

the Bulletin

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City Council confirms Larry Sciroto as new PGH Police Chief

By Alan Guenther *Bulletin contributor*

Pittsburgh – City Council voted unanimously on May 23 to confirm Larry Sciroto, 49, as Pittsburgh’s new police chief.

“It’s time to go to work,” Sciroto said to reporters after the vote.

He said that he planned to make changes and put more officers on the street instead of responding to false alarms or making unnecessary traffic stops.

“I have to empower my officers to engage in a way that maybe wasn’t the way of the past,” he said.

On May 3, Mayor Ed Gainey appointed Sciroto, who will be paid \$180,000 per year. The new chief spent more than 20 years working his way through the ranks of the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police before

See **Sciroto** | page 2



ABOVE: A Bollywood dance routine gets everybody moving at the ‘Trap + Paint’ party. Garfield residents joined together with volunteers and BGC staff members to celebrate Remake Learning Days on May 19. See more of the action on page 11. Photo by Andrew McKeon.

No joke: comedian buys two churches to support local comedy scene

By Elizabeth Sensky *East Liberty Development, Inc.*

Stanton Heights - Steve Hofstetter never planned to buy a church in Pittsburgh. Nevertheless, this comedian is now the proud owner of not one, but two.

Born and raised in New York, Hofstetter found his way to Pittsburgh by way of the COVID-19 pandemic.

But the comedian had already made a name for himself on the comedy circuits of New York City and Los Angeles; he hosted and produced the first season of the series *Laughs* on FOX, and has amassed more than 750,000 subscribers on YouTube.

Hofstetter is now using his platform to help new comedians and artists get ahead in the industry - and that is where the churches come in.

The first church, which Hofstetter purchased in 2020 in Stanton Heights, serves as the home of the Steel City Arts Foundation (Steel City AF). Founded in honor of Hofstetter’s father, the foundation describes this repurposed facility as a “live-work-play” environment for comedians.

The space has a detached three-bedroom

See **Steel City AF** | page 6



ABOVE: Comedian Steve Hofstetter stands in what used to be a church in Stanton Heights, and is now home to Steel City Arts Foundation. Read more at right. Photo courtesy of ELDI.

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*‘EACH ONE TEACH ONE’ LEARNING
CENTER OPENS IN GARFIELD*

*SILVER EYE ON PENN AVE:
PHOTO CENTER WIDENS FOCUS*

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Scirotto *continued from page 1*

retiring in 2018.

During his service in Pittsburgh, Scirotto spent six years as the Zone 5 Commander [Zone 5 includes the Bloomfield, Garfield, East Liberty, Homewood, Larimer, and Morningside neighborhoods].

In interviews prior to the council vote, Scirotto - who is openly gay, and also the son of a white mother and Black father - said that he wants to “build trust” with local communities and has vowed to change the culture of the police department.

Critics of the bureau have questioned the way police handle calls involving people with mental illness.

The city last month agreed to pay \$8 million to the family of Jim Rogers, a 54-year-old, homeless Black man, who died after he was tased at least eight times for taking a bicycle from a Bloomfield porch on a joyride and later returning it. Five police officers were subsequently fired because of the incident.

Black Political Empowerment Project (B-PEP) chairman Tim Stevens, who helped attorney Todd Hollis negotiate the settlement - the largest in the city’s history - said he understands the challenges

Scirotto will face as he takes command of the police department.

“Having a police chief of color, who happens to be of the LGBTQ+ community, will mean that maybe some practices in the past that were accepted by some police officers...will not be tolerated,” said Stevens.

“They may not admit it, but some officers will probably have an issue with a new chief of color, and from the gay community,” Stevens noted. “But my hope is that they will put their prejudices aside, accept him as the new chief, respect him, and respond positively to the policies and procedures that he will promote.”

In August 2021, the city of Fort Lauderdale hired Scirotto as its police chief, but he was fired seven months later for allegedly favoring people of color for promotions over white officers.

He has denied those charges and filed a wrongful termination lawsuit against the Florida city.

Scirotto said he felt a four-hour public interview held with council members last week “provided our community, and our officers, with confidence and a blueprint”

BELOW: Mayor Ed Gainey’s pick for Pittsburgh’s next chief of police takes questions from City Council members at a hearing on May 18. Photo by Kiley Kosciński/90.5 WESA.



for the direction he’d like to take the bureau, according to the *Tribune-Review*.

The new police chief said he is working to ensure officers can “engage in a new way, a new philosophy” - and wants his officers to think of themselves as guardians, not “warriors.”

The City Council plans to hold a reception, inviting residents to meet Scirotto in person. Council President Theresa Kail-

Smith had originally promised to hold a public hearing to permit residents to ask questions of the chief before he was confirmed. But she changed her mind, saying that direct public input “wasn’t necessary.”

Scirotto replaces Scott Schubert, who retired as chief last summer and is currently working for the FBI.

[Alan Guenther may be reached at guenthera30@gmail.com.] ♦

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Bulletin welcomes new intern: get to know Jack McKay

By Jack McKay *The Bulletin*

Garfield - My name is Jack McKay and I'm currently interning at the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC), where I will write stories for *The Bulletin*.

I try to think of myself as an advocate for progressive change, a passionate scholar, and a dedicated teacher and athlete. On my path to obtaining a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science from Chatham University last year, I developed a deep appreciation for critical thinking, effective communication, and writing.

Among my many interests, I am particularly drawn to the areas of climate change, social justice, economics, and race relations in the United States. I believe in equal rights and opportunities for all, and this belief has driven me to try to learn as much as I can about how different social welfare reforms can help address economic inequality.

I feel the BGC is an organization that is committed to this mission, and that's why I chose to apply for this *Bulletin* internship.

Outside of my academic pursuits, I am an instructor who finds joy in teaching sports. As a tennis coach for the Edgewood Club, I try to help individuals of all ages develop their tennis skills and foster a healthy lifestyle. I am also a committed athlete who plays a lot of tennis and basketball; both sports have taught me a lot about hard work and being a team player.

I believe that my interdisciplinary background, combined with my commitment to community engagement and sportsmanship, will allow me to approach my writing from a holistic perspective.

I hope that the stories I write will demonstrate my drive, grit, and empathy - qualities that I think also define the community of Garfield. ♦

BELOW: *Bulletin intern Jack McKay gets up a shot on the blacktop. Due to conflicting eyewitness accounts of what happened at the Highland Park basketball court, we cannot confirm whether or not his shot resulted in a made bucket. Photo by Andrew McKeon.*



the Bulletin

Serving Pittsburgh's
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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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for the latest neighborhood information and community updates.

Module, City of Bridges propose new home development in Garfield

By Joe Reuben *Bulletin contributor*

Garfield - The latest in a string of new housing developments in the neighborhood made its way to the city zoning board on Jun. 1 for approval of several variances related to its site design. Module Design and City of Bridges Community Land Trust are teaming up for a second time in trying to bring new, affordably-priced housing units to Garfield.

They are also partners in a 10-unit housing development in the 5100 block of Rosetta Street, which received approval from the zoning board last year. That project is still awaiting the sale of nine, city-owned lots to the developers by the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA).

The Columbo St. development could move to construction as early as this fall if the financing for it can be rounded into place by September. The three, 3-bedroom homes would carry sales prices well below \$200,000 and, with some supplemental mortgage fi-

nancing for qualified buyers from the URA, could feature monthly mortgage payments of as little as \$1,200 per month.

City of Bridges prides itself on creating housing that remains permanently affordable. This requires limits on the future resale price a homeowner can seek when they decide to put their home on the market.

The community land trust accomplishes this by holding on to ownership of the land beneath the home, and then working with the homeowner to set the resale price when the time comes. This allows the next owner to also enjoy the advantages of homeownership at a vastly reduced price, according to City of Bridges' literature.

"Because we're seeing some rapid inflation in prices for new and renovated homes in Garfield," Rick Swartz, executive director of the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC), noted, "it's important to have some development that keeps homes affordable well into the future. This is not something that all homebuyers are looking for but, for those who are, they will still enjoy some appreciation in their home's value as time rolls on."

The BGC sold the Columbo St. lot to City of Bridges in 2021 for \$5,000. To inquire further about this and other homeownership opportunities with City of Bridges, contact Crystal Jennings-Rivera (crystal@cityofbridgesclt.org). ♦



ABOVE: The front elevation concept for three 3-story homes proposed for construction at the corner of Columbo St. & N. Pacific Avenue in Garfield. Graphic courtesy of Module.

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Garfield resident opens childcare center on Penn Ave.

By Jack McKay *The Bulletin*

Garfield - A daycare center called “Each One Teach One” recently opened its doors at 5152 Penn Ave. The center’s director, Dominique Thornhill, has worked hard to create a learning environment where children can thrive in Garfield.

Thornhill’s educational journey began at the University of Pittsburgh, where she earned a doctorate in language & cultural studies.

She soon became a teacher in the Pittsburgh Public Schools system, and realized that many of her students could benefit from “early intervention.”

Her vision of a facility that could provide educational enrichment services to kids of all ages, as well as quality childcare, eventually came to fruition in Wilkinsburg.

“We opened in November of 2020 - in the middle of the pandemic - as a learning center,” Thornhill told *The Bulletin*. The idea of the facility, she said, was to pro-

BELOW: Dominique Thornhill (left) holds childcare close to her heart. She recently opened the Each One Teach One learning center in Garfield. Photo courtesy of Dominique Thornhill.



BELOW: A kid shows off his prize catch during an Each One Teach One field trip. Photo courtesy of Dominique Thornhill.



vide “a safe place for school-age children to complete their virtual learning.”

Even though she chose Wilkinsburg for Each One Teach One’s first location, Thornhill had always wanted to open a second location in Garfield.

“I was born and raised in the Garfield area,” she explained. “It was always a dream of mine to not only live, but also work in my community.” After years of struggling to find a new location, the Each One Teach One Learning Center finally opened its doors in April.

To achieve success in opening a second location, Thornhill has had to overcome various challenges along the way. It has been difficult, she noted, to balance the logistical duties, such as accounting and website management, with her in-house duties of supporting staff members and

helping the children. Yet she found a silver lining in all of the hard work when, during the pandemic, Each One Teach One was better able to “serve families while schools and many other childcare centers were closed.”

Thornhill’s drive has resulted in many rewarding experiences for children and their families. The center provides after-school programming, as well as holiday

events like “Breakfast with the Easter Bunny” and “Parents Night Out.”

Each One Teach One hosts a nine-week summer enrichment program that features trips to Kennywood, the Carnegie Science Center, the Children’s Museum, and spray parks, among other destinations.

The center also provides extracurricular activities where kids can engage with local role models. In July of 2021, the Westinghouse football team visited the center in Wilkinsburg.

“We were happy to have the Westinghouse football team visit - as they are not only winners on the field but also in the classroom,” Thornhill said. “The football team spoke about perseverance, hard work, focus, and brotherhood.”

Thornhill and her staffers refer low-income families to the Early Learning Resource Center, which provides financial assistance for tuition. Each One Teach One also sponsors some families, allowing them to participate in programs like the summer enrichment offerings.

Whether through quality childcare, summer camps, or educational services, Each One Teach One strives to make a positive impact with kids from Garfield and the surrounding neighborhoods.

After all, as Thornhill explained, the center was born out of her unyielding “love for learning and children.” ♦

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Steel City AF *continued from page 1*

home that houses comedians for nine months at a time, free of charge. It also features a computer lab, gym, comedy library, recording studio, and a digital showroom that can be used for open mics and digital shows.

The chapel itself houses a performance space & events center that can host art and comedy shows, lectures, food festivals, and even be utilized for film and TV productions.

Building on the momentum of Steel City AF, Hofstetter recently purchased a second church - this one located in Ross Township - where he aims to develop Pittsburgh's arts scene even further. This time, he plans on transforming a former church into a comedy club and film production studio. The church is commercially zoned, and previously served as the Melwood Party Center, located a few miles southwest of Ross Park Mall.

Busy with its own church renovation, East Liberty Development, Inc. (ELDI) was connected with Hofstetter through a *Pittsburgh Business Times* story on church buildings in the East End. That connection led to ELDI giving him a tour of Sts. Peter & Paul Church, where he elaborated on his work throughout the city.

Dive into our conversation below to learn about how Hofstetter ended up in Pittsburgh, his vision for Steel City AF, and what he thinks might enhance Pittsburgh's comedy scene. *[The following transcript has been edited for space.]*

ELDI: *Tell us the story of how you ended up buying two churches here.*

Hofstetter: "I first got the idea to do something like this in a church when I was at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival [in Scotland]. I kept passing by this gorgeous, but also dilapidated, church just outside the city, and I thought what a cool performance space it could be. I looked into it, and someone had purchased it for hardly anything a few years earlier and hadn't done anything with it since. I tried to get in touch, but never heard back. But it was this idea that I filed away as something I would like to eventually do, and every couple of months I would check out what was available.

"Then, when the pandemic hit, not only did it give me a lot more time to be on the internet,

but it also made me reconsider both my priorities and the entertainment industry as a whole and how [entertainers] don't need to be based in New York or LA anymore. The world is digital - you can really be based wherever it is that you want to live, so I kept looking and I found this amazing building in Pittsburgh that was surprisingly affordable. I went to go see it, and it was perfect."

ELDI: *When did you first consider moving to Pittsburgh?*

Hofstetter: "I was living in LA at the time of the pandemic, but I've always liked Pittsburgh. I would tour here as a comedian, and I was always surprised by the city, because Pittsburgh's reputation for people who haven't been here is this cold steel town where everyone's covered in soot and all the pictures are in black & white.

"I don't know if Pittsburgh is trying to hide how great it is (laughs) or it just needs to get the word out a little better, but physically it is one of the most beautiful cities in the country, and it's incredibly affordable. It is compact enough that you can get anywhere under a half hour, and most places in 15 minutes. It's got everything that a big city has without most of the drawbacks. So, it was one of the places I had considered looking. There weren't many cities I was willing to live in - and I wasn't willing to live in anything other than a city - so that kind of narrowed down where I was looking."

ELDI: *When did you make the move?*

Hofstetter: "February 2021, so the pandemic was still raging. It became easy for me to see that I loved Pittsburgh, because if I enjoyed it in the dead of winter while most of it was closed, of course I was going to like it."

ELDI: *Did you have to do a lot of renovations on the Steel City AF church?*

Hofstetter: "Tons - a lot of construction and some modernizing when it comes to tech. A lot of people have these visions of buying an old building and converting it. That's great, and I highly recommend it, but I also recommend that people be realistic about it and understand that these buildings weren't made for internet. They weren't made for cell phones, so getting

- continued on page 14 -

BELOW: *The exterior of Steel City Arts Foundation in Stanton Heights. Photo courtesy of Steel City AF.*



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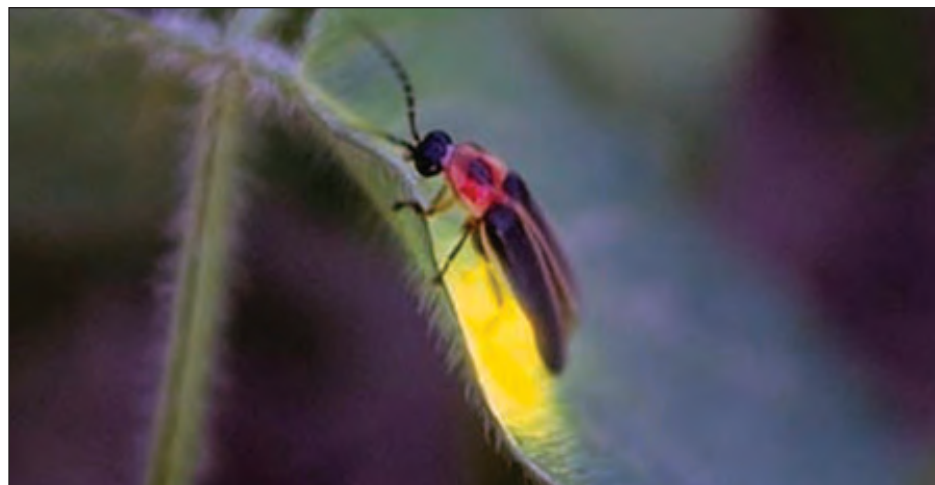
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"COME SUPPORT FOLK AND SEE SOME ART, GOOD VIBES AND GOOD TIMES"

Gardening advice & earthy delights: all things fireflies

By Minette Vaccariello *Bulletin contributor*



ABOVE: A firefly flashes near the top of a plant. Tall grass gives these insects a high point where they can send out signals for partnership. Photo courtesy of Minette Vaccariello.

Garfield - There are many wonderful conveniences and benefits to living in the city - it's why I've been a city-dweller for over half my life. But when summer rolls in, I feel nostalgic for when I used to live in the country.

I grew up in a rural part of New England, and have fond memories of stargazing in fields, swimming in lakes and, best of all, watching the fireflies light up in the early evenings. Now that I live in an urban environment, I've found ways to replicate the feelings of summer in the country, right here in my own backyard.

In my tiny 500 sq. ft. backyard, I've grown a pollinator garden packed with native plants that have attracted lots of bees, birds, and over 20 different types of butterflies. Beginning in mid-June, right around dusk, we'll see the magical flashes of fireflies in the sky.

What makes fireflies look so cool?

Fireflies naturally produce "bioluminescence," which makes them glow and tells predators that they're toxic. They exchange flashes to attract a mate, with each species having its own flash pattern used to identify its own kind. When you get a colony of one firefly species, you'll experience synchronized flashing. This rare sight only happens in a few regions across the world, and Pennsylvania is lucky to be one of them. Just under three hours from Pittsburgh, you can experience this synchronized light show in Cook Forest State Park [in Clarion County].

How do you attract fireflies?

Remember these five things to make an ideal habitat for fireflies: moisture, leaf litter, tall grass, leaf cover, and darkness. Fireflies like moisture - and moist ground to lay their eggs - so having something as small as a birdbath in a yard can help. Leaf litter attracts the food that fireflies eat, like snails, worms, and slugs. Tall grass gives fireflies a high point to climb where they can flash a signal to attract their partner. Leaf cover protects them during the day from the sun and heat. Keeping it dark at night (where you can) helps the fireflies shine bright and find their mates.

Which flowers and trees can help support a firefly habitat?

Native flowers and trees can contribute to the firefly habitat by keeping the soil moist while also adding shelter. A few native plants that attract fireflies are asters, goldenrod, and cardinal flowers, and trees like buttonbush and native pines. If you're looking for a few of these native flowers or trees for your yard, come by this month's native plant pop-up sale.

On Saturday, Jun. 3, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Rust Belt Natives will host a pop-up plant sale at the corner of Gem Way and N. Pacific Ave. in Garfield; future pop-up dates are Jul. 8, Aug. 12, and Sept. 9. Come see what native plants are growing in the pollinator garden this month - and pick up your own firefly-friendly plants and trees to help bring the magic to your yard.

To learn more about Rust Belt Natives, please visit rustbeltnatives.com. ♦

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Neighborhood FOCUS

Bloomfield parish prepares for closure of last remaining Catholic church

By Alan Guenther *Bulletin contributor*

Bloomfield - For the first time since 1866, Pittsburgh's Little Italy neighborhood might be without its own church to serve its remaining Catholic population.

The Rev. Tom Gramc told *The Bulletin* that, in early June, he will formally recommend that the St. Joseph Church at 4712 Liberty Ave. be permanently closed.

Rev. Gramc said he will make his recommendation to Bishop David Zubik, but the Diocese of Pittsburgh has not said when the bishop will make his final decision.

The St. Joseph Church closed "temporarily" in September, when parishioners complained of dust and odors as the Diocese attempted to make repairs to the 137-year-old Gothic-style church.

When St. Joseph closed for repairs, the faithful were invited to attend services just over a mile away at the St. Augustine Church on 37th Street - in a quiet, leafy section of Lawrenceville,

Some Bloomfield residents are upset with Rev. Gramc's pending recommendation. Linda Vacca, for example, sees the recommended closing as the latest in a series of unfortunate events for the St. Maria Goretti parish, starting with the shuttering and eventual demolition of the St. Lawrence O'Toole Church in 2020. The Garfield church property has since been sold to the Children's Home of Pittsburgh.

In May 2022, the Diocese closed the Immaculate Conception Church (The Mac) on Edmond Street. That move infuriated Vacca and a group of area parishioners, who appealed the decision to the Vatican.

When the Immaculate Conception Church closed, Vacca said Diocesan officials had promised they would not leave Bloomfield without a Catholic Church. Now, with the recommended closing of St. Joseph, she said the Diocese is breaking its word.

"This is all by their own actions. This was once one parish with three churches," she said in an interview. "And today, this is one parish with zero churches." While Vacca appeals the closure of The Mac, the Diocese cannot move forward with its sale, which Rev. Gramc says has added to the parish's financial problems. The parish is paying thousands of dollars each month to heat, cool, and insure the vacant Mac and St. Joseph churches.

Carlo Schiaretta, a Bloomfield resident who served on a parish task force that recommended closing The Mac and keeping St. Joseph open, said he is considering asking the bishop's permission to launch a fundraising drive to keep St. Joseph's open.

Members of the St. Maria Goretti parish raised \$650,000 a few years ago for the "Church Alive" campaign, Schiaretta said. He'd like to see whether local business leaders will get behind a drive to raise \$2.5 million to repair and save St. Joseph's.

- continued on next page -



ABOVE: The Rev. Tom Gramc in the sunlit sanctuary of Lawrenceville's St. Augustine Church. Photo by Alan Guenther.

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BELOW: Lawrenceville's St. Augustine Church welcomes all the Bloomfield parishioners who cannot worship closer to home. Photo by Alan Guenther.



“I think a clean, well-maintained, beautiful church is helping to attract people.”

- Rev. Tom Gramc, St. Maria Goretti parish

- continued from previous page -

“I’d love to have a two- to three-month hiatus,” Schiaretta said, to give Bloomfield residents time to contact local business leaders and find out if they’ll put up the money to restore the St. Joseph church. If the campaign doesn’t succeed, he said, “we’ll know that at least we tried.”

Rev. Gramc, the young priest who leads the St. Maria Goretti parish, was noncommittal when asked about Schiaretta’s proposed fundraising campaign.

“I’d have to have a conversation with him about that,” Rev. Gramc noted. The fundraising drive would not only have to pay for the \$1.6 million needed to repair St. Joseph’s, but it would also have to raise enough to close the parish’s deficit.

“The parish is losing \$130,000 a year,” Rev. Gramc said.

While he understands the reverence people have for their neighborhood churches, Rev. Gramc explained that he is likewise concerned with the long-term need to solve the parish’s fiscal problems.

If buyers for the two vacant churches in Bloomfield could be found, and the operating deficit could be closed, Rev. Gramc feels that parishioners could then be happy in the St. Augustine Church in Lawrenceville.

Recent Mass attendance figures give him hope.

Although some in the parish predicted Mass attendance would drop when The Mac closed and St. Joseph was temporarily shuttered for repairs, quite the opposite has occurred.

Instead of declining, Mass attendance grew significantly, Rev. Gramc said. Attendance has grown by more than 53% since parishioners were first asked to attend St. Augustine’s church, according to Gramc.

The combined average for weekly Mass attendance has increased from 489 in September 2022, when St. Joseph’s first closed for repairs, to 751 per week in April 2023. The numbers have climbed steadily since February, when 583 people attended, according to figures provided by the Diocese.

“Both of the church buildings in Bloomfield were in bad disrepair,” Rev. Gramc said. “Leaking ceilings, falling plaster, odors in the church. People were concerned

about safety.”

Maintenance is not an issue with the St. Augustine Church in Lawrenceville, built in 1898 with a \$103,000 donation from the owners of Iron City Brewery.

“I think a clean, well-maintained, beautiful church is helping to attract people,” Rev. Gramc said.

While consolidation of the Catholic churches may be difficult for people who prefer to walk to a neighborhood church or are unable to drive, there is something positive to be said for the feeling of spirit and community when larger numbers of people come together to worship.

Father Philip Farrell, Regional Vicar/North Vicariate, said that “it’s about community... It’s about saving souls.

“And that’s what we’re seeing with the gradual uptick in folks coming to church,” Rev. Farrell said. “What we’re really working for is to make sure our folks have a powerful experience of the Lord.”

[Alan Guenther, a Bloomfield resident and frequent Bulletin contributor, may be reached at guenthera30@gmail.com.] ♦

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Our neighborhood has recently lost two well respected funeral homes. Winter Funeral Home, PC and McCabe Brothers, Inc. have closed.

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'City in the Streets' event coming to Garfield

A Message from the City of Pittsburgh

Pittsburgh - Last month, Mayor Ed Gainey launched the new "City in the Streets" initiative through his Office of Neighborhood Services.

This program brings city department leaders out of city hall and into neighborhoods to engage with residents and provide swift follow-up to requests for services. The initiative kicked off on May 24 in the city's Marshall-Shadeland neighborhood.

"Building trust between government and community begins with people interacting directly with city leaders in their neighborhoods," said Mayor Gainey. "City in the Streets will help connect our residents to the people who keep us safe, our streets paved, and our pools & parks open."

The block-party-style engagements will take place in six neighborhoods in 2023, and will also include local businesses, vendors, and community partners working to bring attention to neighborhood needs, as well as food, games, and activities for children.

Leaders from the following departments and authorities will be onsite at each event to share information about resources and capital projects in the community, deliver onsite services, and intake service requests for follow-up work:

- Department of Finance
- Department of Human Resources and Civil Services
- Department of Mobility and Infrastructure
- Department of Parks and Recreation
- Department of Permits, Licenses, and Inspections (PLI)
- Department of Public Safety
- Department of Public Works
- Mayor's Office
- Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority
- Urban Redevelopment Authority

Some actions that residents can expect during each event are removal of unsightly items by DPW, in-person support from PLI in applying for permits, and Human Resources staff assistance for residents interested in filling out job applications for employment opportunities with the city.

By bringing these resources directly to the community, Mayor Gainey is fulfilling his promise of improving core constituent services to the residents of Pittsburgh and making local government more accessible than ever before.

Input from various neighborhood groups will help inform the specific locations and vendors for each event in the City in the Streets initiative. The administration hopes that this innovative way to engage with community members will help provide department directors and city leaders with better insight into the challenges neighborhoods are facing - and how we can work together to make every neighborhood in Pittsburgh safe, welcome, and thriving for everyone.

City departments will utilize the information and input gathered at each event to create work plans for those neighborhoods and clear timetables for follow-up actions.

City in the Streets will take place in a different neighborhood, once a month, until October. Next stop: Garfield on Wednesday, Jun. 28; exact location to be determined.

For more info, and to RSVP, visit pittsburghpa.gov. ♦

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REMAKE LEARNING DAYS
GARFIELD - 5/19/23

ABOVE: Garfield's 'Trap + Paint' party welcomes everyone to join in the fun. This event, a part of Remake Learning Days, connected local families with live painting opportunities and helpful resources on N. Pacific Ave. Photo by Jack McKay.

BELOW: Artists of all ages fill canvases in Garfield. Photo by Jack McKay.



BELOW: Garfield residents show up for the party, and then sign up to become Greenzone volunteers on May 19. Photo by Andrew McKeon.



ABOVE: Rick Swartz, Executive Director of the BGC, unlocks hidden talents with a spray-can during a 'Trap + Paint' session on N. Pacific Ave. Photo by Andrew McKeon.

BELOW: Pamela Schon (left), Chief Operations Officer of the BGC, sits patiently while receiving a Henna tattoo outside the BGC Activity Center. Photo by Jack McKay.



ABOVE: The Garfield Coloring Book, blown up to family-size proportions, invites artistic contribution. Photo by Jack McKay.

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'Hack the Future' students showcase artwork at Assemble

By Thea Keene *Assemble*

Insight/Garfield - On Jun. 2, Assemble will showcase students' work from the "Hack the Future" program in its gallery space at 4824 Penn Ave.

Every month, from 6-10 p.m., the gallery welcomes folks of all ages to make art during Unblurred: First Fridays. In addition to its role as a gallery, Assemble is a community space for arts & technology that hosts a variety of programs for people of all ages.

One of those programs, Hack the Future, is designed for students in grades 9-12 to explore science, technology, engineering, art, and math (STEAM) while focusing on social justice and innovation topics relevant to themselves and their communities.

The program began in 2018, led by former teacher and current board member Shannon Thompson, with support from a Great Remake Grant from The Remake Learning Network.

Hack the Future is unique not only in the way that it centers student autonomy through self-driven projects, but also in how it pays students to attend and engage with the design process.

Khadijat Yussuff, monthly coordinator & Hack the Future teacher, takes the cultivation of her students' agency seriously.

"I never do baby talk," they explained. "It creates a reaction of 'this person must think I'm stupid,' and I don't want anyone, because of age, to feel that way."

Yussuff emphasizes that communication

is incredibly important for building trust within the space: "From the beginning, I let them know I'm learning along with them. Part of the agency is not only learning from them as well, but giving them the time and space to bring ideas to me."

Students in the program are wrapping up their personal projects for the spring semester, driven by their various interests to enact culturally relevant change.

Throughout the year leading up to these projects, guest experts come to share their knowledge with the high-schoolers.

"I try to make sure I talk to the kids about what they want to learn from the guest artist," Yussuff noted. "I know them all pretty well and can gauge their interest, but the ask beforehand is crucial."

A strong sense of community and belonging radiates throughout Assemble's facility when Hack the Future is in session.

It shows in the little things the students do: getting up to use the bathroom or grab a slice of pizza without raising a hand; announcing they were walking to the convenience store to get a drink; turning to one another to tell jokes and ask questions; sharing their pronouns with pride; approaching the instructors with updates in their lives or new ideas; cheering when a latecomer walked through the doors. The room feels alive. This is their space and their time.

For the June Unblurred show, students of Hack the Future will be the featured artists, and their final projects will be on display to the public for the whole month.

The chosen theme for the showcase is "nostalgia," and the students will be exploring this as a function of various ideas - nostalgia as it relates to their own lives, especially as queer youth; as it relates to their generation and the previous ones; and as it relates to technology.

The projects utilize a variety of mediums including microcontrollers, computers, cameras, camcorders, clay, paper, and textile media. "I'm very inspired by them and what they want to make," Yussuff said.

Stop by Assemble (4824 Penn Ave.) during the month of June to see works by Hack the Future students, and learn more about Assemble's other programs.

Hack the Future is supported by AEO Foundation, Department of Human Services Teen Programs, PA Humanities, and other funders who support Assemble's school-year programs. Please visit assemblephg.org to learn more. ♦



ABOVE: Rick Swartz (standing), the Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation's (BGC) executive director, speaks with Garfield residents at a 'State-of-the-Neighborhood' meeting on May 23. A representative from the URA visited the BGC Activity Center that evening to answer neighbors' questions about the Housing Opportunity Fund. Photo by Carlee Kukula.

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ABOVE: An Assemble student learns how STEAM principles can intersect with social justice during a 'Hack the Future' session. Photo courtesy of Thea Keene.

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.]

Garfield's first garden tour: calling all greenthumbs

By Vania Arthur Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation

Garfield - On Jul. 8, the neighborhood will host its first-ever garden tour, and we're currently looking for gardeners who would like to showcase their backyard spaces, flowers, edible gardens, and farms.

We would like to include Garfield's certified backyard habitats, which were established last year through the Audubon Society. The garden tour will run from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and will coincide with a Garden Party happening along N. Pacific Ave - with gardening demonstrations, music, kids' activities, plant sales, and food vendors.

If you're interested in participating/including your garden on the upcoming tour, or if you have questions, please contact Vania Arthur, BGC's Greenzone Coordinator (vania@bloomfield-garfield.org) or Minette Vaccariello, community volunteer (justaminette@gmail.com). ♦

Silver Eye Center for Photography expands impact with new facility

A Message from Silver Eye Center for Photography

BELOW: The new Lab @ Silver Eye features handsome interior design at 5228 Penn Ave. Photo by Sean Stewart.



Dear friends of Silver Eye,

I'm writing to share some exciting news.

First, thank you for joining us [on the evening of May 11] for a wonderful opening of the Fellowship 23 exhibition. If you couldn't make it, we hope you will stop in the gallery to see the powerful work by the six artists in this show, which is up through Jul. 28.

Notably, most of the work in the Fellowship 23 exhibition was printed and framed at our newly relocated digital lab, our first exhibition produced in this new location. The digital lab has moved to 5228 Penn Ave. [corner of Penn & S. Atlantic Aves.], just five blocks from the gallery, and is now open for lab members and service work.

This leads me to a very exciting announcement: "The Lab @ Silver Eye" is expanding! Silver Eye is creating an education center where our growing community of photographers, artists, researchers, and art lovers can come together to create, learn, and connect. Together, the relocated digital lab and the new education center will form The Lab @ Silver Eye, a vibrant new hub for artists in Pittsburgh and the Bloomfield-Garfield community.

The new facility will bring exciting opportunities for photographers, artists, researchers, and art lovers to engage with photography - and with one another. We'll be hosting everything from in-person workshops to meet-up groups, portfolio reviews, and salon socials. The Lab will also feature our library of photobooks.

We hope that you'll join us at future events and help us spread the word. We're here to provide resources and community to photographers. Learn more about The Lab @ Silver Eye, and how to contribute to the launch fund, at silvereve.org.

We look forward to welcoming you to The Lab @ Silver Eye!

With gratitude,

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Executive Director ♦

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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 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!



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Steel City AF *continued from page 6*

Wi-Fi in every inch of this building was a Sisyphean task. We have a lot of technology running this building now, but it took a bit to get it all there.”

ELDI: *Why did you want to start Steel City AF?*

Hofstetter: “The precursor to it for me was something called the Martin Foundation. My father’s name was Martin. It’s founded in his memory. The idea was there are over 1,000 nonprofits that focus on comedians helping other people, but at the time I started the Martin Foundation, there wasn’t a single one that looked inward. It was always everything from Comic Relief to Laugh for Sight - all these great organizations where comedians would do benefits for other people - but at the same time, we have an industry where depression is higher than average, anxiety is higher than average, and suicide is higher than average. So, I wanted to create something that would help comedians. My father was a very charitable person. He didn’t have any money, but he donated his time. When he passed, his death was a reminder that you shouldn’t wait on things. So, I started the foundation, and from there, the idea grew.

“When the pandemic hit, it went from one sizable scholarship to 30 different \$1,000 grants to comedians to keep people working at a time when it was illegal for us to do shows. Then, when I found the building, it shaped a lot of what we do, because having the additional three-bedroom house on the property allowed us to house comedians, the fact that the previous owner was a record producer and had created basically a control booth allowed me to create a recording studio, so a lot of the ideas came from just looking at the building and going, ‘Okay, what can this be?’”

ELDI: *You’ve talked about how being a good neighbor is a priority for Steel City AF. What does being a good neighbor mean to you, as someone who has lived all over the country?*

Hofstetter: “Well, this is the first time that I’ve had neighbors that I know. Living in New York and LA, you pretty much have to be a gossip in order to get to know your neighbors (laughs), whereas this is a neighborhood, and it’s a lot easier to meet people. There’s no way to make everybody happy, but we do what we can to use our influence to help with local events. We sponsored a neighborhood clean-up and a local soccer team, things like that. Then there are also things like keeping up the appearance of the property. We installed a new fence, which not only beautifies the property but also creates some sound barrier and privacy. We planted a bunch of trees. Again, both for beautification, but also, this is something we coordinated with the city because there are studies that show tree-lined streets create a safer neighborhood. We also put in sound panels in the chapel, because I’m someone who loves being able to sleep, so the last thing I want to do is be the neighbor that prevents other people from doing that.”

ELDI: *What is your ultimate vision for Steel City AF?*

Hofstetter: “Right now, we have over 30 members and an elected board where members help guide the organization. We have a development program where, step by step, we’re teaching people how to turn comedy into a career, and not just picking up a couple of bucks here and there. If this goes incredibly well, I’d love to see other people do the same thing in other cities. I’d love to see this help enhance the comedy and art scenes all over the place. For now, I’m concentrating on Pittsburgh. This has now been my home for two years, and I love it. I hope that other people can see what we’ve done as proof of concept and do the same.”

ELDI: *What do you think might help Pittsburgh’s comedy scene grow?*

Hofstetter: “Mentorship. Pittsburgh has produced a lot of really wonderful comedians, and most of them have moved out of the city. Every major city I’ve ever performed in has a collection of five to 10 working headliners - people who are headlining A-list comedy clubs around the world - that just live in the city because they like it there, they’re from there, their family is there, etc. Pittsburgh doesn’t have as much of that as many of the other cities I’ve been to. Some of our members are going to get opportunities and then use them to go have a career in New York, LA, or somewhere else. But what I’d love to do is get to the point where people see Pittsburgh as a wonderful place to be based and to help the next generation of comedians.” ♦

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Pedantic Arts Residency welcomes international artists to Penn Ave.

A Message from Pedantic Arts Residency

Friendship/Garfield - On Jun. 9, Pedantic Arts Residency will officially launch its third iteration by welcoming three creatives from across the globe.

Pedantic highlights the impact that education, study, and structured contemplation can have on artistic output by emphasizing the art world tradition of interconnecting creators, organizers, and critics.

Welcoming three international residents - whose practices overlap between visual arts, curation, and writing - this unique opportunity invites cross-disciplinary dialogue and collective immersion within the context of Pittsburgh's arts landscape.

As part of the four-week long program, the residents will be housed in a residential/commercial hybrid facility at the

southwest corner of Penn and S. Atlantic Avenues in Friendship

The building, designed by Moss Architects, functions as an incubator for creative thought, discussion, and growth. As opposed to the typical expectation of output in residency programs, Pedantic places emphasis on the connections and conversations that take place while the residents share living quarters.

The Pedantic Apartment's location provides immediate access to the art hub of Penn Avenue - home to myriad galleries and arts organizations, as well as the monthly festivities of Unblurred: First Fridays.

This summer's three residents include Akea Brionne, a Creole, lens-based artist

and researcher from Detroit, MI, whose work is rooted in an interdisciplinary exploration of the Black experience in America, with emphasis on the relationship between Black women and social geography; Chenoa Baker, a curator based in West Roxbury, MA, whose work is rooted in anti-colonial, equitable, and collectivist work; and Chad Bilyeu, a Black American writer, historian, and photographer based in Leiden, the Netherlands, who creates what is known in the comic industry as "full scripts" [scripts meant to provide an artist with dialogue, scenario, and expositional instructions].

On Wednesday, Jun. 14, the three residents will take part in a meet-and-greet at the KST Alloy Studios (5530 Penn Ave.), where each resident will give a brief pre-

sentation on their current practices and background. On Friday, Jul. 7, an open house [hosted in the Pedantic Apartment] will celebrate the conclusion of their residency term.

Pedantic is co-organized by Headwater Media and Casey Droege Cultural Productions. Principal funding for the project was provided by the S. Kent Rockwell Foundation.

The Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation (BGC) is providing fiscal sponsorship. Working together with Friendship Development Associates, the BGC launched the Penn Avenue Arts Initiative in 1997 to help revitalize the commercial district.

To learn more about Pedantic, please email hannah@caseydroege.com. ♦



Father's day is a special day of the year to remember our fathers and father figures.

Yet, as we know, it can also be a very difficult time for those who grew-up without or who have lost a father.

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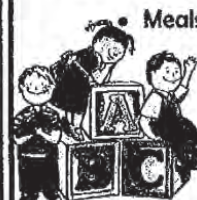
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Innamorato, Dugan win primary elections, will face Republican challengers on Nov. 7

By Alan Guenther *Bulletin contributor*

Allegheny County - By defeating their more conservative opponents in the May 16 primary election, Democratic candidates Sara Innamorato and Matt Dugan won their way onto November's ballot.

Lawrenceville resident Innamorato, 37, will face Republican Joe Rockey, 58, a retired PNC bank vice president, in the contest for county executive. The county executive oversees departments & agencies that award hundreds of millions of dollars in contracts each year to companies & nonprofit agencies, and also appoints members of numerous agencies & authorities, including the Allegheny County Jail Oversight Board.

In the race for county prosecutor, Dugan defeated incumbent Steve Zappala in the Democratic primary. The prosecutor decides which criminal charges should be pursued, and Dugan, who currently serves as the county public defender, has pledged to stop prosecuting minor offenses which fill the county jail and clog the courts.

Zappala, however, has not accepted defeat. On election eve, he said he was considering running in November - as a Republican - in an effort to retain the office that he has held for the last 12 years. He received enough Republican write-in votes on May 16 to qualify to run as the Republican candidate.

Progressives in Allegheny County have been on a prolonged winning streak. The streak started in 2018, when Innamorato ran as a "Democratic Socialist" and won election as a state representative. Progressives also succeeded in electing Summer Lee to the U.S. House of Representatives, Ed Gainey as Mayor of Pittsburgh, and Bethany Hallam to the Allegheny County Council [Hallam defeated her primary challenger, Joanna Doven, and will be on the November ballot].

Democrats enjoy a two-to-one voter registration advantage, county records show, so their candidates are in a favorable position heading into the November election. But Republicans still feel they have a strong chance to win.

In a recent interview with the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*, Republican Jim Roddey explained his party's strategy. Roddey was elected as Allegheny County's first county executive in 1999, and served one term. He is chairing Rockey's campaign. "This region

needs a problem solver," Roddey told the *Trib* recently, "someone that understands business, not someone pushing extreme political theories."

Despite enjoying strong support from the building trades unions and holding a commanding lead in fundraising, John Weinstein finished second to Innamorato. He ran negative television ads against her, labeling her "Socialist Sara." Innamorato was endorsed by Democratic Socialist U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders, D-Vt., before the primary.

Analysis [by PublicSource.org] published after the election showed that Innamorato won the election by carrying most of the wards in the city. Weinstein led in the suburbs, where Rockey is expected to be strong.

Outgoing County Executive Rich Fitzgerald, who was term-limited after holding the office for 12 years, offered a somewhat dour view of the results. "It looks like we're going to become similar to places like San Francisco or Seattle or Portland with a far-left agenda of our elected officials...people who want to shut down fossil fuels, people who want to defund the police and people who kind of don't want to deal with the homeless situation," he told WESA-FM.

Innamorato portrayed her victory as a chance to turn away from failed politics of the past. "When I launched this campaign, I said I was running because I wanted to build a county for us all, and the county executive will chart the direction for the next generation," she told supporters on election eve at Bloomfield's Trace Brewery. "Let's create a region where we can all thrive, and we have shared and sustained prosperity for all."

The general election will be held on Tuesday, Nov. 7.

[Alan Guenther may be reached at guenthera30@gmail.com.] ♦

July Bulletin Deadline: Friday, June 16th

Bulletin advertising info available at bit.ly/bulletin_ads

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