

the  
**Bulletin**

A publication of the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

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

**Former PNC executive  
runs as ‘one of us’ in  
County Exec. race**

By Alan Guenther *Bulletin contributor*

*Pittsburgh* - Can a man who was pulling down as much as \$4.3 million per year in salary, stock options, and corporate perks successfully campaign as “one of us”?

Joe Rockey, the Republican candidate for Allegheny County Executive, is about to find out. He is running for the most powerful job in county government.

If elected County Executive, Rockey’s administration would be awarding hundreds of millions of dollars in government contracts, and overseeing important agencies and boards.

But instead of emphasizing his corporate experience, Rockey, 59, a retired executive vice president for risk management at PNC Bank, frequently talks about how he

See **Rockey** | page 2



**ABOVE:** Cyclists and pedestrians reclaim Butler Street during the Jun. 25 ‘OpenStreetsPGH’ event in Lawrenceville. Turn to page 15 for more OpenStreets action. Photo by Jack McKay.



**ABOVE:** Local artist Ivory Eddins (left) connects with Garfield Night Market customers on Friday, Jun. 2. See more ‘market moments’ on page 11. Photo by Vania Arthur.

**‘Unblurred: First Fridays’: Penn Avenue  
celebrates 25 years of creativity**

By Carlee Benhart Kukula *Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation*

*Perspective/Garfield* - This year marks the 25th anniversary of “Unblurred: First Fridays” on Penn Avenue. It all began back in 1998, when vacant storefronts reflected severe disinvestment in the business district.

The Penn Avenue Arts Initiative, which came together in 1995, helped turn the avenue into an arts destination - and Unblurred eventually led the charge.

On behalf of the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC), I recently spoke with some of the folks that helped create, run, and support Unblurred to learn more about how it

established a monthly tradition within the city’s arts communities.

As Jeffrey Dorsey, executive director of the Union Project, recalled, Unblurred aimed to create a comprehensive event that could capture everyone’s attention - and invite people to explore the artistic offerings that often go unnoticed “like a blur” as they drive along Penn Ave. without stopping.

An artist himself, Dorsey was passionate about engaging with the community and

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# Rockey *continued from page 1*

grew up poor, living on food stamps. Rocky's campaign slogan is "One of us. For a change." He said that Democrats will attack him as "Country Club Joe," but does not feel that decades of living an admittedly privileged life have left him insensitive to the needs of the less fortunate. In a recent interview, *The Bulletin* asked Rocky, a retired banker, what he feels like he has in common with the average voter - say, for example, a single Black mother raising a family in Garfield.

He said that "my experience is not exactly the same as hers. But I watched my mother, when my father got sick, [leave] the house to work minimum wage jobs and try to make ends meet for her family." While he was growing up, Rocky said his family did not have a car or television, and he knew what it was like to "see a lot of people with a lot more than I had."

But he had "the passion to work hard to get to a different point in my life. And so, you might say 'Well, Joe, the last 10 years of your life, you've had a little bit of a different experience from a Black woman in Garfield. But in the first 30 years of my life, I feel that I had a very similar experience.'"

Rocky says he worked odd jobs to get his degree in accounting from Duquesne University. His Democratic opponent, Sara Innamorato, 37, also overcame a difficult begin-

ning, escaping what she has described as a drug-addicted and abusive father in her teens. Innamorato's website [saraforall.com], promises that she will put "working people over corporate profit and fighting for those on the margins."

As a state representative in Harrisburg, Innamorato is paid \$102,000 per year, according to the League of Women Voters. Rocky was paid \$4.3 million in 2018, according to ExecPay.org. Full details of Rocky's corporate compensation can be found at [tinyurl.com/RockeyPay](https://tinyurl.com/RockeyPay).

During the interview, Rocky said that while he did not have his financial history in front of him, the ExecPay report on his salary seemed accurate - and that he was proud of the advantages he had accrued. "Yes, I have been successful. And yes, through a lot of hard work, I have been able to climb to the top of one of the largest financial institutions in the country," Rocky said.

He emphasized how, from a political standpoint, he is a centrist - and said that he has tried to steer clear of the national Republican Party, knowing it may not be as popular in a heavily Democratic Allegheny County.

Asked, for example, how he felt about Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump, Rocky said: "I will not support

**BELOW:** Joe Rocky, Republican candidate for Allegheny County Executive, looks forward to the November election. Photo by Alan Guenther.



Donald Trump," calling him "too divisive." Rocky said he believes that President Joe Biden won the 2020 election and legitimately carried the state of Pennsylvania.

The County Executive appoints board members who supervise the counting of ballots during elections; Rocky said he will make sure all votes are counted fairly.

Rocky said he was pleased to win the support of the Pennsylvania District Council of the Laborers International Union of North America. The group has backed Republican candidates before, and it has donated considerable sums to candidates in the past.

This is Rocky's first run for political of-

fice. He lives in Ohio Township, a small municipality northwest of the city.

His website has many details about his stellar record of personal service but few details as to his stances on critical issues.

For example, his website reports that he helped create a residence for the city's homeless population, serves on the boards of St. Joseph's House of Hospitality and the Little Sisters of the Poor residence on the Northside.

He holds positions on the boards of Catholic charities and Duquesne University.

But in sharp contrast with Innamorato,

- continued on page 14 -



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# 100 Bulletins: editor reaches publishing 'century mark'

By Rick Swartz Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

*Garfield* - Shortly after Andrew McKeon completed his tenure as "cinema tender" at Dreaming Ant DVDs - a back-in-the-day, Liberty Ave. mainstay - the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC) plucked him out of obscurity [ouch!] and promptly threw him into the frying pan of community journalism.

Andrew joined the BGC as editor of *The Bulletin* newspaper in the spring of 2015, just after the Bottom Dollar grocery store came and went from the avenue. He cut his teeth, so to speak, by documenting the push for Aldi to inhabit the grocery space at 5200 Penn Ave.

Now that he's put 100 issues of the paper to bed, Andrew is nearing the ceiling of editorial tenure here. Nevertheless, he's unlikely to surpass the reign of the late and most-venerable Sister Sally Witt, who guided the paper from its 1975 inception until her resignation in 1990.

Andrew always says that he's just trying to survive the monthly deadline [#facts], and we applaud his efforts to produce 100 editions of *The Bulletin*.

Now that he's the proud father of a [dazzling, miraculous, and thrill-seeking] daughter, Andrew said the only thing remaining on his bucket list is for *The Bulletin* to win the Edward R. Murrow Award - even if that means beating out the *Valley News Dispatch* to get there.

He's since moved a pilgrimage to the West Coast - to visit filming locations from the 90s action-thriller *Heat* - further down that list.

Regarding his old DVD collection, Andrew said that he might bring a few titles to the office one day - if only to rent the DVDS to his BGC colleagues, for a nominal fee. ♦

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

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**Bloomfield-Garfield.org**

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# Unblurred

*continued from page 1*

learning the intricacies of running a nonprofit organization. Unblurred became a unifying force, connecting different sides of the street - neighborhoods, ethnicities, businesses, and creatives - fostering a sense of community and revitalizing the area.

“We would always talk in the office about what success would look like,” Dorsey said. “And I remember saying that if I were to be fortunate enough to have a family and have children, that they would want to come here. And so, you know, fast forward 10, 15 years, and I have two children who love to frequent Unblurred and go to the Glass Center for ‘Hot Jams.’”

Dr. Amber Epps, executive director of Protophena and longtime Unblurred participant, has fond memories of even the wackiest moments - like when a few shattered light bulbs plunged the Garfield Night Market into temporary darkness.

While working for the BGC, she ran Unblurred from 2014-2018, and still participates every month through her small business, Arts & Crafts Botanica (4901 Penn Ave.), which she owns and operates with her sister, Pamela Schon (the BGC’s COO). Dr. Epps noted how the First Friday festivities have changed over the years.

“I’d like to see more of the longtime Garfield residents coming down to participate,” she said. “The energy of the Unblurred crowd, particularly after quarantine, is very different and very young.”

Rich Engel, a technical writer at NRG Oncology and former Mainstreets Manager for the BGC, reflected on how Unblurred allowed him to connect with gallerists, journalists, and artists. Emphasizing the festival’s ability to bring together permanent and pop-up spaces, Engel said he continues attending Unblurred and enjoys sharing the experience with visiting friends and newcomers to the city.

“My favorite part of Unblurred is the walk. What appeals to people is that the things you want to see are all within walking distance from each other,” he explained, “so you’re going to promenade. You’re going to start at the Glass Center, and you’re going to go up the street, and you’re going to see people.”

Nina Gibbs, a marketing and advertising professional who ran Unblurred from 2018-2022, spoke to its exciting and spontaneous atmosphere. Before joining the BGC staff, she owned and operated a local gallery, Most Wanted Fine Art, that opened in 2007.



**ABOVE:** Unblurred festivities draw a crowd up and down Penn Avenue on Friday, Jun. 2. Photo by Jack McKay.

**BELOW:** The courtyard at Two Frays Brewery (5113 Penn Ave.) is packed with Unblurred patrons on Friday, Jun. 2. Photo by Jack McKay.



“I attended Unblurred for the first time in 1998, specifically to see a show at Quiet Storm [R.I.P.]. I have a long history of wonderful shows that I was personally involved with through Most Wanted Fine Art. It is very hard to choose a favorite,” Gibbs noted. “I was really impressed by how businesses and artists responded in order to stay afloat during the reconstruction of Penn Ave. - and I think a lot of places had some really creative shows during that time.”

When Dr. Samantha Marino moved back to town in 2010, she was delighted to see how First Fridays had progressed during her absence. She worked as Mainstreets Manager for the BGC from 2012-2014. Dr. Marino also helped create the Garfield Night Market in 2013, where budding entrepreneurs from the neighborhood could launch their businesses in a supportive environment. “Watching it grow has been my favorite part of Unblurred,” she said.

Dr. Marino credits the longevity of Unblurred to all the tenacious business owners on Penn Ave., and also to the BGC. ♦

### Garfield Greenzone

# MEET THE INTERN!

2023

INTRODUCING

## Tatym Rasnussen

Hi! I'm Tatym and i'm really excited to work with Vania on the neighborhood's green space this summer! I'm a junior at Carnegie Mellon and I love learning about community spaces and projects and how they bring people together. I've always loved camping and gardening with my family so this experience is blending together some of the things I cherish the most: nature and community! I can't wait to work with you all :)



## Developer updates plans for erstwhile ShurSave site

By Sam Spearing Bloomfield Development Corporation

**BELOW:** Bloomfield's former ShurSave site will be redeveloped into a combination of rental housing units and a Giant Eagle grocery store. Image courtesy of Sam Spearing.



signatures.

Echo quickly identified Community Market as the interim grocer that would continue operating the site until it was ready for redevelopment.

Upon ensuring the continued presence of a grocery store, the developer began studying the site's zoning conditions,

while also reviewing the Bloomfield Central Gateway Guidelines.

During a Nov. 2021 meeting hosted by the BDC, Echo sought to have the zoning of an Ella Street parcel changed in order to create a cohesive site under a single zoning district.

Phil Bishop [of Echo Realty] confirmed that the development plans include a grocery store in the form of a Giant Eagle (a regular tenant with Echo Realty).

At the time, the development plan also included approximately 190 rental units, with 10% of them being priced affordably [less than 30% of monthly income for a household making 50% of the Area Median Income or less] under the standards of Bloomfield's Inclusionary Zoning district.

Echo proceeded with its request and, after two Planning Commission meetings and a City Council hearing, Council voted to approve the rezoning in April of 2022.

The developer is now working to meet zoning requirements and standards for the site - and also dealing with increased construction costs.

Echo Realty will present an updated proposal at community meetings on Jul. 11 and Jul. 15.

Both meetings, hosted by the BDC, will help fulfill the City's requirement that the registered community organization host a "Development Activities Meeting" in the neighborhood - in advance of a hearing in front of the Zoning Board of Adjustment scheduled for early August. Two separate meetings - sharing identical information - are being held to allow more people to attend; a remote hybrid option will also be made available.

Residents are invited to hear more about Echo Realty's proposal, ask questions, and learn about next steps as the project progresses. To learn more, please visit [bloomfieldpgh.org](http://bloomfieldpgh.org), call 412-681-8800, or email [sam@bloomfieldpgh.org](mailto:sam@bloomfieldpgh.org). ♦

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# Kate Lovelace: Magistrate hopeful looks to reform system

By Jack McKay *The Bulletin*

**East End** – In May, attorney Kate Lovelace won the Democratic Primary for the position of Magistrate Judge in district 05-02-31 (comprised of Garfield, Friendship, Bloomfield, Stanton Heights, Highland Park, Morningside, Upper Lawrenceville, and East Liberty).

Lovelace said that, if she wins the November election, she can implement her vision of what a Magisterial District Judge should be: a judge who would rather empathize with people than put them into the system.

As a public defender, she has learned that a person's criminal record is "a consequence of the system rather than the behavior." According to Lovelace, many Magistrates are scared to challenge an officer's assertion of what happened in a given incident.

"An officer can charge a person with a misdemeanor as a form of leverage," she explained, "to make a defendant feel as if they have committed a crime, and that their case is going to go Downtown."

What most Magistrates seem to forget, Lovelace noted, is that they get to hear these cases before any decisions are made Downtown. In other words, she maintains that just because an officer says a person committed a misdemeanor does not mean that said person actually did anything wrong.

Lovelace said that, if elected, she will lean into the critical thinking that often eludes local Magistrates. The job at hand, as she sees it, is to determine whether the misdemeanor

**BELOW:** Magisterial candidate Kate Lovelace. Photo courtesy of [kateformagistrate.com](http://kateformagistrate.com).



charge is valid; if the charge is invalid, she will not hesitate to render a verdict of "not guilty."

Throughout her legal career, the candidate said, she has always tried to understand where her clients are coming from before speaking with the Magistrate. "Most of the people I represent are very poor, or very marginalized in some other way," she said. "The people I represent live very hard and complicated lives, and there is no way that I can explain all of that to a Magistrate."

In order to protect disadvantaged people, she promises to hold the government to its burden of proof in every case.

When somebody comes to the Magistrate saying that a certain thing happened, Lovelace says the law dictates that they have to establish not only proof of intent, but also proof that the person committed the act in question. In today's environment though, she contends that the testimony of a police officer is, by itself, sufficient to establish both.

She noted that her approach to the job will be different. "Just a police officer saying to me 'I believe this person had intent' will not be good enough," Lovelace explained, "whereas many Magistrates would say 'Great, enough said. We will take this case Downtown,' I will say 'Not enough said. Goodbye!'"

The attorney also said she plans to help the many defendants that are unable to pay the fines levied against them.

"Most of my clients have fines and fees that they started paying, and then stopped paying for whatever reason." If she becomes Magistrate Judge, Lovelace says she will waive many of these fines - exercising a power in the local Magistrate's toolkit.

Judges may also increase a defendant's penalties for not paying their fines.

Apparently, one of Lovelace's recent clients went through the Accelerated Rehabilitative Disposition (ARD) program and, because of

her unpaid \$190 fine (she had already paid \$3,000 in fines), the judge revoked her ARD eligibility and she had to go to jail - due to a fine that would not have sent her to jail in the first place.

Still, she acknowledges that improvements have been made to the system. In the past, many Magistrates waived a person's preliminary hearing as a condition of their release from jail. According to Lovelace, this trend was terribly unfair because "a person's release should have no bearing on whether or not they give up any rights."

Thanks to the work of younger Magistrates like Mik Pappas, the practice of a judge waiving a preliminary hearing has abated significantly. As a result, a person's bail is being determined in a more rational manner.

"A person's bail conditions," Lovelace said, "should only be based on the danger [they pose] to the public, and whether or not they will appear in court."

Despite this progress, she believes that Magistrates could still do more - and promises to help divert people away from the system if she wins the November election.

"The Magistrate court should be the last court that people go to," Lovelace said, "not the first court." ♦

## MEET OUR 2023 BOOM UNIVERSE RESIDENT ARTISTS:



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# 1520 ADJUDICATION ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM

## WHAT IS 1520?

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## WHO

Individuals in Magisterial District Court can request the 1520 Program, where the district judge (MDJ) will determine eligibility.

## Contact:

Vania Arthur, Greenzone & Public Safety  
Coordinator,  
[vania@bloomfield-garfield.org](mailto:vania@bloomfield-garfield.org) 412-441-6950 x115

## WHAT TYPE OF ACTIVITIES

1520 program includes an appropriate set of activities that could include, but are not limited to, **land maintenance, tree tending, classes, or workshops** based on the MDJ as well as a short interview.

## WHERE

The **Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC)** is a court-approved 1520 Program Service Site. Located at **113 N Pacific Avenue, Pittsburgh PA 15224**

**ASK YOUR LAWYER OR JUDGE  
ABOUT YOUR CASE  
ELIGIBILITY!**





## Gardening Advice & Earthly Delights: native plants can beat the heat

By Minette Vaccariello *Bulletin contributor*

*Garfield* - I write this article while listening to the rain outside. This is the first rain we've had in Garfield in weeks! It has been unusually hot and dry, for late May & June in Pittsburgh, reminding me more of our normal July & August weather.

During similar hot weather in August, 8 years ago, I visited a native plant nursery for the first time. Unlike typical nurseries I've visited with endless tables of flowers, this nursery had several artistically styled garden beds showcasing native flowers. These native plants were impressive - towering tall, and full of blooms despite the high temperatures and strong August sun.

In the hottest days of summer, most plants find themselves drooping, with their flowers spent. I asked the nursery owner why these plants were still thriving while others weren't, and that was when I first learned about the resilience of native plants. Because native flowers are well adapted to their local environment and climate, they require less water and can withstand the extreme heat of the summer. That day, I brought home my first native flowers: cup plant, and green-headed coneflower; both plants are still growing strong in my garden to this day!

### *Want to grow flowers that thrive in the high heat of summer?*

Come by Rust Belt Natives' pop-up plant sale on Saturday, Jul. 8 to find some resilient plants that can deliver gorgeous blooms throughout the summer, and into fall. In addition to this month's pop-up sale, on the same day, Garfield will host its first-ever Garden Party, along N. Pacific Ave. from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Partygoers will get to enjoy live music, kids' activities, tasty fare from local food vendors, and garden demonstrations from the Western PA Audubon Society.

### *Looking for urban garden inspiration?*

Also on Jul. 8, the inaugural "Garfield & Friends" Garden Tour is scheduled from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. - celebrating urban gardens in and around Garfield. The tour will highlight 10+ community gardeners and their backyard spaces featuring flowers, pollinator-friendly habitats, edible gardens, and even farms. Maps for this free, self-guided tour can be picked up on the day of the event, under the Rust Belt Natives tent at the Garden Party. The green spaces on this tour are diverse, showing off a variety of creative ways to transform any outdoor space into a garden. Spaces vary - from big to small, organized to naturalistic - but each one will offer plenty of ideas about which plant varieties are well-suited to grow in our city dwellings, and ways to create your own magical garden oasis. ♦



**ABOVE:** A Tiger Swallowtail butterfly rests atop blackberry lillies in Garfield. Photo by Minette Vaccariello.



**ABOVE:** Rust Belt Natives hosts a pollinator pop-up sale in Garfield on Friday, Jun. 3. Photo by Vania Arthur.

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# Neighborhood FOCUS

## Bad news on short notice: City closes Bloomfield pool, rattling community

By Alan Guenther *Bulletin contributor*



**ABOVE:** A crowd of Bloomfield residents raises questions, like why their public pool is suddenly non-viable, during a Jun. 26 meeting at the Liedertafel Club. Photo by Alan Guenther.

*Bloomfield* - On Jun. 26, dozens of neighborhood residents met with City officials to learn more about the allegedly abrupt decision - made by these very officials - to shut down Bloomfield's public pool this summer.

The meeting, which was held at the Liedertafel Club (410 S. Mathilda St.), gave neighbors a chance to ask why the City had not yet fixed the leaking pool structure.

Most attendees wanted to know why a short-term fix could not stop the leak in order to save the summer swimming season for hundreds of area children.

They said the City knew the pool was leaking last year but failed to act.

To boos and heckles from the crowd, City officials said that, if more significant problems are discovered, the pool might have to close for 18 months or longer.

"You knew about this last year, and you did nothing," said resident Linda Vacca.

"Why not patch it?" asked resident Ralph Peterson.

The audience cheered Brian Schrecengost, a contractor with reputedly more than 20 years of experience working with his own company and PWSA, when he offered to take a crew of 25 men to the bottom of the empty pool and "get this done in a week."

- continued on next page -

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COMING!  
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COMING!

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**BELOW:** The emptiness of Bloomfield's public pool is hard to ignore - and the impact will be felt by families across the city's East End. Summer traditions may die hard but, in Bloomfield, they could become endangered by the pool's projected 18-month closure (read: two summers without a local swimming destination). Photo by Alan Guenther.



*"We were trying until the last possible minute to find a way to open the pool."*

- Jake Pawlak, Deputy Mayor of Pittsburgh

- continued from previous page -

Pittsburgh Deputy Mayor Jake Pawlak said that procuring funds to make a major repair takes time. "I can't hire him (Schrecengost) here in this meeting," Pawlak said. "The law doesn't work that way."

Major capital funding requests must be submitted to City Council, he explained, which reviews and approves requests by the end of December, making funds available the following year.

Resident Nina Sacco said that dozens of children from Shadyside, Garfield, and other adjacent neighborhoods use the pool all season long. She asked for a commitment from the City that repairs will be completed in time for the pool to open next summer.

Pawlak said that, without knowing what will be discovered when the pool liner is pulled back, he could not promise that the pool will be ready for the summer of 2024.

Chip Gaul, assistant director of the Dept. of Public Works, said that fixing the known leaks would cost between \$200,000 and \$300,000. Water from the leaks, he said, gushes through a four-inch drainage pipe, causing the pool to empty each day.

A big hole in the bottom of the pool's deep end - "big enough to put your hand in," said Kathryn Vargas, director of CitiParks - has been discovered.

Gaul said he is concerned that other leaks will be found as further assessments are conducted under the surface. All pools leak to some extent, he explained, but

something must have happened over the winter to make the current leak worse.

District Councilwoman Deb Gross, who hosted the community meeting, said she did not know about the leak until two days before the pool's scheduled opening. Lifeguards had been hired. Residents were preparing for another season of swimming at the pool on Ella Street, near the Bloomfield Bridge.

"We were trying until the last possible minute," Deputy Mayor Pawlak said, "to find a way to open the pool."

Long-term repairs, if approved by City Council in December, will pay for construction work next year. The City has opened 15 of its 18 pools this year. Bloomfield children must now travel to other neighborhood pools while their own pool remains unavailable.

[Feel free to contact Alan Guenther at [guenthera30@gmail.com](mailto:guenthera30@gmail.com).] ♦



**ABOVE:** Local contractor Brian Schrecengost is up in arms about the City's decision to close the Bloomfield pool for the next two summers. He and other attendees of a Jun. 26 meeting called the City out for delivering the bad news on such short notice. Photo by Alan Guenther.

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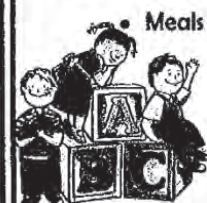
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# Assemble hosts ‘Donor Happy Hour’ fundraiser at Wigle Whiskey

By Thea Kane Assemble

*Strip District* - On Jul. 12, Assemble will host a “Donor Happy Hour” event from 4 to 6 p.m. at Wigle Whiskey Distillery (2401 Smallman St.). All are welcome to attend the Happy Hour, where Assemble will also celebrate its 12th anniversary.

Wigle Whiskey is a great venue to honor the STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math) education center’s dedication to building confidence through making, for learners of all ages.

During the school year, Assemble provides various programs for youths in grades 1-9, including free afterschool and programs like Hack the Future, Saturday Crafternoons, and Girls Maker Night.

Assemble also hosts adult events, like 21+ nights and Fiber Arts Series workshops (in partnership with Two Frays Brewery), and offers teaching opportunities for volunteers to become guest experts and share their knowledge with Assemble students. Earlier this year, Assemble hosted its first “Afterschool Bash.” All children and families who attended any of the afterschool programs during the past school year were invited together for fun, games, and an incredible concert by Barrels to Beethoven.

The Donor Happy Hour will bring Assemble supporters together to celebrate 12 years of hard work with some good drinks at Wigle Whiskey.

Since the Nutting family first opened the distillery doors in 2011, Wigle has partnered with countless charities and nonprofits to improve its neighbors’ quality of life through charitable giving, volunteer efforts, donations, and community events. The “grains-to-glass” distillery shows a commitment to supporting small businesses, building on a tradition of community service in Pittsburgh.

Join Assemble’s community of neighbors, teachers, and artists while enjoying locally grown spirits at the collaborative happy hour on Jul. 12; a portion of tab sales from the event goes directly to Assemble’s STEAM programs. Please RSVP at [eventbrite.com/e/652203246467](https://eventbrite.com/e/652203246467). Stop by Assemble (4824 Penn Ave.) in Garfield, or visit [assemblepgh.org](https://assemblepgh.org) for more information. ♦

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# LOCAL REAL ESTATE BLOTTER

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

Real Estate Sales for the month of April 2023

Compiled by Lillian Denhardt, Residential Realtor

## RETURN OF THE LOCAL REAL ESTATE BLOTTER!

[Ed. Note: Allegheny County's online real estate portal, where this blotter's listings are sourced, is back up and running - and we're excited to resume monthly publication of local property sales. Kudos to those who called asking when the blotter might return. We appreciate your concern and applaud your support.]

### Bloomfield

Arnold Family Protector Trust to Modern Legacy LLC at 740 Broughton St. for \$350,000.

CRN Properties LLC to Engine House 25 LLC at 428-430 S. Atlantic Ave. for \$500,000.

Eileen Kaplan Revocable Trust Agreement to Matthew & Hardman at 203 S. Evaline St. for \$560,000.

Glen A Clifton to John R Java Jr at 433 S. Evaline St. for \$280,000.

Sister Trio Holdings LLC to 4917 Friendship LLC at 4917 Friendship Ave. for \$665,000.

### Friendship

Lucille E Butler Lucas to Quality Home Investments LLC at 124 S. Graham St. for \$310,000.

William G Cumber to Pa Plus Holding LLC at 245 S. Saint Clair St. for \$235,000.

### Garfield

Matthew T & Deadra S. Keener to Evan E Schneider at 5126 Dearborn St. for \$325,000.

Rowland W & Walda Jean Hill to Natalie-Rose Sampson at 214 N. Mathilda St. for \$130,000.

Stephanie Gary to Bethany Tucke at 417 N. Graham St. for \$205,000.

### East Liberty

405 Betty LLC to Margaret Rimmel at 407 N. Beatty St. for \$590,000.

Costello Real Estate Development LLC to David E Reinwald at 302 N. Saint Clair St. for \$750,000.

Costello Real Estate Development LLC to Laura M Chanlatte at 314 N. Saint Clair St. for \$750,000.

Molly E Ennis to Kelley Mayraha Bunge at 5617 Hays St. for \$326,000.

O'Neills Investments LLC to Christopher Turnbull at 615 N. Beatty St. for \$637,500.

### Lawrenceville

516 54th Street LLC to Katherine Meghan White at 516 54th St. for \$345,500.

Alexander Gase to Andrew James Groff at 300 1/2 45th St. for \$365,000.

Amanda M Wang to Polly & Higgins at 5132 Carnegie St. for \$445,000.

Angela Thu Gruenberg to Valerie Van Hulle at 444 52nd St. for \$630,000.

Anna M Failla to Bradley Alan Campbell at 318 57th St. for \$159,000.

Boulevard Rows LLC to Daniel & Angelina Savage at 3638 Mintwood St. for \$360,000.

Brandy Dott to Thomas & Dana O'Conner at 5227 Stanton Ave. for \$259,900.

Carnegie 5261 LLC to Reid A Snyder at 5261 Carnegie St. for \$340,000.

Dana M Staudt to Caner Galata at 3914 Clement Way for \$220,000.

David Rosen to Jesse J Reed at 3436 Ligonier St. for \$487,500.

Dawn M Walters to Lillian To at 4918 Hatfield St. for \$630,000.

Douglas R Kauffman to Brian Bird at 213 Main St. for \$550,000.

Elaina R Holko to Kevin A Brooks at 313 Main St. for \$475,000.

Emilio & Rosanna Veneziano to 511 52nd Street LLC at 511-513 52nd St. for \$289,000.

Frank R Coniglio Jr to Lucky Stone Real Estate Services LLC at 137 1/2 46th St. for \$150,000.

James J Winner to Stephenie Murray at 182 1/2 45th St. for \$280,000.

John M & Margaret Ann Mahronich to Home Page Properties LLC at 517 1/2 53rd St. for \$144,900.

Joshua R Nightingale to William Grebenc at 3831 Liberty Ave. for \$350,000.

Karen M Chuly to Christopher Jay Leasher at 274 38th St. for \$275,000.

Kate M Ellery to Kyle R Rioboli at 5111 Duncan St. for \$500,000.

LPB Properties LLC to D & BS Cottage LLC at 222 57th St. for \$95,000.

Marcus Giangiuli to Michael Franceschi at 170 Locarna Way for \$242,735.

Margaret M Sciuillo to Samuel Heineman at 4543 Carroll St. for \$251,000.

Pgh Housing LLC to Stephen B Donovan at

147 45th St. for \$279,000.

Richard C Yagesh to Barbara J Mosley at 5602 Celadine St. for \$225,000.

Robert O & Lori A Pickel to Daniel J Burkhardt at 316 44th St. for \$362,500.

Robert S Harbison to Cory Sanders at 3725 Butler St. Unit 310 for \$599,000.

Steven C & Joanne M Townsend to Raymond Byrne at 226 42nd St. for \$433,000.

Thomas H Welsh 3rd to Michael A Turturro at 4620 Carlton St. for \$750,000.

UERG LLC to Paulo Saldi Garcia at 259 44th St. for \$576,500.

William J & Darlene M Hanlon to Rebecca D Peralta & Henry Josue Avila at 3950 Liberty Ave. for \$475,000.

### Stanton Heights

East Liberty Development, Inc. to Cole Loneker at 215 Schenley Manor Dr for \$193,000.

James L & Linda E Fink to Aztec Realty LLC at 4301 Stanton Ave. for \$90,000.

Peter J & Kathleen Contis to Christopher M Vayansky at 4706-4708 Coleridge St. for \$220,350.

Ronald E Heim to David Cook at 1145-1147 Woodbine St. for \$293,000.

*This column, which uses County data, 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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## Rockey *continued from page 6*

whose website outlines problems and detailed plans of action, Rockey's website contains a few short phrases about generating more jobs for Allegheny County and promising to "end the crime wave."

His website says "we don't need confrontation. We need consensus... Together, we can ensure that our future is bright."

Rockey and Innamorato have differing stances on several "hot-button" issues. On the future of the Allegheny County Jail, for example, Innamorato says she will "fire the warden and hire new leadership at the county jail who will establish clear, publicly available plans to end solitary confinement and other inhumane practices."

Since April 2020, nineteen incarcerated individuals have died, either while in custody at the Allegheny County Jail or shortly after their release. The University of Pittsburgh published a study documenting filthy conditions in the kitchen and problems with prisoners getting medications and treatment on time.

Rockey said he was beginning to study the issues at the jail, and believed conditions were "clearly unacceptable." But he was evidently not ready to declare what should be done.

"I understand how politics works," he said. "You talk and then you investigate. In business, you investigate, then you talk. And so, drawing a conclusion on an individual like Orlando Harper [warden at the jail], without doing the homework is a disservice to him, and doing a disservice to what the right answer might be. Because getting rid of him, if he's not actually the problem, and maybe he is - I know, a lot of people seem to think he is, but if he's not the problem, and you get rid of him, you won't get different outcomes. And so, you have to understand what's causing the issues before you start implementing change."

On housing, Innamorato has proposed

a countywide "Tenant's Bill of Rights" to protect renters from rising costs and predatory practices by landlords.

She has introduced state legislation to provide \$125 million to help seniors and longtime homeowners fix up and stay in their houses.

Rockey noted that the federal government should increase the amount of tax credits used by investors to help pay for affordable rental housing.

He said that he oversaw community development programs while at PNC Bank, and he said the bank invested in neighborhoods throughout western PA.

Asked to identify affordable housing projects that his bank supported in the Pittsburgh area, Rockey said he did not want to get into specifics about his former bank's investments.

Similarly, Rockey declined to reveal his personal view on abortion. He serves on the board of directors of the local Little Sisters of the Poor, one of the most fervently pro-life groups in the nation.

The Little Sisters of the Poor won a U.S. Supreme Court case over whether they could be forced to pay for contraception services for their employees; the high court, in a 2020 ruling, said they did not.

In contrast, Innamorato is pro-choice, and pledged to fight for women's rights.

If elected, his main job, Rockey says, will be to bring businesses, jobs, and prosperity to the county. He's a businessman, he said, not a politician.

"There's the strategic aspect of where are you going, how are you growing?" Rockey said. "And then there's the tactical aspect of somebody walking into the building today, and we have to take care of them. You have to be able to manage both, and that's what I'm ready to do."

[Alan Guenther may be reached at [guenthera30@gmail.com](mailto:guenthera30@gmail.com).] ♦

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**BELOW:** Local cyclists take to the streets - riding from Lawrenceville to the Northside, through spaces usually devoted to vehicular traffic - to celebrate 'OpenStreets PGH' on Sunday, Jun. 25. Photo by Jack McKay.



**ABOVE:** Bike polo enthusiasts transform a Lawrenceville parking lot when given the 'car-free' opportunity. Photo by Jack McKay.



**ABOVE:** Non-motorists gather in the parking lot of a former Circle K convenience store in Lawrenceville. The June installation of OpenStreets PGH celebrated all modes of alternative transportation. Photo by Jack McKay.

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# Bill to rescue blighted properties remains stalled in City Council

By Alan Guenther *Bulletin contributor*

*Insight/Pittsburgh* - After a two-hour meeting on Jun. 13, it became clear that some City Council members do not trust the Pittsburgh Land Bank to turn aged, decaying properties into affordable housing opportunities for thousands of city residents.

The City clings to ownership of more than 11,500 properties that are in need of rehabilitation or redevelopment. In many cases, the City gained title to the land after owners failed to pay their real estate taxes over a number of years - and were subsequently walled away from their properties.

Most of the properties remain empty, and are steadily deteriorating. These rotting hulks stand as monuments to nearly a decade of the City's resistance to utilizing a nonprofit entity known as a "land bank," which Council itself created in 2004 to address this crisis.

Local nonprofit groups and private parties could purchase vacant properties from the City - ones that have been transferred to the land bank - for redevelopment. The land bank could then choose to make these units available at a lower price to city residents who are at risk of being driven out of their neighborhoods by rapidly rising rents.

But before that can happen, the City needs to pass legislation that would give it the legal framework within which to transfer the properties to the Pittsburgh Land Bank - so that the much-needed work can begin.

During a lengthy Downtown meeting between City Council members, representatives of Mayor Ed Gainey's administration, and the Urban Redevelopment Authority, contradictory views were exchanged. Some council members, such as Erika Strassburger, Anthony Coghill, and Daniel Lavelle, said they wanted to move forward rapidly. "Alacrity," Strassburger said, was her top priority.

But Councilwomen Deb Gross and Barbara Warwick, along with Council President Theresa Kail-Smith, made it clear that a current draft of the Land Bank legislation fell far short of what they wanted. At one point during the hearing, Kail-Smith elaborated on her distrust of nonprofit groups looking to repurpose these properties. The Council President said she once reported a nonprofit group [located in her district] to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) because she thought it was engaging in illegal activities.

**BELOW:** City Councilmembers consider supporting Pittsburgh Land Bank legislation on Tuesday, Jun. 13. Photo by Alan Guenther.



The bottom line here is that any legislation will need to be retooled before Kail-Smith allows Council to take a final vote on the measure. A public hearing will be scheduled once the legislation is revised, but there is no indication as to how long that could take.

Prior to the meeting, the Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group (PCRG) issued a statement, which included a brief on the origins of the local land bank, as well as a call-to-action for local legislators to finally get to work. "It is time to finish what we started," PCRG stated. "Pittsburgh needs an effective and efficient land recycling organization that can manage the vast amounts of vacant, tax-delinquent, and blighted properties that riddle all our communities."

Claiming more than a dozen community redevelopment groups as members, PCRG asked city residents to call on the Land Bank to negotiate agreements with Pittsburgh Public Schools, Allegheny County, and the City in order to "ensure that the Land Bank is capable of efficiently processing tax delinquent properties into productive use."

When tax-delinquent properties are finally sold, the municipalities and schools that depend on real estate taxes for their funding could recoup some of the revenue lost during years of City ownership. When a blighted property is redeveloped, a new owner will upgrade the property and potentially increase its taxable value. Whatever the new owner is allowed to build could also spell major change to the character of a community, which is why some neighborhood groups and elected officials remain wary of the local land bank's process.

[Alan Guenther may be reached at [guenthera30@gmail.com](mailto:guenthera30@gmail.com).] ♦

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