

Café de Noir

by Joseph Samuel Rogers



Café de Noir owner, Elias Kassab

Pawsburgh Photography

I have fond memories of walking down Brookline Boulevard on cold winter nights on my way to Boy Scouts at Resurrection Church. I frequently visited Cannon Coffee for a cup of hot tea and free wifi to check my Facebook account on my iPod touch (then a big deal for a 13 year old). Although Cannon Coffee was sold at the end of the summer, its legacy of providing a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere continues through Café de Noir.

Owner Elias Kassab, a Brookline resident for over ten years, previously operated the Sunrise Restaurant on Route 51, but construction on that road forced him to close the business. Kasaab began searching for restaurants and businesses in the local area that were getting ready to close to take over, and he eventually came across Cannon Coffee on Brookline Boulevard. While many elements of the former coffee shop remain intact, including the comfy chairs, wooden tables, free wifi, and art for sale, Elias has added a few personal touches that reflect his own Lebanese culture and background in the

restaurant business.

Café de Noir means black coffee, and the store's name reflects its most popular item. Elias changed the type of coffee bean used to LaPrima, a higher quality bean, and this change has been met favorably with his customers. One of the new additions to the coffee shop is a deli case featuring a variety of sandwiches, salads, hummus, and baklava desserts that Elias himself prepares fresh daily. He periodically rotates the menu to give his regular patrons something new to try.

Elias brings passion and energy to his new business venture and is enthusiastic about being a member of the Brookline community. He is eager to immerse himself in the Boulevard scene and to provide customers with what they're seeking in a community coffee shop. He is listening to suggestions and is open to hearing customers' "wish-lists."

Elias is exploring the potential of having music events and other entertainment, which is why he added a piano in the seating area. He wants to partner with the community and hopes that his coffee shop can be a popular destination just like his predecessor's, one that ever grows and adapts to the vibes of its customer base.

Eias is a very welcoming person who greets all customers with warmth and a gentle smile. His friendly personality makes this coffee shop a very attractive destination. We

are fortunate that such a caring, conscientious, and committed owner has decided to continue the coffee scene in Brookline.

Residents should make it a New Year's resolution to stop in and try one of his lunch items or delicious beverages. The hot tea hit the spot on the cold January day that I visited, just like it did long ago. Café de Noir and Elias Kassab are another reason why it is mighty fine to dine in Brookline!



Exterior of Café de Noir

Photo courtesy of Joseph Samuel Rodgers

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- 1 John 4:10

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- Romans 5:8

In the month we remember the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr, we recall these words of both Dr. King and the apostle Paul.

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Brookline Updates

Community Contacts

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Councilwoman Natalia Rudiak	412-255-2131
Brookline Recreation Center	412-571-3222
Carnegie Library	412-561-1003
State Senator Wayne Fontana	412-344-2551
State Representative Dan Deasy	412-928-9514
State Representative Dan Miller	412-343-3870
State Representative Harry Readshaw	412-881-4208
Brookline Christian Food Pantry	412-344-8451
Meals-on-Wheels	412-343-8144
Dollar Energy/Columbia Gas Cap	412-344-4222

Community Crimes Zone 6

December	Total	Brookline
Zone 6 Crimes		
Aggravated Assault	5	0
Robbery	11	0
Burglary	8	1
Theft	16	3
Theft from Vehicle	6	1
Stolen Vehicle	2	1*

*Victim reported that vehicle was stolen by boyfriend

FEBRUARY COMMUNITY MEETINGS

February 8 Monday

Brookline Chamber of Commerce Meeting 6 p.m. at Carnegie Library 708 Brookline Blvd.

February 15 Monday

South Pittsburgh Development Corp. 7 p.m. at United Presbyterian Church 1036 Brookline Blvd.

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February 7 for March's Issue
 March 7 for April's Issue

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Brookline a Safe Place to Live, but Could be Even Better

by Dan Kaczmarek

Crime is an important topic in any community, but it's sometimes difficult to put the numbers into context.

Each year, the City of Pittsburgh publishes an extensive report regarding crime in Pittsburgh for the previous year. The report includes crime figures by Pittsburgh neighborhoods. (It does not address crime statistics in neighborhoods that are contiguous to but outside the City, such as Dormont.) The most recent report available is for 2014. Additionally, each month the Brookline Newsletter publishes preliminary crime figures supplied by the Pittsburgh Police for the City's Zone 6, which includes Brookline.



Pittsburgh Police Zone 6 Headquarters

Photo courtesy of Pittsburgh Police Zone 6

The Brookline figures are both included in the Zone 6 numbers and broken out separately.

It should be emphasized that the 2015 figures are preliminary and subject to adjustment up or down once the City's final report is completed, pending investigation regarding reported incidents.

Overall, what the numbers show is that Brookline is a very safe place to live, but that several crime categories need more aggressive community action.

The Chances of Being Personally Affected by Crime

One way the yearly police report crunches numbers is by "total crimes per 100 citizens" per neighborhood. Calculating crime this way addresses the significant population differences among neighborhoods. (According to 2010 U.S. Census figures, Pittsburgh neighborhoods ranged in population from 11 in Chateau to 15,110 in Squirrel Hill South.) The Census figures indicate that Brookline, with 13,214 residents, is the third most populous neighborhood in Pittsburgh, after Squirrel Hill South and Shadyside.

Calculating total crimes per 100 citizens

Although "total crimes per 100 citizens" may have some use as a

broad baseline number, it doesn't pinpoint a community's strengths or weaknesses with regard to crime. For instance, because all types of crime are thrown equally into the statistical mix, one act of vandalism counts as much as a homicide.

To arrive at total crimes per 100 citizens, two broad categories of crime are first calculated-- "Part I Crimes" and "Part II Crimes."

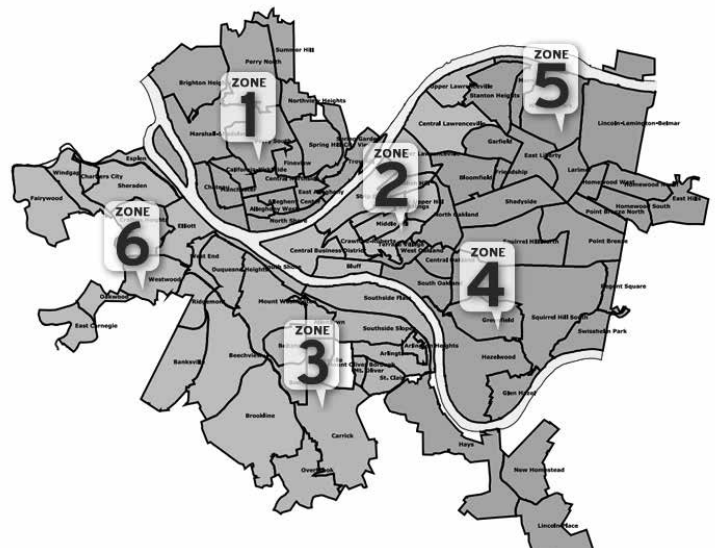
Part I Crimes are divided into violent crime and property crime. The categories under violent crime are homicide, rape, robbery and aggravated assault. Property crimes consist of burglary, theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson.

Part II Crimes include forgery, simple assault, fraud, embezzlement, stolen property, vandalism, weapon violations, prostitution, other sex offenses, drug violations, gambling, family violence, drunken driving, liquor law violation, public intoxication, disorderly conduct, and "other."

In determining total crimes per 100 citizens, Part I and Part II offenses are added together. That sum is then divided by the fixed neighborhood population and the result is multiplied by 100.

Based on these calculations, the report shows Brookline in 2014 as having had 5.66 crimes of any kind per 100 people. To provide some context, here are the 2014 numbers for some other neighborhoods.

Banksville 3.93	Mt. Washington: 9.18
Beechview 7.40	Overbrook: 6.64
Bloomfield: 7.89	Shadyside: 6.30
Bon Air: 9.78	Squirrel Hill North: 2.41
Brookline: 5.66	Squirrel Hill South: 3.84
Carrick: 12.09	Upper Lawrenceville: 7.08
Central Lawrenceville: 7.10	



Brookline and Zone 6

The city's 91 neighborhoods are divided into 6 police zones. Brookline is part of Zone 6, along with 14 other neighborhoods: Banksville, Beechview, Chartiers City, Crafton Heights, East Carnegie,

Elliott, Esplen, Fairywood, Oakwood, Ridgemont, Sheraden, West End, Westwood, and Windgap.

In 2010, the total population of Zone 6 was 45,374. Brookline's population was 13,214--29 percent of the Zone 6 population. Based on last year's preliminary information, here is a table of total reported 2015 Zone 6 Part I incidents and the number and percentage of incidents reported in Brookline. Although we again emphasize that the 2015 numbers are preliminary and are subject to adjustment in the final report, they do provide a rough idea of which types of crime need the most community attention.

Type of Crime	Zone 6, Including Brookline (preliminary)	Brookline (preliminary)	Brookline Percentage of Zone 6 Offenses (preliminary)
Homicide	4	1	25%
Rape	1	0	0%
Robbery	68	1	1%
Aggravated Assault	73	8	11%
Total Violent Crimes	146	10	7%
Burglary	205	46	22%
Theft	452	143	32%
Motor Vehicle Theft	36	5	14%
Arson	2	0	0%
Total Property Crimes	695	194	28%

What the numbers suggest is that Brookline is a safe place with regard to violent crime, including robbery. In fact, if we compare the 2015 preliminary numbers for Brookline to the 2014 numbers for all City neighborhoods (admittedly an unequal comparison), Brookline would show the fewest violent crimes per 100 people of all but 4 other City neighborhoods: East Carnegie, Regent Square, Squirrel Hill North, and Swisshelm Park.

While Brookline stands out as a safe place to live, the figures aren't as positive regarding property crimes, particularly theft. Using the 2015 preliminary numbers, Brookline would have accounted for 32 percent of all Zone 6 reported thefts, the only category where Brookline's percentage would be higher than Brookline's population percentage. However, the promising news is that it appears this problem can be greatly reduced by one simple act—locking your vehicle.

Of the 143 Brookline incidents characterized as some sort of theft in the 2015 preliminary numbers, 63 were reported as thefts from vehicles. Over half of the thefts from vehicles were reported to be from vehicles that had been left unlocked. Three additional vehicles were reported as possibly unlocked. Eight of the 63 vehicles were specifically reported as being locked and the status of the remainder of the vehicles wasn't provided.

It's impossible to say how many of the thefts from vehicles would not have occurred if all the vehicles had been locked, but it appears the numbers could have been sliced by over half, perhaps close to 75 percent, if no vehicles had been left unlocked.

So while Brookline, as with any community, is not crime-free, it is one of the safer City neighborhoods, a good place to raise a family that is trending up. It clearly can use more work in reducing thefts, however. And much of that can be accomplished by residents taking action on "easy pickings" crimes, particularly from vehicles. The police recommendations are familiar to all of us—locking doors and closing windows, not leaving valuables in plain sight, etc. We just have to take a couple extra seconds to make it happen.

Differences between Theft, Robbery & Burglary

Although theft, robbery, and burglary each usually involve the taking of another's property, legally they are considered differently. Here's how the terms are broadly defined under Pennsylvania law.

In general, theft is considered to be the unauthorized taking of property from another with the intent of permanently depriving them of it.

Robbery has been committed if, during the commission of a theft, the defendant injures someone, threatens them with injury, commits any first or second degree felony, uses force (no matter how slight), or takes money from a financial institution by making a demand upon an employee of the institution.

Burglary is defined as entering any portion of a building or occupied structure with the intent to commit a crime inside, unless the premises are open to the public at the time or the defendant is allowed to enter.

Cautions Regarding Crime Statistics

The yearly police report cautions against using crime statistics alone to make direct comparisons between neighborhoods [as is often done by websites unfamiliar with local neighborhoods.] Ideally, says the report, being aware of crime statistics in your neighborhood should be used as a starting point to study crime there and to identify those areas where action should be taken.

According to the report, "Simplistic comparisons based only upon crimes that occur in an area do not take into account the fixed population, the transient population, the factors that lead to a particular crime (such as an area with a high density of parking lots may have more occurrences of thefts from vehicles), the geography and other factors that impact crime. Consequently, they lead to simplistic and/or incomplete analyses that often create misleading perceptions adversely affecting communities and their residents. Valid assessments are possible only with careful study and analysis of the range of unique conditions affecting each neighborhood."

The report also advises that crime statistics are not 100% accurate because they represent only reported crimes. Reporting varies greatly by crime type, with violent crime being reported far more frequently than property crime.

Call for Volunteers

- ANGELS' PLACE Volunteers needed at Angels' Place, Inc. Help us work with children, arts and crafts, organizing and more. If interested, please call Stephanie at 412-531-6667. www.angelsplaceph.org
 - BROOKLINE CHRISTIAN FOOD PANTRY call Pat Erny at 412-344-8451
 - BEGIN AGAIN CLOTHING MINISTRY To donate gently used or new clothing, call Brookline United Presbyterian Church at 412-531-0590
 - DOGIPOT MAINTENANCE call Lisa at 412-304-3086
 - FOREVER HOME BEAGLE RESCUE call 412-304-4034 or BeagleHQ@msn.com Foster homes needed as well as donations of dog food, blankets and bath towels.
 - MEALS ON WHEELS sponsored by St. Mark's Lutheran Church call 412-343-8144
 - OASIS: HELP CHILDREN READ Tutors (age 50+) needed in Pittsburgh Schools, including Brookline PreK-8 and West Liberty K-5. Call John D. Spehar at 412-232-2021. In partnership with Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council.
 - OPEN YOUR HEART TO A SENIOR Volunteers needed to assist senior citizens. Call Family Services at 412-661-1670
- Other ways to help: Meals on Wheels can use donations of cash, cookies, desserts and bread. The Brookline Christian Food Pantry can use grocery store gift cards (send to Pat Erny, 2918 Pioneer Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15226).

Brookline Memorial Recreation Center

Weight Room and Fitness Center

Patrons ages 16-17 must be orientated and accompanied by a parent or guardian. Membership card is required. \$5 monthly fee for use of weight room and fitness center.

Kindersports

This fun activity is for children up to school age and their parents. This includes fun time in the gym, story time, a craft and snack. Program runs throughout the school year on Wednesday mornings at 10 a.m. FREE. Please be sure to wear your tennis shoes.

Quilting Class

Quilting class has expanded from Monday evenings 6 p.m.-8:45 p.m. to now include Friday mornings! Friday morning class will run from 9:30 a.m. to noon. Class is open to everyone who has some sewing experience and a sewing machine. This class is ongoing and everyone is welcome! FREE

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Fundraisers

Bingo. Every Monday, Church of the Resurrection. Doors open 5 p.m.; bingo begins 7 p.m. 412-563-4400.

Bingo. Every Sunday. American Legion Post 540. Doors open at 4 p.m.; bingo begins 6 p.m. 412-561-9750.

Julie McLaughlin Fundraiser. Our friend and Brookline native, Julie McLaughlin, was struck by a vehicle and severely injured in December 2015. Unfortunately, this incident has left her with lifelong injuries. She has already had several surgeries and will need more. Please join us for the Best Pasta Dinner Brookline has ever witnessed! Sunday, February 21, 2016, 12-4 p.m., St. Pius Church. Adults: \$10, Children 2-12: \$5, Under 2: Free. Save \$2 and pre-purchase your tickets! Contact Heather Fulton at Heatherafulton@gmail.com or Peg Sherwood at Peg3127@gmail.com.

Lenten Fish Fry. Church of the Resurrection. Ash Wednesday (Feb. 10) and every Friday in Lent. (Take Outs call 412-563-4400: 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m. for lunch; 4-7 p.m. for dinner.) Fish sandwiches, French fries, cole slaw, mac n cheese, homemade haluski and pierogies, and more.

SMOQ PITT Makes "Best-Of" List

Congratulations to SMOQ PITT barbeque restaurant, for being named by Thrillist as the best new barbeque joint in Pittsburgh in 2015. Thrillist is a news/media website with editions in over 30 cities nationally and internationally and more than 16 million subscriptions.

Old Notes By Old People

by Chip Gorski

It took me a couple of travels down Brookline Boulevard to get used to the new traffic patterns. For years, we all were aware of and on guard for drivers who back out of a diagonal parking space on the inbound side and into oncoming traffic. The situation was not only responsible for more than a couple of crashes, but also more than a few gestures to the offending motorists. Now they have their own lane. It took me a while to get used to this change in traffic patterns. I had a few issues trying to navigate around the Cannon and onto Chelton Avenue. Now, I actually have to think about getting into the right lane before I get to the traffic light. I guess it's a small inconvenience for progress and safety.

I took some pictures of the Boulevard and points around Brookline last month for folks who grew up in Brookline. They have moved on to warmer climates in Southern California or Nevada. Aside from the changes in traffic and shops on the Boulevard, each said it look like nothing has changed much. I suppose that is positive. A picture of a local street did cause one woman to ask "why is that road paved? It used to be cobblestone." True, we used to have a lot of cobblestone

streets. I know there are still many of them and they are all unique. I suppose cobblestone was more widely used when trolleys traversed the streets along with cars. She was sad to see her street paved because she thought the cobblestone gave the neighborhood charm. I guess that's true to some extent. But they are probably more expensive to repair, and, like the Boulevard, they can be a little difficult to navigate. I believe she may have forgotten the experience of trying to get up or down a cobblestone street that had a fresh coat of snow or ice. Not fun.

I took a picture of the former home of a neighbor who moved west. They hadn't seen their "old" home in quite some time. While the landscaping and paint colors have changed, they still reminisced about the fun times in that home and watching all of the kids on the street grow up and move on with their lives. I guess communities do grow up and move on with the lives on their residents. But...it's good to know that things don't change too much.



The Brookline Chamber of Commerce
would like to say

Thank you

To all of the business owners,
professionals and community
members who donated money to this
year's Christmas lighting fund. Because
of your generosity, we were able to
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maintain the festive atmosphere we all
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We would also like to thank Moses
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Brookline Teen Outreach Moves Forward; Will Locate in American Legion Building

by Caitlin McNulty
President, Brookline Teen Outreach

In January, Brookline Teen Outreach attended the Hilltop Youth Summit, hosted by Councilwoman Natalia Rudiak and Dr. Jamil Bey of PGHWorks. There, we discovered that Brookline has the highest number of youth per capita living in any of the 90 city neighborhoods. In addition, Brookline Teen Outreach is the only organization in South Pittsburgh that is serving teens by giving them access to licensing counseling services, free tutoring, quality programming, innovative and exciting community service opportunities, and a safe place to have fun. We have joined forces with so many amazing organizations to make this a reality for our neighborhood and we are proud to call Brookline home.

Brookline Teen Outreach is happy to announce that we will be taking up residence at 520 Brookline Boulevard, American Legion building, in March. We hope to bring as much integrity and good citizenship to the Brookline community as the American Legion and its members have done for the past 77 years. An open house will be held on Saturday, March 19, for all interested Brookline residents to attend.

Sharing Time and Talent in Brookline

Brookline Teen Outreach is collaborating with the Resurrection Youth Group to conduct a Brookline-based mission trip, which is slated for the first week of August. Teen and adult volunteers will spend the week beautifying and engaging with our community in a variety of ways. If you are interesting in helping with our mission, or have ideas for projects or service, please contact Caitlin McNulty at 412-302-9394 or Caitlin.mcnulty@yahoo.com. We encourage projects and services to come from residents, business, volunteer service organizations, and community organizations.



American Legion Building

Pawsburgh Photography

Call for Volunteers

We need volunteers to serve in a range of different roles at Brookline Teen Outreach. There is something to suit everyone's particular skills and talents and we would love to have your help. Are you great at planning events? We need you on our fundraising committee. Are you a retired teacher or professional who would like to tutor students? Let us know! Have a cool talent that you'd like to share? We want you on our programming schedule. These are just a few examples, but there are many other ways to join in. An information session will be held in early March to all who have expressed interest in having an active role in Brookline Teen Outreach.

For more information about all of the events mentioned in this article, and many more exciting happenings, please follow the Brookline Teen Outreach facebook page.

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Welcome Rather Ripped Records

Rather Ripped Records, 754 Brookline Blvd., Tues-Sat 11 a.m.-7 p.m.; Sun 11 a.m.-4 p.m.; closed Monday, 412-253-3445. Owners, Russ and Dale Ketter. A treasure-trove for music lovers! Most used LPs are \$1. Used CDs start at \$2. Rather Ripped brings extensive music knowledge and a wide variety of music to Brookline. Russ bought his first "45" at age of 5. From Berkeley, CA, since 1971 to hometown of Pittsburgh!! LIVE SHOWS once a month.

On Saturday, February 6, at 3 p.m., Rather Ripped Records will present its 2nd live in-store concert with John Kerr. John will present a solo voice and acoustic guitar set of original and unique cover songs. The concert is free and open to all customers and neighbors.



Rather Ripped Records

Pawsburgh Photography



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Brookline Little League Signups



2016 Registration, Boys
and Girls: Ages 5-18
At Moore Park
Saturday, February 6 and
Saturday February 13
12 p.m. – 3 p.m.
Registration Fee: \$75 1st
child; \$25 each additional
child

New players, please bring a copy of birth certificate
Website: <http://leagues.bluesombrero.com/blla>

Senator Wayne Fontana



Pennsylvania families and children received good news just before the New Year with Governor Wolf signing into law Act 84. This legislation reauthorizes and extends the life of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) until December 31, 2017. CHIP was slated to expire at the end of this year,

which would have resulted in over 150,000 children losing their insurance coverage.

For nearly 25 years, CHIP has offered no-cost or low-cost health care coverage for children under the age of 18 whose parents make too much to qualify for Medicaid but cannot afford private insurance. Coverage under this insurance includes routine doctor visits, prescriptions, dental appointments and eye care, along with immunizations, mental health, durable medical equipment, rehabilitation therapies, home health care and autism-related services.

Monthly premiums for the program are based on each family's income. More importantly, families enrolled in CHIP will not see any changes to their eligibility, co-payments, benefits, coverage or even their cards with the passage of this new law.

I was pleased to vote in favor of House Bill 857 (Act 84) and I am hopeful that efficiencies in the legislation will allow even more children to be covered by CHIP. You can learn more about CHIP at www.chipcoverspakids.com. My website is www.senatorfontana.com.

Representative Dan Miller



Since the last two months I have given updates on our Disability & Mental Health Summit (have you checked out at www.disabilitysummit.com yet?), I thought I would share with you some of the related legislation I have been working on in Harrisburg.

Recently Rep. Kathy Rapp and I began circulating a memo on an issue first raised to me by our school district and their special education staff. This bill will require the state department of education to provide training to transition coordinators, who are staff members who work with kids over age 14 with IEPs [Individualized Education Programs] to plan for life after high school. If enacted, this will ensure our school staff members are continuously updating their knowledge to best ensure that their students can reach their fullest level of success.

Representative Dan Deasy



Pennsylvania has a graduated licensing program in which teen drivers transition from a learner's permit to a junior license to an unrestricted license. A recent law added more requirements to enhance teen driver safety. Some of the provisions of the young driver license law are as follows. Please visit

my website at www.pahouse.com/deasy for a complete list.

- Mandatory six-month skill-building period with a learner's permit;
- Driving restrictions, with some exceptions, from 11 p.m. to 5 a.m.;
- 65 certified hours of adult-supervised, behind-the-wheel training, 10 of which must be nighttime driving and 5 in inclement weather;
- In the first six months of licensing, junior drivers may not carry more than one passenger younger than 18 who is not an immediate family member unless accompanied by a parent or legal guardian;
- After six months, the number of non-immediate-family members may be increased to three, if accompanied by a parent or legal guardian;
- Seat belt use is required for all occupants in vehicles operated by junior drivers;
- Texting while driving is illegal for all drivers;
- Automatic suspension of junior license if convicted of a high-speed violation or accumulation of six points on a driving record; and
- The driver's license of anyone 21 or younger must be suspended if the individual is convicted of making a terroristic threat while on school property, in school vehicles or during a school-sponsored activity.

Please call my office at 412-928-9514 for more information on the teen driving law.

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BROOKLINE PLUMBER
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Representative Harry Readshaw



In November, I introduced H.B. 1692, which would make it easier for family members to commit a loved one for drug and/or alcohol treatment. The bill was introduced at the request of my friend, a constituent who recently lost his son because of a drug overdose.

The bill would allow a family member to petition the Court of Common Pleas to initiate proceedings for involuntary treatment for those suffering from drug or alcohol abuse.

The involuntary treatment would only be permitted in cases where a person poses an immediate danger to themselves or others and treatment would give a reasonable chance for recovery.

While fees would be involved, this bill would offer an additional opportunity for families fighting addiction.

Affected families, law enforcement, judicial staff and others helped me draft this bill, which is based on the Ohio "Casey's Law" and Florida's "Jennifer's Law."

The bill is currently in the Human Services Committee.

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Council Woman Natalia Rudiak



What if the cure for cancer is trapped in the mind of a child who can't afford a high-quality education?

On Monday, December 21, 2015, I and the Women's Caucus passed a bill to create the Office of Early Childhood. The goals of this office will be to align city services that

affect young children, like licensing, workforce and professional development, and health and safety for those who care for kids from birth through early elementary school. We also included a position of "Early Childhood Manager" in the 2016 budget.

We want this manager to connect child-care providers with resources to expand and grow, and to work to create more pre-school options for families. Quality early childhood programs benefit parents, employers, and the state economy as well.

- Families experience stable employment and higher earnings. Child care helps keep poor families working.
- For employers, high-quality child care makes employees more reliable and productive, decreasing turnover and absenteeism, and increasing retention and productivity.
- In Pennsylvania, every \$1 invested in child care results in \$2.17 circulating in the economy as a result of increased employment, consumer spending, and tax revenue. That's more than doubling our money!

I believe that "a Pittsburgh child's access to high-quality early-childhood education should not be an accident of birth. It should be available and affordable for all Pittsburgh children." Investing in early education will double our money and create opportunities for tomorrow's leaders to learn and grow!

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Move Over, Flowers and Candy

by Dan Kaczmariski

At around 9:30 a.m. on February 14, 2013—1/2-hour before that day's opening time for Le Cupcake Shoppe--owner Alex Hagen looked out the window at a surprising sight. There, patiently waiting for the shop to open, was a line of customers, mostly male.



Owner Alex Hagen (right) with patron Kiersten O'halek.

Pawsburgh Photography

"We had opened the previous October," says Alex, "so it was our first Valentine's Day. I had gotten a decent amount of advance orders, so I thought that was all I was going to get, plus my normal weekly walk-ins. But there was a line the whole day; it was just crazy."

Each year since then, despite Alex's increasingly successful encouragement to customers to order ahead, Cupid's Day morning has witnessed a line outside the shop. Even last year's snowstorm didn't dampen the turnout. The day that used to be the domain of flowers and chocolates has had to make room for the shop's specialty themed cupcakes, cake pops, chocolate-covered strawberries, and more.

"I guess it's the different things we offer," says Alex. "We have cupcakes that look like roses and all the cake pops are dipped in chocolate. We theme a lot of things with conversation hearts or I'll just come up with fun things, like Love Bug cupcakes and Bee Mine cake pops. We have the strawberries and non-alcoholic champagne cupcakes and other specialty items."

She once again advises advance orders, but is gearing up to accommodate walk-ins. She'll open the day with double or triple the normal quantity of products and replenish as the day goes on. "Because I'm a softy, I don't want someone to come in and say 'omigosh, I forgot to order,' so I try to be prepared." Ideally, however, customers will place orders by 3 days ahead of time, especially for larger quantities and detailed specialty items.

Le Cupcake Shoppe is normally closed on Sundays but is scheduled to be open on Sunday, February 14 from around 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The shop will have extended hours on Saturday, February 13 from around 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. To confirm Valentine's Day weekend opening and closing hours, check out the shop's Facebook page or website.

Le Cupcake Shoppe, 412-254-4295, www.lecupcakeshoppegh.com, twitter at [lecupcakeshoppe](https://twitter.com/lecupcakeshoppe) and on Facebook.



Le Cupcake Shoppe on Capital Ave.

Pawsburgh Photography



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Free Meals for Kids

GrubUP Pittsburgh offers free afterschool meals for those under 18 at the Brookline Rec Center.
Snacks: 3-4 p.m. Hot meal: Starts 5 p.m.

Community Events & Announcements

Carnegie Library of Brookline February Events

For All Ages

- Crochet & Knitting Fun – Saturdays, February 6 & 20 @ 1 p.m. – one-on-one assistance and limited free supplies are available.

For Ages 12 – adult

- Intro to Guitar – Tuesdays, February 2 & 23 @ 7 p.m. – Make an appointment to learn basic techniques, get introductory tips and hands-on practice. Call 412-561-1003 to reserve a half-hour session.

For Kids

- Tween Workshop Tuesdays – Tuesdays @ 3 p.m.
- Storytime: Toddler and Preschooler Tales – Mondays, February 1 & 8 @ 6:30 p.m. – Thursdays, February 4 & 11 @ 11 a.m.
- Kids Club: Wacky Wednesdays – Wednesday, February 3 @ 3:30 p.m.
- Black History Month Bingo – Wednesday, February 10 @ 3:30 p.m. – show off or sharpen your knowledge of black history.

For Teens

- Pokémon League – Mondays @ 3 p.m. – card and video game drop-in battle leagues
- Teen Time – Thursdays @ 3:30 p.m.

For Adults

- Let's Speak English! – Tuesdays @ 6:45 p.m. – non-native English speakers build comfort and confidence with the language through casual conversation.
- Monthly Movie Showdown – Tuesday, February 9 @ 6 p.m. – *Citizen Kane* versus *The Sixth Sense*
- Power Yoga with Amy – Wednesdays @ 6:30 p.m. – bring your own water, mat and towel for free fitness-based yoga.
- Résumé Assistance by Appointment – Wednesdays, February 10 & 24 @ 6-8 p.m. – A qualified volunteer is available to review your existing résumé and cover letter to help make them stronger. Call 412-561-1003 to schedule a half-hour appointment.
- Game Night – Tuesday, February 16 @ 5:45 p.m. – classic and adventure-based board games
- Book Discussions
 - Mystery & More – Wednesday, February 10 @ 1 p.m. – *The Orphan Train* by Christina Baker Kline
 - Between the Lines – Monday, February 15 @ 6 p.m. – *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* by Betty Smith
 - The Buzz at Cannon Coffee – Thursday, February 25 @ 6 p.m. – *The Blondes* by Emily Schultz

Visit www.carnegielibrary.org/locations/brookline or call 412-561-1003 for more information.

Heritage Players Theater News

The Heritage Players perform at the Seton Center on Pioneer Ave. and draw actors, directors, and crew from throughout the Pittsburgh area. Brookliners are encouraged to share their talents with the all-volunteer group.

Mark your calendar for March

The Heritage Players will present Oscar Wilde's classic British comedy, *The Importance of Being Earnest* March 11-13 and 18-20 at the Seton Center. Friday and Saturday performances are at 8 p.m. and Sunday matinees are at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$12 at the door or \$10 in advance online at www.bphp.org/xu35a. For more information, to purchase a season ticket for \$25, or to place a business ad in the show programs, visit www.bphp.org.

Also coming this year

Picnic by William Inge, May 13-15 and 20-22

Alice in Wonderland, August 5-7 and 12-14

Mame by Jerome Lawrence and Robert Edwin Lee and music and lyrics by Jerry Herman, October 14-16 and 21-23

Season tickets

Enjoy a significant discount off per-performance tickets by pre-purchasing season tickets. \$25 entitles you to admission to three mainstage show.

Become a Member

Membership includes one ticket to each production, plus the right to attend all general membership meetings, the right to vote at all general membership meetings (including play selection), the ability to volunteer for a committee, and the ability to run for board positions. Members receive 10 percent off all classes offered.

What's Happening at Brookline PreK-8

by Amy Cornelius Dembosky, Parent Volunteer

We are excited to announce our second attendance challenge for the year. With the support of the United Way, Brookline will compete against students at Concord, Roosevelt, and Arlington schools to see who can have the most days of full-day attendance and the fewest tardies. The winning school will receive a roller skating party! Specific details were sent home with students in January. For more information, please get in touch with your child's teacher or call the school at 412-529-7380.

One key to meeting attendance goals is staying healthy. Reducing the spread of germs is something in which we can all take part. Remind your child about the importance of hand washing. It's great to do it whenever they get a chance at school as well as upon returning home for the day. Remember to "catch your sneezes in your sleeves" rather than in your hand-- that goes for coughs, too! If you're able to send in some tissues or soap or hand sanitizer, those donations are always appreciated, too. Thank you!

Speaking of donations, maybe you have heard of DonorsChoose.org. Several of our wonderful Brookline PreK-8 teachers have had projects funded this year; some even received matching funds from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation! There are a few projects up right now. To see them, go to the website and put in Pittsburgh Brookline. If you see a project that you like, you can donate any amount. You can also share the link with friends and family! Thanks for helping our teachers to be innovators.

Finally, there are a few dates to keep in mind if you'd like to get involved. Our monthly Parent School Community Council meeting will be held Wednesday, February 17. All are welcome to attend--one doesn't need to be an official member. Coffee with the administrators will be Friday, February 26. Stop by to share ideas, praise, and concerns with Mr. Vater and Mr. May.

During winter weather, don't forget to check the Pittsburgh Public Schools or local TV websites for information about delays and closings. Stay warm!

What's Going on at Pittsburgh West Liberty?

by Deonne Arrington, Principal
Teresa Grusong-Adams, First Grade Teacher


It looks like winter has finally made its way to Pittsburgh. During the cold months, recess can be a little challenging, and at West Liberty we are trying to make it as exciting for the children as possible. We are developing clubs for recess where children can attend a club of their interest. The teachers invited the children to participate by expressing their areas of interest, and the staff worked together to help form the clubs. The children are excited about attending their lunchtime clubs.

We also have new ventures at West Liberty with the introduction of our iPad carts. Teachers in all grade levels, Kindergarten through 5th grade, can borrow the cart and have children use the iPad to assist them with their schoolwork. This is a great way for us to help meet the needs of all our students.

We are sorry to see our Intermediate Science teacher, Ms. Candace Woods-Wright, leave us. She has been a great addition to our staff and we will miss her. At the same time, we welcome Mrs. Steffey. Mrs. Steffey is joining us from Wilksburg School District. We are glad to have her join our West Liberty family.

Speaking of people who have left us, our former custodian, Mr. Dave, will return. He will be coaching our Kindergarten through-5th grade girls and boys basketball team. Welcome back Dave; we missed you!

That's all for now. Try to keep warm during these cold days of winter. Remember, Pittsburgh West Liberty is the place "Where Learners Excel and Character Counts."



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Round Cake Pops decorated in hearts, glitter, or pink & reds!

Large gourmet cupcakes topped with strawberry dipped in chocolate of your choice!

Valentine's theme tray: 12 mini-cupcakes, 12 cookies, 6 cake pops!

6" round Lovers Cakes in gourmet Valentine's flavors, topped with initials, red or pink fondant hearts, or customized conversation heart!

Mini-cupcakes with Valentine's themed flavors; also with customized conversation hearts!

Let Le Cupcake Shoppe make Valentine's Day special for your special ones!!

109 Capital Avenue (two doors from Fiori's Pizzeria) | 412-254-4295