

the
Bulletin

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**County’s top spot
remains up for grabs
in May 16 primary**

By **Alan Guenther** *Bulletin contributor*

Perspective/Pittsburgh – Six Democrats on the May 16 primary election ballot are vying to become the next Allegheny County Executive.

If you read the local media, the county executive is often described as “the most powerful job in county government.” But what exactly does that mean?

The county executive has the power to sign contracts worth millions without the approval of the county council. The executive runs a government with a \$3 Billion budget - and more than 6,000 employees - and appoints board members for critical agencies such as the health department, the county jail, and Pittsburgh Regional Transit ; this elected official also presides over the Board of Elections.

See **County Executive** | page 2



ABOVE: Volunteers tool up for an Apr. 15 tree-planting at Garfield’s Healcrest Urban Farm. See more of their arboreal efforts on page 13. Photo by Vania Arthur.



ABOVE: Lauren Long (pointing) demonstrates new techniques to her cosmetology students. Read about Long’s journey to Garfield on page 11. Photo courtesy of Lala’s Salon & Spa.

**Party to process: how Democratic
endorsements impact our vote**

By **Jennifer Haven, Brian Junker, and Ryan Morden** *8th Ward Committeemembers*

Insight/Allegheny County - May 16 is an important Election Day in Allegheny County, but you might be unfamiliar with who is on the ballot this year.

Campaigns for local municipal offices - city and county council, county executive, magistrate judge, and other open seats on the ballot - attract much less money and attention than US Senate or Congressional campaigns, but they are more likely to affect your daily life.

How can you find out what these offices actually do, and who to vote for? Endorse-

ments might be a helpful way to see which candidates share your values.

The Democratic Party in Allegheny County, known formally as the Allegheny County Democratic Committee (“ACDC”), is one group whose endorsement might be of interest. Ideally, the ACDC endorsement would reflect Democratic values: a clean environment, health care for all, strong unions, and civil rights for marginalized groups.

In past elections, however, the ACDC endorsement has skewed more toward con-

See **Endorsements** | page 6

County Executive continued from page 1

Look a little closer and you'll see how the county executive can improve - or muck up - nearly every aspect of your life, as documented in the article, "How Allegheny County's next executive could reshape the local power structure," published jointly by the *Pittsburgh City Paper* and PublicSource.

Do you ride a bus? Use county social services? Attend the Pirates, Penguins, or Steelers games? Do you know someone in the county jail? Do you ever relax in North Park or South Park? All these activities are run by people who were appointed by the county executive, and that's how the executive affects thousands of lives every single day.

Rich Fitzgerald has held the job for the past 12 years, but he can't run again because he's not allowed to seek a fourth four-year term. Salary illustrates the difference in power between the county executive position and the subordinate Allegheny County Council. The executive rakes in a cool \$142,339 a year. Each council member gets a paltry \$10,939, but only if they attend 20 of the 24 council meetings held every year.

Of the six Democratic candidates, two are women. Joe Rockey, 58, a former PNC Bank executive, is the only announced candidate on the Republican side and, as such, will likely be his party's lone nominee in the November general election. Listed below, in alphabetical order, are the Democratic candidates.

- **Theresa Sciulli Colaizzi**, 63, served on the City's School Board for 13 years, and ran her beauty salon for three decades before it closed during the pandemic. At an Apr. 18 candidate forum, she said that she would solve the area's financial shortfalls by getting nonprofit groups to pay their fair share in payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT) agreements. Throughout the forum, she targeted the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) and Allegheny Health Network, saying their patient treatment centers were everywhere, "like cockroaches," and she pledged to go after them for financial support.

- **Dave Fawcett**, 64, is an attorney. When he was a Republican, Fawcett was a member of the Allegheny County Council from 2000 to 2007. Now running as a Democrat, he has worked with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) to represent pregnant women who were being mistreated in the Allegheny County Jail. During the April 18 candidate forum, he repeatedly mentioned his plans to build a countywide riverfront park system, saying that green spaces showcasing the area's natural beauty would attract people to live here, helping to stem the local outflow of jobs and population.

- **Sara Innamorato**, 37, has served Bloomfield and Lawrenceville as the 21st District State Representative for the past five years. Innamorato first won office as a Democratic Socialist and is supported by Mayor Ed Gainey and State Rep. Summer Lee. She was profiled in the April edition of *The Bulletin*, where she said growing up with a drug-addicted father helped inform her approach to government services. In response to the well-documented, poor conditions - not to mention the 17 deaths of incarcerated people - at the Allegheny County Jail, Innamorato has said she would fire jail warden Orlando Harper. Innamorato, who serves on the Allegheny County Housing Authority board, said she'd advocate for more use of Section 8 voucher funding to place current renters in homeownership. "I believe everyone deserves a safe, stable, and affordable place to call home," she said during the Apr. 18 forum hosted by PublicSource and NEXTPittsburgh.

- **Michael Lamb**, 60, is the city controller, and he was recently endorsed by Rich Fitzgerald, the outgoing county executive. Lamb said that, if elected, he will establish a program to give Allegheny County high school graduates two years of free tuition to the Community College of Allegheny County (CCAC), according to 90.5 WESA.FM. The program, which Lamb calls "Allegheny Achievers," would expand on the existing Pittsburgh Promise scholarship program for city students. The Allegheny Achievers fund would pay for up to 60 credits at CCAC. During the speech where he endorsed Lamb, Fitzgerald called the free, two-year-college program "brilliant."

- **Will Parker**, 41, mobile app developer, is the only Black candidate in the race. Parker said he is running to correct "systemic racism." He has promised bold change and asked [during the candidate forum] why voters would expect change from people with prior experience in government. His website says he is a nephew of former Pirates slugger Willie Stargell. "There are far too many disparities when it comes to equality, equity, education, investments, transit, and housing," Parker states on his campaign website. "My plan is to close these gaps with the help of technology, which will keep track of all operations."

- **John Weinstein**, 59, is the current county treasurer, and he won the endorsement of the Allegheny County Democratic Committee. Weinstein has been re-elected six times since first being elected as treasurer in 1999, and he maintains that he'll be ready to lead the county government on the day he takes office. Weinstein has received large campaign donations from political action/labor-related committees in the area, and he has been endorsed by many local, elected officials. In the words of his campaign website, "... we can send a bold message to Pennsylvania: less politics, more solutions."

To learn more, visit the websites of PublicSource or 90.5WESA.FM. Every candidate, except for Colaizzi, offers extensive background information on their campaign websites. Alan Guenther, a frequent contributor to *The Bulletin*, may be reached at guenthera30@gmail.com. ♦

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Garfield Greenzone Coordinator: Vania Arthur joins BGC staff

By Pamela Schön Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

Garfield - Working as a visual artist, photographer, storyteller, arts educator, Kincaid St. Garden lead, and Garfield resident, Vania Arthur remains active in multiple communities. It's kind of her thing.

Arthur's outside-of-the-box thinking informs not only her artwork, but also her community gardening efforts in the neighborhood. It is with great pleasure that we announce Arthur's addition to the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC) staff as the Garfield Greenzone & Public Safety Coordinator. *[The following conversation has been edited for space.]*

BGC: When did you first get into gardening and land conservation?

Arthur: "I used to garden with my grandmother, as a child, when I lived with my grandparents during the summer months. It was something that she and I always did together in her backyard in Brooklyn. I hadn't gardened in so long by the time I moved to Pittsburgh after graduation. My friend Kuwame [Kinsel (BGC's Greenzone/Public Safety Outreach/Garfield Night Market Manager)] and I stumbled upon the Kincaid St. Garden, which was abandoned at the time (2017/2018). One thing really led to another and what started out as something that I did - just to clear my mind, and to have a safe space to look at the stars - has developed into this community project.

"Land conservation wasn't really something that I saw myself doing or, quite frankly, being interested in. It's one of those things that I'm now learning comes with the territory of creating & integrating active, safe, and accessible green space in a more urban environment."

BGC: How could arts and environmental initiatives intertwine to make change?

Arthur: "Art is really inside everything if you think about it. It's the double yellow lines on the road as you drive to work. It's the color of the stop signs - and the patterned order of red, yellow, and green stop lights. It's also in the way certain buildings are structured, or how row houses look next to each other. It's in the way you decide what to plant in your garden - whether that's tomatoes, onions, or even mint - and their relationship to each other, as well as what you want from each plant.

"For my practice as an artist, it's a lot of planning and behind-the-scenes work before anything hits a canvas, and *definitely* before it's visible to the public! Art has the power to communicate the needs of the community when/where the environment can be the holding space for it. Both [art and the natural environment] are more partners than separate; this gives us opportunities to learn from each other, and grow together!"

BGC: Could you please describe some of your Greenzone priorities?

Arthur: "Some of my immediate goals for the Garfield Greenzone are to connect more with the backyard habitats - as well as the neighbors who keep doing amazing things when it comes to gardening and landscaping, I hope to start developing more community input around green space so that neighbors are able to rely on each other for things that they need. I'm currently developing some workshops, programs, and events that involve greenspace/nature to help make something like gardening more accessible to everyone. Construction-wise, I'll be working primarily at Healcrest Urban Farm - fixing up the hoop house & shed, and also moving mulch. Hopefully, I can start building up some garden beds before the season ends!"

BGC: How might community members support these Greenzone plans?

Arthur: "A big way that community members can support our efforts is by just showing up. You really have no idea how much your presence can change things! And if you can't physically participate in these events, go ahead and tell your friends, family, and followers about how they can get involved. I want to make sure that nobody is afraid to share their thoughts, even though we might not be able to implement *every single* suggestion. I need to know exactly what neighbors want to see in their environment, so your input really helps me create more public spaces where folks feel welcome.

"I'd love to hear from, and connect with, *Bulletin* readers! The best way to reach me is by email (vania@bloomfield-garfield.org). Please don't hesitate to send your suggestions or ask to arrange a chat about volunteer opportunities - and contact me to learn more about our monthly Greenzone meetings." ♦

the
Bulletin

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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.

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BELOW: Vania Arthur (left) joins her BGC colleague, Kuwame Kinsel (second from right), as well as City Council candidate Khari Mosley (second from left) and Shawn Terrell (of the Western PA Conservancy) for a tree planting on Saturday, Apr. 15. Volunteers gathered at Garfield's Healcrest Urban Farm to help plant seeds of change. See more of the action on page 13. Photo courtesy of Vania Arthur.



Fact sheet: Garfield Highlands housing development

A Message from the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

What is the Garfield Highlands housing development?

Garfield Highlands is the third of three neighborhood developments that are intended to provide affordable rental housing to families whose incomes do not exceed \$57,000 per year (the limit for a 4-person household). It is also intended to reclaim properties that have been sitting vacant, blighting the neighborhood, for a long period of time.

The project budget is now expected to be in excess of \$10 million. The development will feature fourteen 3-bedroom homes and eleven 2-bedroom homes; at least four units will be accessible to persons with mobility impairments. Monthly rents will start at \$770 for a 2-bedroom house, with the range going as high as \$1,087 for a 3-bedroom. All of the homes will have basements, meet the latest EnergyStar standards, and come equipped with kitchen appliances.

Garfield Highlands will operate as a rental development for a 30-year period after it is finished. However in year 16 of its operation, each tenant will have the opportunity to purchase their unit at a cost that will, in all likelihood, be less than \$100,000. If they choose not to do so, they can remain a tenant for at least another 15-year period.

Who will own Garfield Highlands?

It will be owned by a limited partnership comprised of the 1) the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation [BGC], 2) a company [from State College, PA] known as Gatesburg Road Development, and 3) Citizens Bank. The BGC and Gatesburg Road Development will each share in the ownership of 0.1% of the development, and Citizens Bank will control 99.9%, for the first 15 years after construction is completed,

What’s with the unusual ownership structure?

The development will benefit from the use of federal housing tax credits provided by the PA Housing Finance Agency. Those credits will be utilized by the limited partner, Citizens Bank, in exchange for over \$8 million that the bank will invest in the project. That investment will replace what would normally be mortgage debt. Citizens will receive no money from the rents that are collected. Instead, the bank will be able to use the tax credits to reduce its tax obligation to the federal government over a 15-year period. This is how Citizens will reclaim its investment. After the first 15 years of the project has run its course, Citizens will withdraw from the project altogether, and its ownership stake in the project will be transferred to the BGC and Gatesburg Road Development.

BELOW: One of 15 construction sites for the Garfield Highlands project, this site is located in the 5300 block of Hillcrest St. Photo by Rick Swartz.



Who else will contribute funding to the project?

The city’s Urban Redevelopment Authority is lending \$1.25 million to the project, and the Federal Home Loan Bank has approved a \$590,000 grant to the BGC that the organization will, in turn, lend to the project. These loans will be repaid - either when the houses are sold in year 16, or when the project must be refinanced after year 30.

Who will manage Garfield Highlands once construction has been completed?

The limited partnership will likely use the services of NDC Real Estate Management to oversee the leasing and day-to-day operations of Garfield Highlands. They currently manage the first two rental housing developments known as “Garfield Glen.” NDC has an office here in Garfield, in the Laurentian Hall Apartments’ complex (5321 Penn Ave.), and its main offices are located Downtown (1133 Penn Ave.).

Who is the general contractor for the project?

Mistick Construction, Inc., with offices on the city’s North Side, is in charge of construction. The project managers are Tom Woodward and Clint Myers. Roxanne Thomas will handle community outreach by placing residents from the area in construction jobs on the project. Contractors registered as MBE/WBE firms are encouraged to contact Clint Myers at CMyers@mistickconstruction.com. Any individuals looking to be hired as laborers should contact Roxanne Thomas at RThomas@mistickconstruction.com.

What is the timetable for completing construction, and leasing the houses?

The hope is that construction of all 25 houses will be completed by early 2024, with some houses available for leasing even sooner. The intention of the limited partnership is to have all 25 houses under lease by mid-summer 2024. Anyone interested in being considered as a tenant for one of the homes will need to contact Linda Fulmer (LFulmer@ndcassetmanagement.com) at the NDC office here in Garfield, and ask to be placed on a list of people who will be notified when the leasing phase opens on Garfield Highlands.

To learn more about the Garfield Highlands project, please contact Rick Swartz of the BGC at 412-441-6950 (ext. 111). ♦

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Lawrenceville Farmers Market returns for new season

A Message from Lawrenceville United

Lawrenceville – Now that spring has sprung, loyal customers and vendors are eager to return to the Lawrenceville Farmers Market for a new season.

What began as a small, grassroots effort - organized by residents who were determined to improve access to quality food in Lawrenceville, which was a “food desert” at the time - is now ready to open its 13th season on Tuesday, May 16. The Market will be open from 3-7 p.m. [with masked shopping from 3:00-3:30 p.m.] every Tuesday until Thanksgiving, with the exception of July Fourth.

As construction continues at Arsenal Park, the Lawrenceville Farmers Market will be located at Bay 41 (115 41st St., below the 40th Street Bridge) for the second year in a row - inviting visitors into the

steel skeleton of a former foundry site, making for some interesting views and homage to the community’s industrial past. Adjacent parking is available to the public at the IceHouse gravel lot and the TechMill 41 parking lot after 4 p.m.

“We’re super thrilled to be back at Bay 41 with an incredible lineup of local farms and vendors, including longtime favorites, as well as some new additions based on customer feedback from last year,” said Bryanna Johnson, who is entering her third season of managing the Lawrenceville Farmers Market for the neighborhood nonprofit Lawrenceville United (LU).

Growing from its humble beginnings of just a handful of vendors and a few dozen visitors each week, the Lawrenceville Farmers Market has become one of the

strongest farmers markets in the Pittsburgh region while still focusing on the food access and food justice priorities that led to its creation.

With recent cuts to food stamps, people who receive SNAP benefits may be pleased to know that they can use their EBT card at the Market and stretch their dollars by 40%, with every \$5 spent earning \$2 in “Food Bucks” coupons that can be used for fruits and vegetables - thanks to a partnership with Just Harvest and the Food Trust.

In addition to credit cards and cash, the Market also accepts Farmers Market Nutrition Program vouchers for qualifying seniors and mothers of young children, as well as Food Bucks RX coupons from local food pantries.

Maintaining a heavy emphasis on food producers this year, the Market will provide a platform for 24 vendors to offer a variety of local produce, meats, baked goods, prepared foods, and more.

Homegrown businesses in Lawrenceville are increasingly represented, with popular restaurant Driftwood Oven serving up their famous sourdough bread and

Chantal’s Cheese Shop signing up to be a full-time vendor; both are, among others, welcome additions for the 2023 season. The Lawrenceville Farmers Market is also proud to partner with Catapult Culinary, an incubator program for minority food-based businesses, which will host a rotating booth this year.

Despite its growth, the Market still retains a grassroots spirit by providing a weekly gathering space where neighbors connect with each other - and with vital resources like flu shots or menstrual products.

While children flock to the weekly Kids Booth activities, the Market focuses on a new theme [older adults (“wisdom keepers”), families, community health, mutual aid, etc.] every Tuesday.

The Market is generously supported by Dollar Bank and UPMC Children’s Hospital Foundation, as well as neighbors who volunteer their time to make the Market happen each week.

For more info, and to get involved, please contact LU at 412-802-7220 or market@LUnited.org, follow the Lawrenceville Farmers Market on social media, or visit LUnited.org. ♦



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Endorsements *continued from page 1*

servative Democrats who, at times, might be out of sync with the choices primary voters ultimately make on Election Day.

A recent influx of more progressive Democratic committee members has spurred support for the kinds of candidates that many voters prefer. But the ACDC's endorsement process can still undermine these more progressive voices.

Currently, over a thousand Democratic committee members from all County precincts vote to endorse candidates, using a plurality system. This means that whoever gets more votes than their opponents wins the endorsement - whether or not they received an absolute majority of votes.

When candidates compete one-on-one, this system can work to reflect committee members' ideological consensus. For example, based on this system, this year the ACDC has endorsed progressive challenger Matt Dugan (820 votes) over incumbent Stephen Zappala (578) for Allegheny County District Attorney, and progressive incumbent County Councilor-at-large Bethany Hallam (819) over challenger Joanna Doven (553). But when several candidates are competing for the same endorsement, this system can break down.

This year, the ACDC endorsed the conservative John Weinstein (545 votes) for Allegheny County Executive over the more progressive Sara Innamorato (457), Michael Lamb (391) and Dave Fawcett (17).

Although 61% of its members preferred a more progressive choice, the ACDC split among three candidates, giving Weinstein the endorsement with only 39% of the votes. At the local level, County Council District 10 incumbent DeWitt Walton won endorsement with 76 votes while the two more progressive challengers earned 78 votes combined (Carlos Thomas, 48; Eric S. Smith, 30).

Eventually, ACDC may choose a different voting system for the endorsement process, such as ranked choice or approval voting. But what can you, as a voter, do right now? Explore recommendations of organizations like Steel City Stonewall Democrats, Young Democrats of Allegheny County, Pittsburgh DSA, and Pittsburgh 14th Ward Independent Democratic Club. Research the candidates and follow them on social media.

Before casting a ballot in-person or voting by mail, talk to the Democratic committee members in your ward and precinct ahead of the Primary Election on May 16. Please visit alleghenydems.com for more info. ♦

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Gardening advice & earthly delights: native plants attract pollinators

By Minette Vaccariello *Bulletin contributor*

Garfield - Are you already growing flowers, or interested in planting a garden? Native plants can bring delight to your garden while offering essential food and habitat for butterflies, bees, and birds. Native plants have adapted to a specific region and, unlike some more well-known domestic plants, are genetically unaltered by humans. They are well-adjusted to the local environment, and therefore require less water and maintenance, which saves gardeners time and money.

Which types of native plants work best?

There are so many beautiful native plants and flowers to choose from; with their different colors, sizes, and bloom times, it can be hard to decide. These easy-to-maintain plants can thrive in an urban environment while also attracting some amazing pollinators and birds: White Beardtongue (bees love), Scarlet Beebalm (hummingbirds love), Purple coneflower (attracts butterflies and goldfinches), Swamp milkweed (a host plant for Monarchs). For more ideas on native plants for your yard, check out "Native Plant Resources" offered on the Western PA Audubon Society website (aswp.org).

Where's a good place to find native plants for your garden?

Right here in Garfield! This season, I will host the Rust Belt Natives (RBN) pop-up plant shop in my pollinator garden on N. Pacific Ave. Located right off Penn Ave [at the corner of N. Pacific and Gem Way] is my tiny, but mighty, urban garden full of native flowers. From spring through fall, this garden will be bursting with over 55 types of native flowers - along with bees, monarchs, birds, and fireflies. This N. Pacific pollinator patch provides a special backdrop for RBN to sell locally grown plants, while also giving customers a demonstration of how native plants look in full bloom, from their various sizes to the types of pollinators they attract.

Rust Belt Natives will host a pop-up shop [at the corner of N. Pacific Ave. and Gem Way] from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on May 6, Jun. 3, Jul. 8, Aug. 12, and Sept. 9. Stop by to see how growing native plants can bring joy and delight to your garden.

About the author: Minette Vaccariello has been a Garfield resident for over 15 years. In that time, she has volunteered in the community by helping to create green spaces, and veggie & flower gardens, in vacant lots. Over the last eight years, she has focused on learning more about native flowers and how they can support an ecosystem of butterflies, bugs, and birds. She is excited to host RBN in her garden, and help connect local gardeners (and those new to gardening) to the joys of growing native plants. Crystal Armagost Volchko (owner of RBN, and Vaccariello's longtime friend) grew up farming, gardening, and foraging, so she is naturally very earth-minded.

Armagost founded RBN in 2021 in order to help make native plant gardening more accessible to urban gardeners. More details about Rust Belt Natives are available at rustbeltnatives.com. ♦



ABOVE: Minette Vaccariello enjoys the fruits of her labor in Garfield, where her garden's native plants attract butterflies, bees, and birds. Photo courtesy of Minette Vaccariello.

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Students analyze potential for arts residency at Sts. Peter & Paul Church

By Elizabeth Sensky East Liberty Development, Inc.

Larimer - The pointy double spires of Saints Peter & Paul Church are a familiar feature of the neighborhood skyline. Yet the church has been vacant for more than two decades, and the building remains in deteriorating condition.

Seeing the potential of this historic neighborhood landmark in 2014, East Liberty Development, Inc. (ELDI) has pursued a community process to find a viable use for the building ever since. In July 2021, The Rooney Sports & Entertainment Group helped ELDI develop a two-phase redevelopment plan. Phase One consists of transforming the church into a multi-purpose performance venue with a 500-seating capacity and 1,000-person standing capacity. Phase Two entails the construction of an annex on the side of the church, which will include offices, workspaces, and a black box theater.

At the end of last year, ELDI was awarded \$2.5 million [through the Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP)] and is currently raising funds to help make that plan a reality. The organization also wanted to explore another exciting piece of this vision: the potential for part of the annex to house an artist residency program in partnership with local arts institutions. To evaluate the feasibility of creating such a program, ELDI enlisted the help of Carnegie Mellon University's (CMU) Master of Arts Management (MAM) program.

For their cumulative project, students from the program's "Systems Synthesis" course embarked on analysis of Pittsburgh and East Liberty's artist landscape, as well as best practices for artist residency programs from across the nation.

Based on these analyses, they created guidelines for artist residency structures, request for proposal (RFP) frameworks and distribution methods, and selection committee recommendations. As ELDI is committed to using the residency to support diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion best practices, the nonprofit asked that this lens be applied to all areas of research.

"They did a fantastic job," said ELDI Deputy Director Skip Schwab. "The level and depth of their analysis blew me away, and has helped us validate this project."

Using raw data analysis, a review of literature, interviews, benchmarking, and the creation of case studies, the students put together a comprehensive final report with targeted recommendations. A total of 37 residencies were studied across 13 cities, and four arts residency programs were used for benchmarking: two in St. Louis (chosen because the city most closely resembles Pittsburgh's art scene) and two in Pittsburgh (the Kelly Strayhorn Theater, and the New Hazlett Theater).

Overall, the report found that Pittsburgh has a robust artist residency landscape

- continued on next page -



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WHEN: Tuesday, May 23rd, 6 PM

SPECIAL GUEST: Jahd Burns, Urban Redevelopment Authority's Housing Department

Mr. Burns will be on hand to collect feedback on programs funded by the URA's Housing Opportunity Fund. This Fund utilizes \$10 million annually from the City's collection of the deed transfer tax.

DISCUSSION TOPICS:

- > Changes coming to Garfield's residential district
- > Latest developments on Penn Avenue
- > Garfield GreenZone update

We'll provide pizza & drinks for attendees. Additional topics are also welcome; to add something to the agenda, please contact Carlee Kukula at Carlee@bloomfield-garfield.org.

BELOW: CMU Master of Arts Management students present their findings about an artist residency program at the Sts. Peter & Paul Church building. Photo by Catherine Sandford.



- continued from previous page -

and that, within that landscape, East Liberty is a key hub for artists.

"I think one of the big pieces that none of us knew was how many actual artists are living in the East Liberty area of Pittsburgh, and how great of an impact an arts residency opportunity could have," said Dr. Brett Ashley Crawford, associate teaching professor for the MAM program.

Analyzing data from the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council's (GPAC) 2022 Survey of Artists, the students found that the highest-represented zip code was 15206, with 14 artists. Most of those artists identified as visual artists, with theater being the most presented live performance discipline. Across Pittsburgh, the survey found that the three resources artists reported needing most are money, space, and mentorship, and that the desire for residencies is especially strong in East Liberty.

"Even though the Pittsburgh arts residency landscape is robust, it very much leans on the visual artists' side," said Isaac Fisher, a student in the program. "There's plenty of room for residency programs that meet a diversity of artists' needs, particularly for programs that cater to performing and media partnerships."

"East Liberty is one of the most diverse communities that we have in Pittsburgh - in terms of its breadth of diversity - but it is a Black majority community, and keeping that front of mind is important."

- Dr. Brett Ashley Crawford, associate teaching professor, CMU's MAM program

Beyond insights into the local arts landscape, the students offered several recommendations to help ELDI create an effective artist residency program at Sts. Peter & Paul. Pointing to the need to create a diverse and inclusive residency program, the students found that 64% of the East Liberty artists who participated in the GPAC survey are white, while only 37.4% of East Liberty residents are white.

"East Liberty is one of the most diverse communities that we have in Pittsburgh - in terms of its breadth of diversity - but it is a Black majority community, and keeping that front of mind is important," said Crawford. "The diversity, equity, and inclusion approach is in many ways founded on the concept of transparency."

As the team reported, transparency not only helps effective arts residency programs gain trust, but it also makes the whole application process smoother. There are fewer questions when the process is clearly articulated because applicants can see what is going on.

In practice, that looks like allowing applicants to talk to program officers and ask questions before they apply, and also having a log-in to check the status of an application, as well as transparency in regards to who is judging the applications.

At its core, the process's best practices center on finding ways to let the artists, and their work, shine. For example, if a visual artist feels more comfortable submitting a video application rather than a written application, then that should be an option.

Another big takeaway from the students' findings was that an artist residency can serve more than just the artists within a community - its effects ripple out to community members from all walks of life.

"Historically, with some of these residencies, it's those moments of accidentally bumping into someone where ideas are sparked," Crawford explained. "I see the combination of the events-venue side and the residency side fueling some creativity that I don't think anybody's even tapped yet, because it has yet to happen." ♦

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VOTE MAY 16, 2023

City pays \$8 million to settle Jim Rogers lawsuit

By Alan Guenther *Bulletin contributor*

Perspective/Bloomfield - After Pittsburgh Police brutally mistreated Jim Rogers, who died after being tased at least eight times for taking a bicycle on Harriet Street and returning it, the City of Pittsburgh agreed to pay Rogers' family \$8 million to settle a wrongful death lawsuit.

The settlement for Rogers' death on Oct. 14, 2021, was announced on Apr. 27 by Attorney Todd Hollis. He said it is the biggest settlement ever paid out by the City.

The settlement came after Hollis said he had collected evidence that documented shocking police abuse and indifference. Hollis said Rogers died only after police officers ignored his complaints that he couldn't breathe.

Hollis said there is video footage showing officers [in the front seats of a police car] laughing and joking while Rogers, 54, was slumped over and unconscious during a long ride to the hospital. When they finally reached UPMC Mercy Hospital - located miles away from the incident, as police drove past several hospitals that could have provided immediate treatment - Rogers was discovered to be unresponsive.

Hollis said the medical experts were ready to testify that Rogers' life could have been saved if he had received treatment sooner. The money will go to Rogers' daughter, who is in her mid-30s and lives out-of-state with her four young children, according to James Frierson, Rogers' brother, who is the executor of the estate.

"Maybe now she can secure the future for her and her children - and she can have some remembrance of the historic events here that, hopefully, will change this city," Frierson, 58, told *The Bulletin*.

Hollis said that, in addition to paying the money, city officials have agreed to meet and discuss a list of policy and training changes that, if adopted, would be known as "The Jim Rogers Rules."

BELOW: Jim Rogers' brother, James Frierson (holding microphone), addresses the media in Bloomfield on Friday, Apr. 28. Pictured from left to right are Roy Blankenship, Jr. of the Black Political Empowerment Project (B-PEP); Frierson; Tim Stevens, chairman of B-PEP; Will Anderson, chairman of the Allegheny County Democratic Black Caucus, and attorney Todd Hollis. Photo by Alan Guenther.



Under the settlement, the City has 30 days to set up a meeting with the family and community advocates to discuss reforms.

Of the eight officers who have been disciplined over the incident, three have returned to work, and the other five are working with the police union to get their jobs back.

Because these police officers have not been charged with a crime, police union chief Robert Swartzwelder has said they should be reinstated.

District Attorney Stephen Zappala convened a grand jury to consider the police

conduct but, over the last 18 months, he has made no presentments. Zappala has maintained that he is waiting for federal law enforcement officials to finish their review before he makes any decisions.

Hollis relayed that he expects to discuss any policy changes with the new police chief, who is expected to be named soon.

On Apr. 27, WPXI reported that the new chief will be Larry Sciroto, who served in Pittsburgh as an assistant police chief before resigning in 2018.

More recently, Sciroto was forced to resign as chief of police in Fort Lauderdale, FLA

following complaints that he favored minority candidates for hiring & promotions.

As *The Bulletin* went to press, city officials had yet to confirm its new hire.

The proposed list of more than 30 reforms, to be known as "The Jim Rogers Rules," would require that police are trained on the law by a civil rights attorney.

Police would also be required to learn how to de-escalate a situation instead of applying unnecessary force, Hollis said. They would be retrained on when and how to properly use a Taser.

Mayor Ed Gainey released a statement about the settlement.

"My heart is with Jim Rogers' family, friends, and loved ones today. As we put his family's lawsuit against the City behind us, the City continues to pray for the family over this unnecessary loss of life," the mayor said. "In addition to the monetary remedy of this settlement, we will also be reviewing our use of force policies with the family and other advocates. We are committed to changing policing in our city and working to rebuild community-police relationships."

Tim Stevens, chairman of the Black Political Empowerment Project (B-PEP), said he could not understand why Rogers had been so badly mistreated.

"I met Jim Rogers on a few occasions and, on a personal level," Stevens said, choking back tears, "he was just a gentle soul. Anybody who met him would know that he was not a threat to anybody. Just because he was born Black, and maybe dark. Maybe that meant something to somebody. But he was a human being. And he brought the bike back [to where he found it]."

[Alan Guenther - of the Pittsburgh Peace is Possible Coalition, which has advocated for justice for Jim Rogers - may be reached at guenthera30@gmail.com] ♦

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LaLa's Salon & Spa: Nail Academy moves to Garfield

By Carlee Kukula Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

Garfield - LaLa's Salon & Spa owner Lauren Long is now expanding her beauty empire by hosting "The Nail Academy" at her salon's 5341 Penn Ave. location.

For more than 15 years, Long has not only built her own brand in the beauty industry, but also exhibited a passion for teaching and mentoring others. The Nail Academy will offer professional courses to aspiring nail technicians, as well as continuing education courses for licensed professionals.

Long's journey in the beauty industry started in her high school's vocational cosmetology program, where she graduated with a cosmetology license. She completed a degree in fashion merchandising at Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

After college, she worked in New York City as a fashion PR coordinator and occasional model. In 2016, Long moved back to Pittsburgh, where she started a mobile nail business while also working a night-shift as a bartender.

The mobile nail business grew quickly and, by 2018, when Long found herself completely booked, she decided to open LaLa's Salon & Spa in Garfield. Within nine months, she opened a second location in Monroeville.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, LaLa's pivoted to private nail classes in a small space at the Monroeville location. In 2021, Long went back to cosmetology school to earn her Master Educator degree, which empowers her to license students and provide continuing education hours.

"It was really hard to keep the doors open during COVID," Long explained. "I struggled to retain staff [members] and make sure they were paid enough to keep food on the table." Despite the challenges, Long strengthened her resolve to provide high-quality beauty education for her students, and top-notch service for her clients.

The Nail Academy will now have its own space - as Long plans to consolidate her salon operations at the Monroeville location, and continue educating her students at the Garfield location. She is finalizing partnerships with local and virtual cosmetology schools to help Nail Academy students earn a comprehensive education in the beauty industry.

"I am partnering with local, virtual, and nationwide cosmetology schools to offer my students a beauty education," Long said.

With many accomplishments preceding a fierce dedication to education, Long is excited to share her knowledge with aspiring nail technicians and licensed professionals alike. She is eager to grow the local beauty community when The Nail Academy welcomes students to its Garfield headquarters this month. Visit LalasSalonsPa.com for more info. ♦



ABOVE Lauren Long, owner of LaLa's Salon & Spa in Garfield, holds a portrait of her grandmother near and dear to her heart. Photo courtesy of LaLa's Salon & Spa.

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CCRP students declare college plans

A Message from BGC Youth Programs

Garfield - At the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC), we're very proud of our College & Career Readiness Program (CCRP) students, and excited to support their higher-learning pursuits. While some of their high school classmates developed acute "Senioritis" and took the easy road to graduation, our CCRP students kept grinding - with great purpose and perseverance - to get where they are today.

These seniors made many sacrifices, applied for numerous scholarships, and logged a lot of computer hours along the way, but now all their hard work is paying off. We'd like to congratulate the following soon-to-be college students, as well as those who are still deciding where to matriculate this fall:

Noraa A. - Howard University	Eliza G. - Swarthmore College (full ride)
Riann M. - Temple University	Cierra H. - IUP
Kayla Y. - Robert Morris University [RMU]	Montay P. - Jackson State University
Sophia R. - Pitt (full ride)	NyAsia B. - RMU (full ride for track)
Kadin K. - CCAC (film tech program)	Shania P. - CCAC
Parris V. - Penn State (Greater Allegheny)	Korren K. - IUP
Keona M. - IUP	Raykwon F. - CCAC
Jaden M. - Carlow	Breanna E. - undecided
Madina M. - Pitt (full ride)	Kashaunna B. - CCAC
Fatmata - Pitt	Shawn S. - Duquesne University (full ride)
Naema S. - Pitt (dental school)	Daenice B. - Howard University
Destiny C. - Clark Atlanta University	Tanzania L. - Edward Waters University ♦



Follow the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation on Twitter (@BloomGarCorp)

Friendship Flower & Folk Festival set for May 13 at Baum Grove

By Diana Toole *Friendship Community Group*

Friendship - Every year, the Friendship Flower & Folk Festival (F4) is held on the first Saturday in May. This year, the event will be held from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, May 13, at Baum Grove.

Located at the intersection of Roup Ave., S. Fairmont Street, and Harriet St. (behind the Aldi), Baum Grove Parklet is open to the public and available for rentals.

Now in its third decade, the annual festival [sponsored by the Friendship Community Group (FCG)] has provided a variety of programming over the years. At different points during its run, F4 has featured a book sale, an artists' market, and live demonstrations on sustainable practices, beekeeping, gardening, and biking.

This year, attendees may bring a blanket to enjoy live acoustic, folk, and jazz performances by top-flight, local musicians - including Abby Morgan, Brian Junker, Ian Toole, Donna Occhipinti, Friends in Harmony, and David Graham.

Rain or shine, there will also be hot picnic food for sale - and a raffle with items, gifts, and gift certificates donated by neighbors and local businesses.

F4 is also the pickup spot for the FCG's annual plant sale/fundraiser. Stop by for a select group of locally grown plants, flowers, heirloom vegetables & herbs, and unique Mother's Day baskets.

Pre-orders may be placed online at friendship-pgh.org/f4plants (by our May 5 deadline) for pickup at the event. All proceeds support the maintenance of Baum Grove and efforts to enhance the quality of life for all Friendship residents. ♦

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WHAT HAPPENED TO THE LOCAL REAL ESTATE BLOTTER?

[Ed. Note: The Local Real Estate Blotter (a feature regularly found on this page) is now on hiatus; Allegheny County's online real estate portal, where the blotter's listings are sourced, has not been updated in months. The Bulletin will resume publishing real estate listings once the County website is back up and running. Until then, readers can look to the Sunday edition of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette for updated real estate listings.]

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ABOVE: Garfield neighbors get the lay of the land before planting trees on Saturday, Apr. 15. Photo by Vania Arthur.

BELOW: Healcrest Urban Farm has enough shovels, not to mention volunteers, to help plant trees on a clear spring morning. Photo by Vania Arthur.



BELOW: Each swing of the pickaxe brings Garfield closer to a green future on Apr. 15. Photo by Vania Arthur.



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LECTURE SERIES: 19TH CENTURY SCULPTORS OF ALLEGHENY CEMETERY

On May 18, the Lawrenceville Historical Society will host local art historian Gary Grimes. An art dealer & historian, Grimes moved to Pittsburgh in 1976 because he found the city rich in 19th century artworks. He will highlight noted sculptors of Allegheny Cemetery, including Isaac Broome, Thomas Shields Clark, Frederic Mayer, Peter Christian Reniers, Wilhelm Spriesterbach, and Ernest W. Watson.

This event is free and open to the public. Grimes' lecture will begin at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 18, at the Lawrenceville branch of the Carnegie Library (279 Fisk St.). Reservations are not required.

June Bulletin Deadline: Friday, May 19th

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'Party like an Afrofuturist': Assemble celebrates new orbits

A Message from Assemble

Perspective/Garfield - When you close your eyes and think of the future, what do you see? Do you see a world where there are people living on Mars, traveling in flying cars, or wearing radial fashion? What do they look like?

In movies and media from yesteryear, the future was often projected as a place with a lot of white people - and not many other folks - represented. We know that is not a real future, so let's imagine and celebrate a future that learns from the past while also centering folks from the African Diaspora. It's time for an Afrofuturism Learning Party!

At Assemble (4824 Penn Ave.), we're collectively imagining a future where, as Alisha Wormsley's artwork affirms, "There Are Black People In The Future." Is this what you're imagining, too? Then you might already be an Afrofuturist, or at least a fan of the genre. Did you love Marvel's Black Panther movies? Are you a Missy Elliot, Janelle Monáe, or Sun Ra fan? Do you think of Kathrine Johnson every time you look to the stars?



ABOVE: Local artist Born Shamir, who painted the Octavia E. Butler mural at Garfield Community Farm, looks to Afrofuturism for inspiration. Photo courtesy of Assemble.

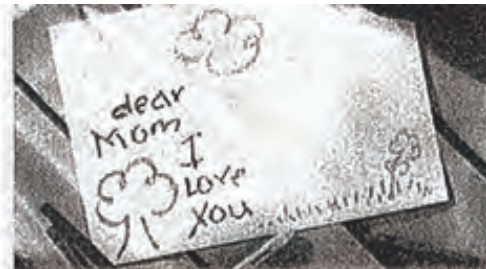
All of these folks, and many others, are proud Afrofuturists. Here at Assemble, we've always been big fans of Afrofuturism; we attend workshops, create lesson plans, and lead summer camps themed around its principles. Our Afrofuturism curriculum, led by Ja'Sonta Roberts, Assemble's Off-Site Programs Manager, has served over 1,000 kids since the beginning of 2020.

As a space for arts & technology, Assemble cannot *not* talk about all the amazing discoveries, creative works, and inventions made by folks from the African Diaspora. It's easy to forget where these accomplishments came from - and exactly how they came to define modern living. We bring lessons from African American history into classrooms, afterschool programs, and summer camps as we get hands-on with Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM).

So it should come as no surprise that we're hosting a party celebrating Afrofuturism - and you're invited. Join us on Friday, May 19, from 4-6 p.m., to meet guest experts who will help us imagine and create a much better, Afrofuturistic tomorrow.

We're excited to have our friend Damola Idowu, of ToyzSteam, on hand to share his awesome platform and games with partygoers. You're also invited to make art with local artist Born Shamir, who painted the mural of Octavia E. Butler at Garfield Farm.

This event is offered free-of-charge as part of "Remake Learning Days." ♦



Reflecting on Mother's Day

Mother's Day can be a sad time for those whose mothers are no longer living.

Whether this is your first Mother's Day without your mother or if it has been years since she has died, there are many ways to honor your deceased mother or grandmother on Mother's Day.

We would like to offer the following suggestions:

- **Talk about your mother with people who remember her.**
- **Bring out pictures of your mother, and show them to other family members.**
- **Consider taking flowers to the cemetery.**
- **Do something your mother would have enjoyed.**
- **Give a Mother's Day donation to your mother's favorite charity in her name.**
- **And finally, bring back the tradition of wearing a single white carnation in memory of your deceased mother.**



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ECS robotics teams compete on world stage

By Deana Callipare Environmental Charter School

Garfield - The Environmental Charter School's (ECS) Robotics Club produced two of the four middle school teams [from Western PA] that qualified for the VEX IQ World Championship competition.

The 6th and 7th grade teams worked on their craft at the ECS Middle School campus (5525 Columbo St.) in Garfield. As of press time, both ECS teams were preparing to travel to Dallas, Texas to compete against students from across the globe on Apr. 30.

"I am extremely proud of the students' hard work and dedication to Robotics Club," David Stehouwer, robotics teacher and advisor said. "As one of the only qualifying city schools from Pittsburgh - and despite both ECS teams competing for the first time this year, as rookies without prior experience with VEX - the teams discovered sustainable and resilient ways to engineer award-winning robots."

The ECS 6th grade team (412E) qualified for the World Championship based on its performance at the Western PA State Championship on Mar. 11, while its 7th grade team (412C) earned a spot on the VexWorlds waiting list.

Last month, ECS staffers were excited to announce that the 7th grade team had been removed from the waitlist, and would join its 6th grade peers at the competition in Dallas.

"This is a unique opportunity," Stehouwer said. "I look forward to seeing our students' teamwork, collaboration, and problem-solving skills in action on a world stage."

The VEX Robotics World Championship is presented by the Northrop Grumman Foundation. It brings together the top VEX IQ Competition, VEX Robotics Competition, and VEX U teams - 787 teams, representing 40 countries, will celebrate their accomplishments together at this robotics competition.

The ECS teams' previous awards and accomplishments include 412E earning first place in both the teamwork and skills division at the regional competition, and finishing first in qualifying rounds at the State Championship; and 412C placing first and second in regional competitions, and winning first place in the teamwork & skills division at the Western PA State Championship.

The goal of the ECS Robotics Program is to empower students to discover how the support of computer science and engineering disciplines can help solve the world's most complex problems while building an equitable and sustainable future.

Students can challenge their preconceptions about who computer science is "meant for" - and who it benefits. They use mechanisms and physical computing to develop systems that interact creatively with their environment.

Learn more about the ECS Robotics Club at ecspgh.org. ♦

JORDAN

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