sam Thorp, Kai Devenitch, DS Kinsel, Jameelah Platt, Robert Almond, Jayla Patton, Khalil Malik, and Max "Gems" Gonzales.

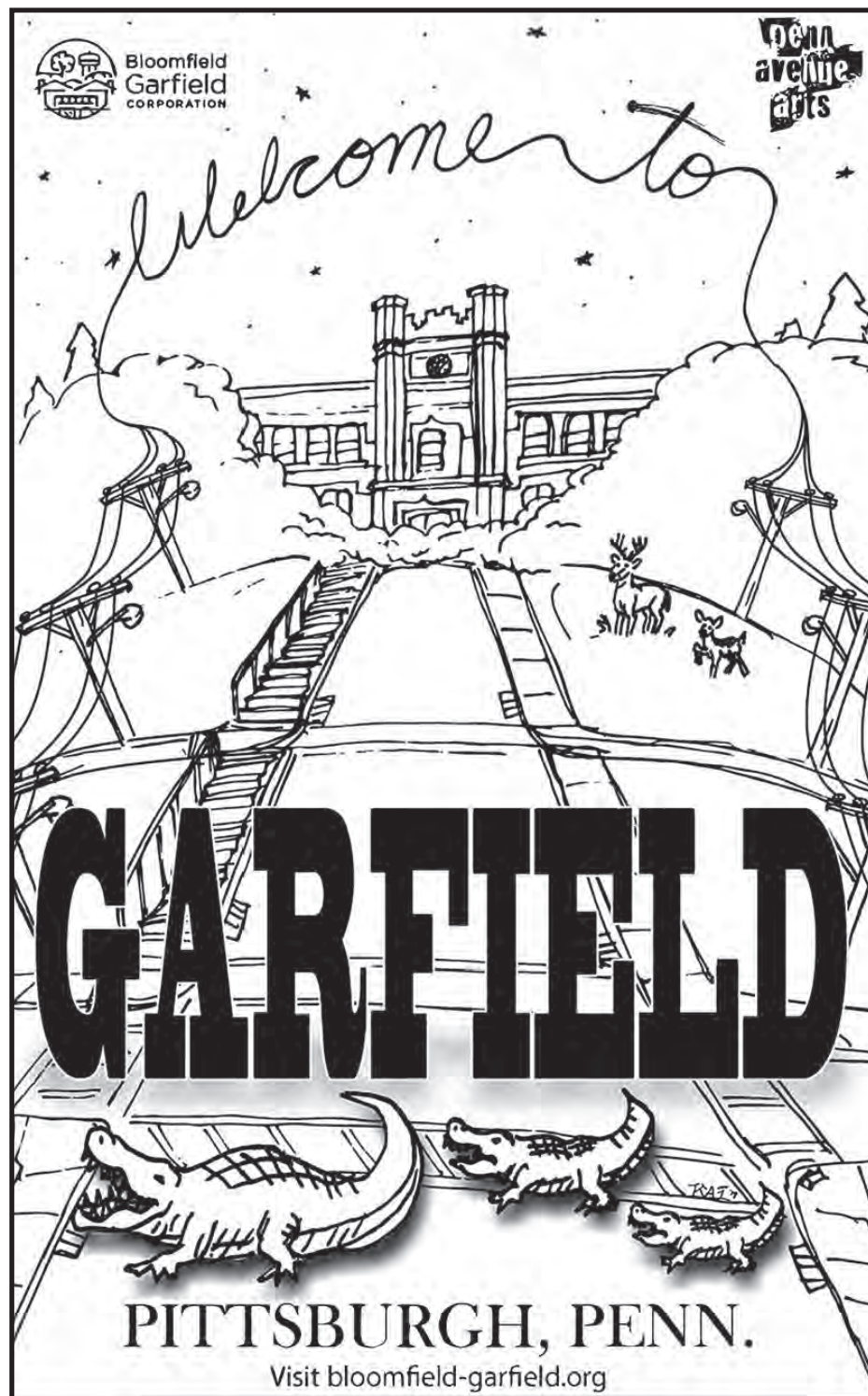
BOOM Concepts hopes that youths and adults alike enjoy the Garfield Coloring Book's variety [see the cover below, and

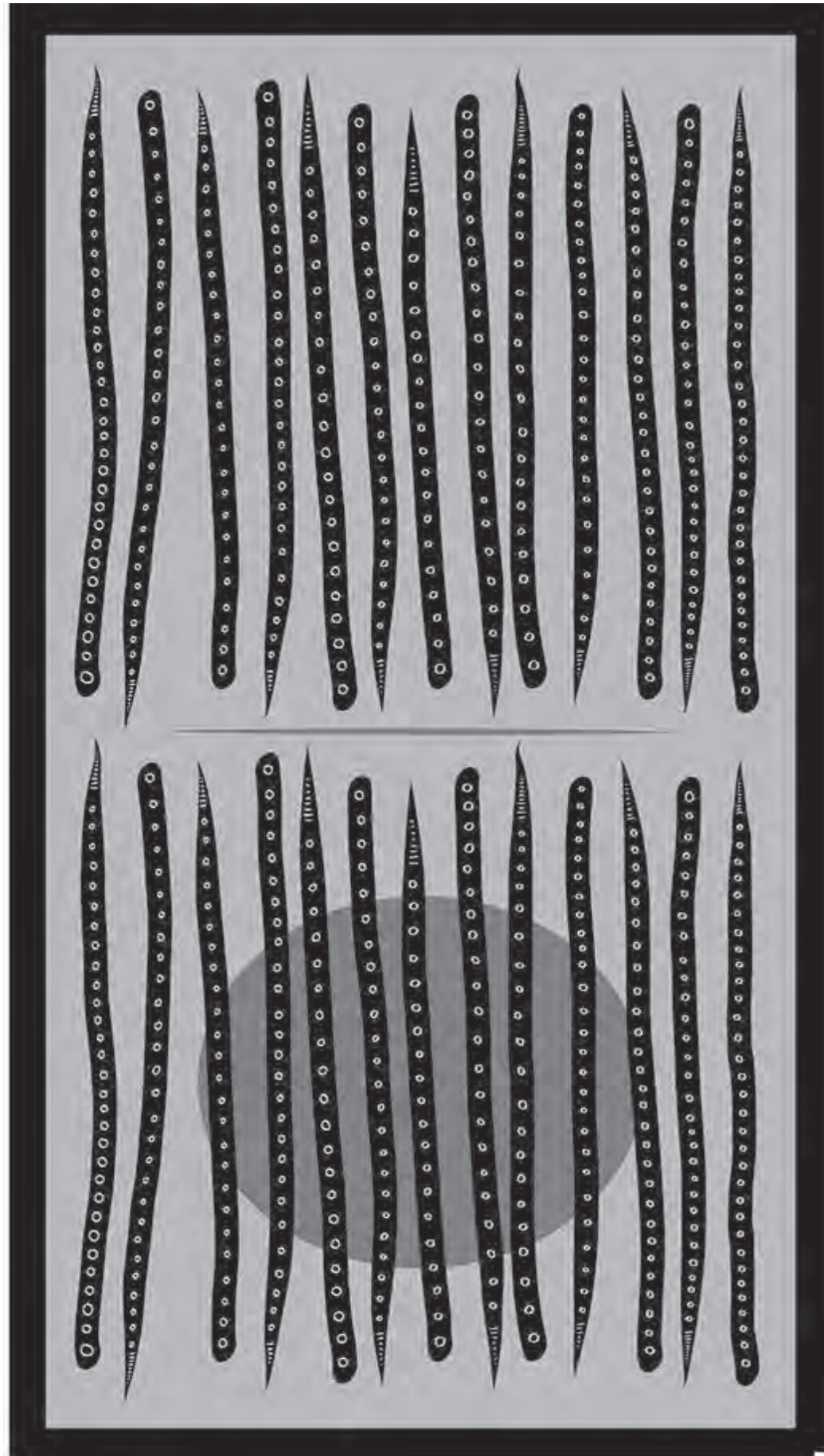
selected works on pages 15 & 16].

Every artist selected to participate in the book's creation has also taken part in Penn Avenue's Unblurred festivities over the years. The overarching goal here is to introduce local artists to local audiences across all ages.

The Garfield Coloring Book is a uniquely accessible, public art action that distributes artists' images as collectible media. BOOM Concepts and the BGC are now offering coloring books and a small set of crayons - at no cost - to neighbors, schools, and nonprofit organizations.

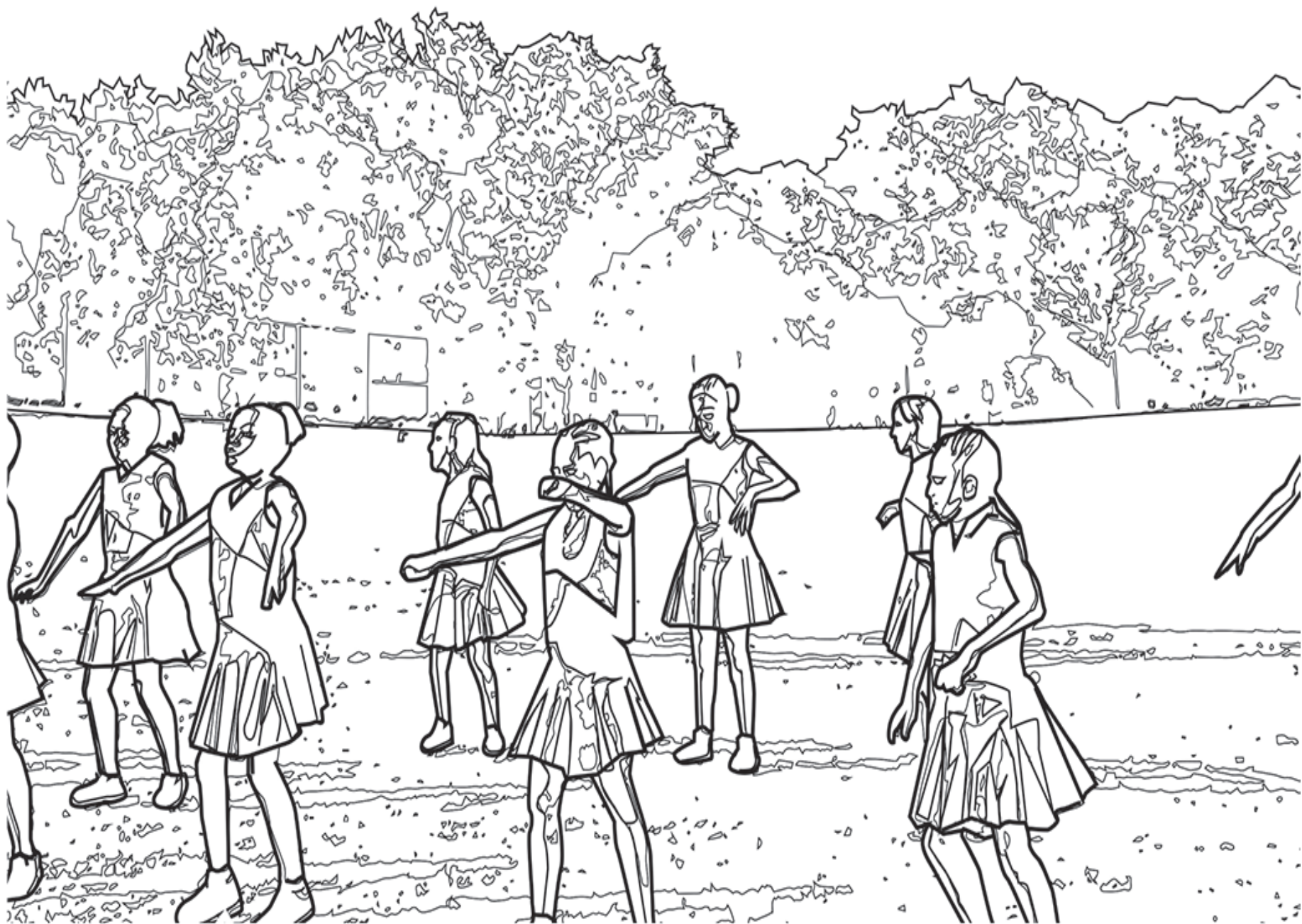
Please contact the BGC's COO, Pamela Schön (pam@bloomfield-garfield.org), to reserve your copies today. ♦





atiya jones





Selected work from the new GARFIELD COLORING BOOK

Visit the BGC (113 N. Pacific Ave.) in Garfield to get a copy today!

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Takara Canty

