

The Observer

Volume 4 • Number 21 • June 12 - 18, 1996

News and information about
issues, events and activities
within the City of Pittsburgh

BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PITTSBURGH, PA
PERMIT NO. 4182

PITTSBURGH'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

Garden Square on track, but slow

by Eric Miller

The \$40 million project to "reverse the social and physical deterioration of the Federal North corridor" is slowly moving ahead on the Northside. The Mattress Factory is working to find tenants for the area, but is awaiting action from the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) to meet its September proposal deadline.

According to Sarah Niles, assistant to Mattress Factory Director Barbra Luderowski, the museum is having informal conversations with potential tenants and funders. The museum—the City-chosen master developer for the project—also is putting together a brochure that describes the Federal North and its plans for the buildings bordering North Avenue, including the Garden Theatre.

An agreement made last September with the URA gave the Mattress Factory one year to come up with tenants and funding. "We would have the option to buy the buildings

See Federal—Page 8



Old grief grows up as garden

A plot of land that once caused a community crisis in Friendship is now a children's garden, and neighborhood groups are trying to give it a personal, and more kept-up, touch from the ground up with an unusual sidewalk sale.

See story, page 4.



At top, four-year-old Jasmine Symms charges up to help Friendship kids plant a new garden. In the bottom photo, nine-year-old Siraha Weatherspon, left, and Archie Howard, also nine, get to work.

Police get scoop on curfew pick-up

by Chris Dreher

The City released guidelines for police to make warrantless arrests of juveniles, hoping that training and knowledge will avoid the lawsuits filed against curfews in other cities.

The guidelines "give juveniles plenty of opportunity to move on," said Chief of Police Robert McNeilly at a public hearing last Thursday.

But whatever they do, the City could face legal opposition. Vic Walczak, executive

director of Pittsburgh's American Civil Liberties Union, said the guidelines are unconstitutional because the City is authorizing police to make arrests without the proper authority.

"We think people have a constitutional right to use sidewalks and public ways so long as they are not otherwise violating the law," he said. "Whether star-gazing or sitting on a bench or playing basketball, you have a right to do that

See Curfew—Page 14

South Siders oppose drug rehab clinic

by Chris Dreher

Menace to a neighborhood or peaceful weapon to curb the city's drug problem?

Last week the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) again heard testimony about a proposed methadone clinic on the South Side, continued from last month. Residents said they are worried about loitering, traffic, and increased crime from the clinic.

The proposed facility at 30 South Sixth Street is in an M4 industrial zoned area and

would need a zoning variance. But with a residential neighborhood close by, ZBA Chairman Regis D. Murrin summarized the problem as "not that it's M4, but an M4 near a residential area."

Daniel Bienstock, the Squirrel Hill resident proposing the clinic, said it would "serve professionally and unobtrusively" approximately 80 patients, perhaps more if the demand called for it. He also promised to be a good

See Clinic—Page 14

Squirrel Hill group closes year, plans new opening

by David Kaufman

Squirrel Hill community leaders envision themselves making a grand entrance to the neighborhood next year, and they're asking for help from the City to pave the way. The "Forward Avenue Portal" Beautification Project was announced at the 24th annual meeting of the Squirrel Hill Urban Coalition.

"In the words of Frank Sinatra, 'it's been a very good year,'" quoted Robert E. Tucker, president of the group, in his opening address. Recognizing contributions from past leadership, he referred to this year's accomplishments as "in no small measure...a result of

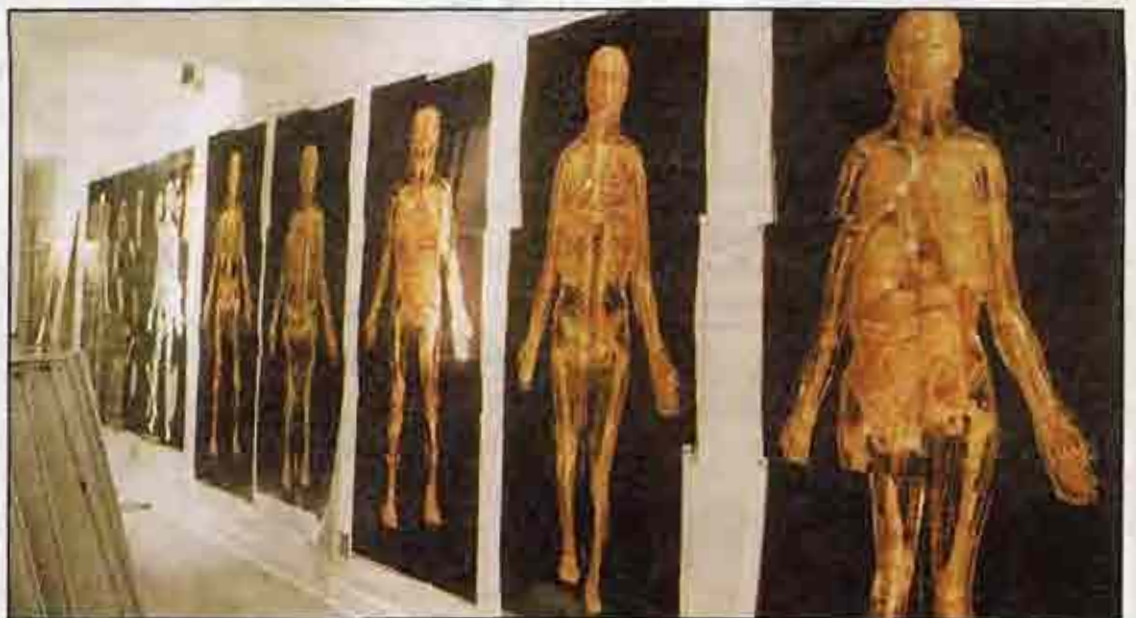
what they did, what they started." Beautifying the Parkway entrance, he noted, was actually outlined in the group's 1991 master plan.

Tucker pointed out that the coalition has tackled some controversial issues in the community.

"We took a stand on the Renaissance Project, which involved three large parcels of land within the 14th Ward: the site of the Riverview Apartments and the Jewish home and hospital for the aged being one, St. Philomena's School property on Beechwood Boulevard...and the property across the street from the current Jew-

See Squirrel—Page 22

Lining up art in Northside's East Allegheny



Two Northsiders have begun an art studio in East Allegheny, not the usual place to find an arts scene, but one that suits the two men's vision of an art community, instead of a geography. See story, page 3.

NOT ALL BATTLES ARE FOUGHT
WITH A SWORD.

OCTOBER 11-13, 1996

WASHINGTON, DC NATIONAL MALL



We will unfold the AIDS Memorial Quilt to show the nation that we care, we remember and that, until there is an end to AIDS, we are not going away. Please join us.

NAMES Project: 415-882-5500

Travel Info: 800-926-2631  UNITED AIRLINES

Official airline

HELP US HELP YOU.
ADVERTISE
621-9000

ALLEGHENY VALLEY BANK



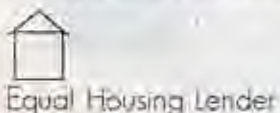
"SMALL BUSINESS IS OUR BUSINESS"

- Free Business Checking
- A variety of business loans, including leasing of equipment and machines and no fee lines of credit
- A full compliment of progressive business banking services
- No loan too small
- Personalized banking

A TOTAL BUSINESS SERVICE PACKAGE

Main office: 5137 Butler Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15201
Phone: 781-0318

"MODERN BANKING WITH OLD FASHIONED COURTESY"



Member FDIC
An Equal Opportunity Lender

Youth group celebrates first year

by Paul Natcher

The Victory in Every Way (VIEW) volunteers and participants recently celebrated one year of service to Beechview's youths.

VIEW provides programming for kids, including speakers such as the Pirate Parrot or sports personalities, crafts, ceramics, creative writing workshops, board games, theater groups and face painting for youths ten years old and over.

"The oldest ones that come here are 17 to 18 years old," according to volunteer Bruce Nordeen, the pastor of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, where the group meets.

VIEW meets every Tuesday night between 7 and 9 p.m. The community-based youth group was conceived in response to the Mayor's Youth and Teen Task Force.

"Funding comes from the community. We get some supplies from Citi-

Parks, mostly the community—businesses and individuals," Nordeen said.

Although the group competes with school-centered activities and a strong athletic association locally, an average of 35 kids attend the group and must commit to staying for two hours.

"The same people who started this group have also been instrumental in getting the CitiParks [CEP] program at Beechwood School, which is operating different nights than this group does. So our goal is eventually we have something for the kids to do every weeknight," Nordeen said.

"We have good kids, rough kids. We are able to provide interaction with adults that have a positive influence in their lives where they may not have that in their daily life," Nordeen said.

In the future, VIEW would like to expand to a second location. "There is the possibility of the Presbyterian Church offering another night per week," Nordeen said.

Federal

Cont. from page 1

once we had funding and potential tenants," Niles said. However, the buildings are still occupied, and this could cause problems for the Mattress Factory unless the situation changes.

Angelo Toronto, director of Project Development at the URA, said the Mattress Factory is waiting for the URA to get control of the buildings on West North Avenue so they can make further plans. Although the URA will acquire properties "as quickly as possible," according to Toronto, priority is given block by block, and this block has lowest priority.

If the Mattress Factory "can't put together development proposals," the URA will entertain other ideas, according to Toronto. However, if the Mattress Factory doesn't have proposals by September because the URA doesn't have site control of the properties, "there

could potentially be some extensions based on circumstances." In any case, the museum has "first shot" at developing the area.

Currently the URA is acquiring property in the area through eminent domain, after which the Mattress Factory must secure enough funding to purchase the block. The timeline for this phase of the project, known separately as Garden Square North, is unclear, but at least one building has been purchased and the Quick-It convenience store plans to move into a new building on Brighton Road. Store representatives have said they might move back to Federal North once the project is near completion.

As another part of the project, the city unveiled site plans and a rendering



The Garden Theatre, now an X-rated cinema, is part of the Mattress Factory's plans to rehabilitate the Federal North area on the Northside.

of the new Zone 1 police station at a Northside community group meeting last month. Work is expected to begin soon to transform the former Kroll Tire building on Brighton Road into the new station, which should be completed by fall.

The present Federal North station must move, as all buildings located on space to be occupied by the new Allegheny General research facility must be delivered this year; all those on the site of a new parking garage must be delivered by next spring. The research facility and parking garage are expected to be completed sometime in 1998. Niles and Tom Ckikurda, vice-president of communications at Allegheny General, both said their employers remain committed to the project.