

Brookline Chamber of Commerce

by Lee Herbermann



*Chamber of Commerce members at their 2016 holiday party
Photo Courtesy of BCC*

Since the Brookline Chamber of Commerce's establishment in 1955, and before that as the Brookline Business Men's Association, merchants and other well-minded community individuals have donated their time and money to promote Brookline's business interests by building a strong community. The entire community benefits from the dedicated efforts of the Chamber. Here's a review of the Chamber's yearly activities and some of its 2016 accomplishments.

This year the Chamber will begin as most Brookliners do by taking down Christmas decorations. In the case of the lighted wreaths lining the Boulevard, however, a bucket truck is needed. The wreaths are then stored courtesy of Community Bank until it's time to put them up for the next Light Up night. Each year this is made possible by contributions from merchants, the Chamber, and other community members to "Keep the Lights Burning."

New Brookline home buyers are welcomed to the community with the Chamber's welcome packet containing all sorts of information and coupons. This year, more than 300 packets were distributed.

By making a contribution to the Boy Scouts of America, Brookline is assured to have American flags, provided by the Chamber, displayed along the Boulevard on holidays.

Summer season starts with the Memorial Day Parade to pay respect to our fallen heroes. After making a contribution to

the parade committee, the Chamber participates in the parade with antique cars and members willing to pass out 100 pounds of candy to children along the way.

Chamber sponsorship in the Brookline Little League assures a banner on the ball park fence and a team with names on uniforms.

The annual August Breezefest celebration in conjunction with the Brookline Breeze requires organization from one end of the Boulevard to the other by the Chamber and other community organizations. Obtaining and placing vendors takes effort and volunteers also contribute their time on the day of the event.

This past year, the Chamber published the latest edition of the Brookline Business & Community Directory, which provides listings of names, addresses, and contact information for the business community, churches, service organizations, and government offices. Producing the Business & Community Directory takes time and money. The directory committee gathers ads and pictures and makes corrections before printing and distribution.

Each fall, the Chamber sponsors a scarecrow contest to herald the Halloween season along the Boulevard. Homemade scarecrows displayed in establishment windows develop craft skills in children and adults. Scarecrow builders compete for cash prizes provided by the Chamber.

The Chamber sponsors the annual Halloween parade, which brings hundreds of costumed children and adults to the Boulevard. The parade involves significant planning, securing of permits, coordination with the Police and Fire Departments, and funding of prizes and candy. This past year, 3,000 pieces



Fun at the Chamber-sponsored Halloween parade

Photo Courtesy of BCC

Continued from p. 1

of candy were distributed by merchants and others along the parade route from the Cannon to Brookline Teen Outreach and back.

In 2016, the Chamber developed and implemented a Brookline electronic app (check your app store, it's free). Over 55 Brookline businesses currently populate the app and the number is growing. Check it out.

The Christmas season starts with photos with Santa, songs, hot chocolate and cookies. The Chamber is there along with others to get you in the mood.

The Chamber also co-sponsors and supports the Brookline Breeze race, group advertising, Food Bank, Angel's Place, Seton Center, local churches and Meals on Wheels.

Brookline businesses, along with contributions from the Brookline Area Community Council and volunteers from SPDC, keep the Brookline Chamber of Commerce working to make Brookline a better place. The Chamber's meetings, held 6 p.m. each second Monday of the month at the Brookline Teen Outreach site at 520 Brookline Blvd., are open to the public.

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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

October		
Zone 6 Crimes	Total	Brookline
Aggravated Assault	3	1
Robbery	8	0
Burglary	17	2
Theft	15	5
Theft from Vehicle	25	16*
Stolen Vehicle	2	1*

*Please note: Eleven of the 16 November reported thefts from vehicles occurred the night of Nov. 22-23, as did the stolen vehicle (which had a key inside). Please lock your vehicle. It only takes a second.

JANUARY COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Monday, January 9

Brookline Chamber of Commerce Meeting, 6 p.m. at Brookline Teen Outreach, American Legion Building, 520 Brookline Blvd.

Tuesday, January 10

Brookline Block Watch, 7 p.m. at Magistrate Jim Motznik's office 736 Brookline Blvd.

Monday, January 16

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

We have over 1,600 readers.

Pick up The Brookline at a Boulevard merchant. Look for "The Brookline Available Here" sign in the window.

The Brookline

The Brookline Staff

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Deadlines for Submissions and Ads

January 7 for February's Issue

February 7 for March's Issue

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The Brookline is available free of charge by email. Go to <http://bit.do/brookline> to sign up. A one-year postal delivery subscription is \$25 for non-SPDC members and \$15 for SPDC members.

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Making the Boulevard Nicer for Everyone

by Dan Kaczmariski



Michael and Pamela Grabowski cleaning up the Boulevard

Dan Kaczmariski

Here's an important fact – the City of Pittsburgh does not remove litter from Brookline sidewalks. If people litter and it doesn't get removed by volunteers or shopkeepers, it stays where it is. If no community-minded person ever came forward to stash the trash, we'd eventually be up to our ankles in beverage cups, pizza boxes, and empty cigarette packs.

For the past five years, Brookline residents Pamela and

Michael Grabowski have overlooked the fact that it shouldn't be necessary to clean up after other people and have walked to the Boulevard on weekends year-round to pick up other people's trash. If you've been there on a Sunday afternoon, you've likely seen them in their yellow safety vests doing their thing.

When they started their regimen back in 2011, each week they'd clean up the entire business side of the Boulevard from Queensboro to Pioneer Ave, then cross to the residential side and work their way back. The process took between 2-1/2 to 3 hours and they'd fill 13-14 plastic grocery bags.

They still go out on weekends, but as a concession to other obligations and the passing of time – “We're getting older,” says Pamela – they've been doing segments of the Boulevard on alternating weeks for about an hour and a half each time.

Every outing nets a cornucopia of garbage. During the winter, they find a puzzling number of hats, scarves, and gloves. “It's always the right glove,” says Michael, laughing. They, like many other litter removers in Brookline, have also noted a disproportionate number of empty Newport cigarette packs on the ground.

Pamela and Michael are remarkably good-natured about the dirty job, but have sometimes had to bite their tongue, such as the day Pamela was picking up litter and a man near her dropped a piece of trash on the ground. When his girlfriend admonished him, he motioned to Pamela and said, “That's OK,

she'll pick it up.” On another occasion, a couple was sitting on a bench when the man rose to walk a piece of trash to a trashcan. His companion asked, “What are you walking down there for; just throw it on the ground.” Other people have inquired whether they're being forced to clean up as a punishment for breaking the law.

Although the Boulevard reconstruction project has been a plus overall for Brookline, it's created an extra job for conscientious volunteers like Pamela and Michael. When new trash cans were placed on the sidewalks, they came with side receptacles for cigarette butts. That in itself is good. However, when City collectors empty the trash cans, they don't also empty the butt receptacles. The butts stay there unless emptied by volunteers like Pamela and Michael. “They're stinky,” says Michael. “If it rains, the water gets into them.” “That's got to be poisonous even to breathe,” adds Pamela.

The Grabowskis also clean up after City of Pittsburgh trash collectors who aren't careful when emptying full to overflowing trash cans lining the Boulevard. Too often, they say, the city collectors yank out the cans in a way that allows loose trash to fall beneath them in their holders. “Michael pulls out the cans and I'll clean out the garbage underneath,” says Pamela.

Pamela and Michael are self-effacing about their dedication to keeping Brookline clean and are quick to give credit to other volunteers who also pick up trash on the Boulevard, such as Kim Sabol and Eileen Papale. “Eileen will tell you,” says Pamela, “keep a newspaper bag by the door and take it with you to pick things up whenever you're out walking. People stop us all the time and thank us for doing this, but if they each picked up even one or two pieces, that would help so much.”

Not to mention how helpful it would be – and how many more Steelers games the Grabowskis would get to watch on Sunday afternoons--if people didn't drop their garbage on our streets to begin with.

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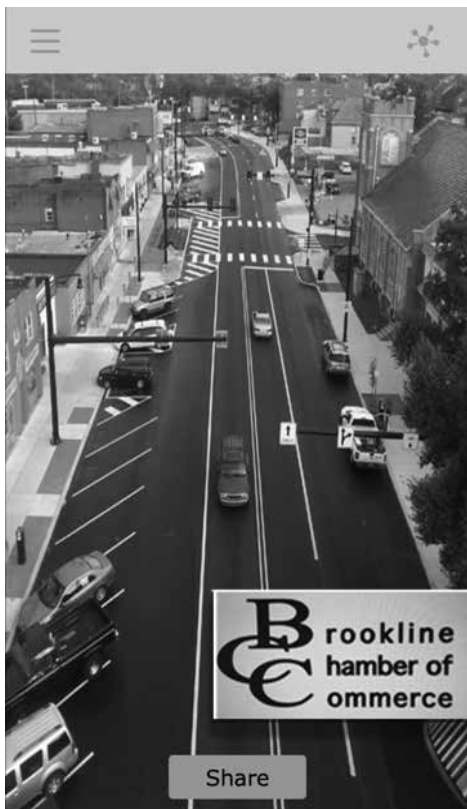
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Brookline App Up and Running

by Matt Fox



It's no secret that technology has become a huge part of our daily lives. Whether you want to stay connected with family on social media, order food from your favorite restaurant, or simply stay up-to-date on the news, there is an app for these things. With such a high demand for consumer information at the push of a button, the Brookline Chamber of Commerce decided it was time to develop one of our own. The Brookline App as it is known in the Google Play and App Store, was developed by Jireh

A Screenshot of the Brookline App

Mobile, a company whose goal as a fellow small business is to offer relevant marketing tools that get results for small business owners.

The Chamber then applied for the Pittsburgh Biz Buzz Small Business Grant Program under South Pittsburgh Development Corporation because of their 501(c)(3) charitable organization status. The grant is designed to spur neighborhood business district revitalization using the 48x48x48 strategy of short and medium term achievable projects and activities. By determining what you can do in 48 hours (a weekend), 48 days (roughly, a month), and 48 weeks (a year), projects can be accomplished by volunteers, working together with businesses. The goals of the program are to bring newcomers into neighborhood business districts and create a buzz about the business district, through media and word-of-mouth.

While the main purpose for the app is to have our local businesses in one place, there's a variety of different functions that can be used daily:

- *Events Calendar* - This calendar will give a complete list of any event going on in Brookline. This will include all

community events, as well as community meetings.

- *Find My Car* - This feature allows users to find their vehicle by dropping a location pin on the spot where they park their car. This will come in handy for those who are not familiar with the business district.
- *Help Wanted* - This will allow local employers to post jobs to find local workers, which can be shared via Twitter and Facebook.
- *Coupons* - Businesses on the app can offer different coupons throughout the year, all of which can be redeemed directly on your smart phone.
- *News* - This tab will use a keyword function to display news and social media posts in the Brookline area that are filtered to contain relevant and pertinent information to the community. Also, push notifications for important alerts.
- *Share* - This function allows users to share the app, leave reviews on businesses, and communicate via email, phone, Facebook, and Twitter.

Currently, the app is live with 50+ members with plans to add the rest of the businesses in the coming weeks. The goal for the app is to provide businesses with an affordable, interactive marketing tool that will not only allow them to promote their business, but also provide better service to their loyal customers.

To download the app, simply search "Brookline App" on the Google Play Store on your Android device or in the App Store on your iPhone.

(Matt Fox is co-owner and operator of Fox's Pizza Den on the Boulevard)

Fundraisers

Is your Brookline community church, school, or other non-profit holding a fundraiser? We'd like to list it in The Brookline. To have your event listed, contact pdkaz@comcast.net. Please include "Fundraiser" in the subject line.

Bingo. Mondays, Church of the Resurrection. Doors open 5 p.m.; bingo begins 7 p.m.

Bingo. Sundays, sponsored by Brookline American Legion; American Legion Bldg., 520 Brookline Blvd. Doors open at 4 p.m.; bingo begins at 6 p.m.

Brookline Teen Outreach fundraiser at Max and Erma's. Enjoy a meal with family or friends and 20 percent of your total bill will be donated to Brookline Teen Outreach. Wed., January 25, 11 a.m. to 10 p.m., Max and Erma's Parkway West, 130 Andrew Dr., Pittsburgh.

How Others See Us

Here's how some local media view our Brookline community.

“A family-friendly neighborhood with affordable housing, plenty to do and true walkability, Brookline attracts young families and single professionals looking for an urban environment with suburban amenities. Brookline Boulevard is the main street every neighborhood wants.

“It's that kind of community: family-oriented, tight-knit and traditional and as authentic as they come. But now there's an infusion of new businesses and energy.... The affordable houses in this walkable neighborhood in the South Hills – with its rumbly bricked streets and an enviable location close to downtown Pittsburgh – have attracted the young and young families. It's also a community that is becoming increasingly diverse.”

NextPittsburgh

“The first thing you notice about Brookline is its wide boulevard lined with shops of all kinds. It's a main street most communities would die for.

“While the facelift [was] a City project, the fact that it [was] mostly in the hands of the people who have a stake in Brookline is indicative of what makes people want to move to and stay in this neighborhood – the supportive community that cares about its businesses and has cleverly leveraged tradition with change.

“You'll find the best characteristics of decades past – a tight-knit community, historic houses cared for with pride, a great library, and deeply rooted family businesses dotting the thriving Brookline Boulevard – mixing comfortably with first-generation residents, progressive new businesses, and an ethnically diverse population.”

PopCity

“A quiet neighborhood that is home to many families, it easily meets the criteria of good housing stock, affordability, ease of commute and shopping, and most of all a strong sense of community.

“The neighborhood has a strong core of youth activities, political activism, volunteer and religious organizations - as well as amenities such as two city parks with playgrounds, numerous art galleries nearby, and a newly renovated Carnegie Library.

“A thriving business district with nearly 90 businesses located along a one-mile stretch, Brookline Boulevard provides the convenience of life's necessities, as well as some specialty shops.

“Brookline is great place for individuals and families who are seeking undiscovered value through good urban demographics and housing stock, easy access to all major roads, a main street business district, a great library, and a strong program of extra-curricular sports for kids.”

(Brookline also made Pittsburghliving's Top 10 City Neighborhoods in the categories of Parks and Playgrounds, Quiet and Relaxing, My Neighbors, Nature, and Pets.)

Pittsburghliving.com

Test Your Brookline Knowledge

Resolve to keep your mind active during the new year. You can start with this quiz on Brookline history. The answers are on page 14.

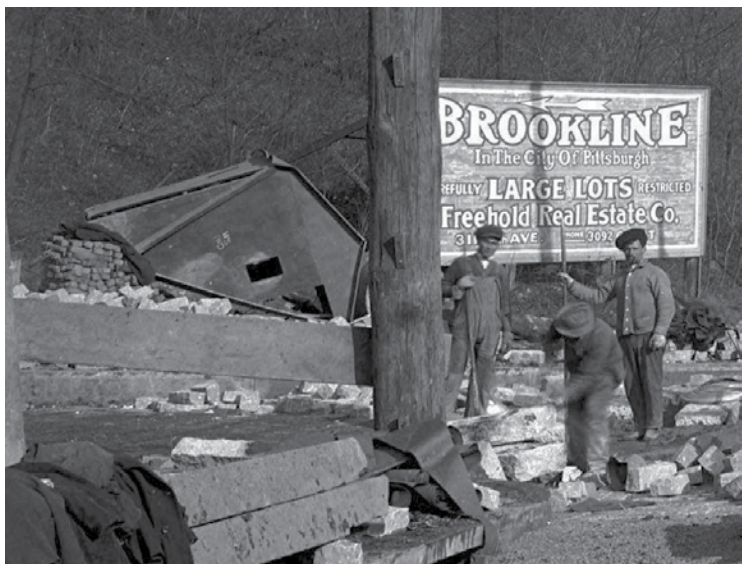
1. What is the 2nd oldest school still in operation in Brookline?
2. What's the oldest Brookline business still in operation?
3. The Brookline Little League began in 1951. Which Brookline business is the only remaining original sponsor?
4. What NFL Hall of Fame Baltimore Colt quarterback who had been released by the Pittsburgh Steelers once lived on Berkshire?
5. What disc jockey known as the “Daddio of the Raddio” lived in Brookline on Pioneer Ave.?
6. When the Brookline Fire Station went into service in 1911, the iconic tower was not built to watch for fires. What was the tower's intended purpose?
7. Brookline has had two movie theatres, The Boulevard Theatre and the Brookline Theatre. The Boulevard Theatre was located in the building most recently occupied by Compulink. Which Boulevard building, still in use as a business, used to house the Brookline Theatre?

Source: *Clint Burton's "The Brookline Connection"*

Brookline 101

Impress your friends and visitors on your walks up the Boulevard by dropping some of these facts into the conversation.

- ◇ Geographically, Brookline is the 2nd largest of 90 Pittsburgh neighborhoods, with 1,333 acres. Squirrel Hill is 1st.
- ◇ According to the 2010 U.S. Census, Brookline has the 3rd largest population of Pittsburgh neighborhoods with 13,214 residents. Squirrel Hill and Shadyside are 1st and 2nd.



1915 photo of workers cutting Belgian blocks for West Liberty Ave. in Brookline
Photo Courtesy of The Brookline Connection

- ◇ The car-rattling stones on some Brookline streets are technically not cobblestones, but Belgian blocks. Cobblestones are small, naturally rounded stones, often dredged up. Belgian blocks are quarried or worked to a regular shape.
- ◇ Pioneer Avenue was established in 1797 as the State road from Pittsburgh to Washington, PA. It was the only main roadway to reach Pittsburgh from the south.
- ◇ Brookline PreK-8 is the oldest continually operating school in Brookline (1909).
- ◇ The Howitzer cannon at the Brookline Memorial Park is the second cannon that's been displayed there. The original cannon, at the park from 1935 to 1942, was hauled away to be used as scrap metal in WWII.
- ◇ There's been a billboard on the Boulevard for decades between the sites currently occupied by Tong Garden and Armond's Frame Shop. No building was ever put in that space because of a natural spring that makes construction there impractical.

- ◇ At the bottom of Whited St., the building formerly housing Larry's Roadhouse was a mansion built in the 1850s that was reported to haunted.



The opening of the Mt. Washington Transit Tunnel in 1904 spurred a building boom in Brookline

Photo Courtesy of The Brookline Connection

- ◇ Brookline had two population surges in the 20th century. The first started in 1904 when the opening of the Mt. Washington Transit Tunnel (operating today between Station Square and the South Hills Junction) allowed for trolley service through the hill. The second was the opening of the Liberty Tunnels in 1924 that provided quick auto access to the South Hills.

- ◇ Moore Park was named after Joseph F. Moore, principal of West Liberty School and Brookline Elementary until 1940. He was an ardent advocate that playgrounds were the best answer to the problem of juvenile delinquency.



Moore Park in the 1940s. Swimming in summer; Steelers in winter

Photo Courtesy of The Brookline Connection

- ◇ In the 1940s, the Pittsburgh Steelers conducted workouts and reviewed game films at Moore Park.
- ◇ In 2004, the Brookline branch of Carnegie Library underwent a massive renovation. The next year, the building won an award from the American Institute of Architects and the American Library Association as a "Library Building of the Year," only eight nationwide to win the award.

(Sources: First two items, City of Pittsburgh. All others, Clint Burton's "The Brookline Connection.")

Brookline Teen Outreach News

by Caitlin McNulty

In this new year, the entire Brookline Teen Outreach Team wants to take a moment to thank the community for their support. In less than one year, we have been able to create a volunteer-run organization unlike any other to serve the southern neighborhoods of Pittsburgh. We are rapidly growing and serving over 160 youth weekly. In addition, we were named one of the top non-profits for 2016 by Great Non-Profits, and accepted as a Quality Campaign Member by APOST after an extensive application process proving the quality of our program. None of this would have been possible without your generous gifts of time, talents, goods and funds. We are excited to grow even more in the new year and hope that you will continue to be a part of our journey in supporting our youth and the community as a whole.

Please consider enjoying a post-holiday family meal at Max and Erma's. This fundraising event takes place Wednesday, January 25 from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. at Max and Erma's Parkway West, 130

Andrew Dr., Pittsburgh. Enjoy a meal with family or friends and 20 percent of your total bill will be donated to Brookline Teen Outreach by Max & Erma's. More information can be found at www.brooklineoutreach.org under events, or on our Facebook page.

Thank you to everyone who came out to our Holiday Blood Drive that supported the Central Blood Bank. Not only did donors give the valuable gift of blood, but they also earned scholarship money for our students.

Brookline Teen Outreach relies on the generosity of people like you. If you have any of the following items and want to give them a new home, please consider donating them: Playstation 2, Xbox controllers, set of pots and pans, copy paper, wall mountable TVs, wall mount basketball hoop, caged exit signs, 5-gallon beverage cooler, phone chargers, and grocery store gift cards. Monetary donations are also accepted and much appreciated.

Thank you and Happy New Year!

Old Notes By Old People

by Chip Gorski

"Did you have a nice Holiday?" That's the question most commonly asked into the first few days and weeks into the New Year. Weeks and weeks of buildup for the big event and it comes and goes so fast as we slide into January and 2017. As I am writing this, we are still a few weeks away from Christmas, and as you are reading this, I am sure the Christmas tree is either back in its box or on the trash pile, or fairly close to it. So to answer the question I started with – I don't know. They haven't happened yet.

I'm not so sure how I feel about the year that's passed – 2016. No major family events or anything that really sticks out. I was able to see some interesting places. The farthest I went in 2016 was Seattle.

It was dreary and cold in June. I felt like I was at home. I wasn't a real fan of the climate. While it's not my thing, I did see the marijuana dispensaries all over the place. It's legal there. And no, I didn't go in to make a purchase (I have to clear that up because if I don't, I'm sure I'd be getting a phone call from my Mother).

For me, it was the year of a credit card hack. Somebody in some airport somewhere got hold of my numbers and an \$800 dollar purchase was made by somebody in Islamabad, Pakistan. Guess what they bought? Food? A TV? A cell phone? No, none of those. They used my card to buy \$800 of handmade soaps. If you're going to steal soap, you probably want to make sure it's of better quality than Irish Spring. It was also the year "I-R-S" called... several times. One of their "agents," who strangely enough

spoke in broken English, told me police were on their way to the house to arrest me unless of course I gave them my credit card information. I'm still eating normal food, not bread and water, and I hope you too see through that scam should you get the same call.

It was the year of surgery. Since I wasn't allowed to walk for about a month, I really couldn't get out of the house. On one big outing, my son drove me to the grocery store for a few things. I was confined to one of those scooters with the big orange flag attached to the back. They make the aisles so very small. As I was making a quick turn, I crashed right into a display of soap that the clerk had just assembled. Embarrassed, I scooted out of there, leaving my son to clean up the mess. It wasn't hard to find me. I was the one with the big orange flag that towered over all of the shelves.

I hope this New Year brings you everything good!



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The Latest on Repainting “The Wall”



If you ride or walk up or down the Boulevard past Pioneer Ave. you can't help but notice the large illustration of the word “Brookline” on a retaining wall. The painting has been there for years and is in need of replacement or repair. The Brookline Area Community Council (BACC), a volunteer community improvement group, is working to once again make the wall a vibrant, colorful welcome to Brookline.

Recently, there have been posts on local social media asking why the painting has not yet been replaced or refurbished. The BACC would like to take this opportunity to bring all Brookline residents up to date on the Wall's status.

The City of Pittsburgh owns the Wall and has determined that the illustration there is considered a community welcome sign, not simply a mural. This distinction makes a difference in how Brookline can proceed to replace the illustration. Based on an agreement with the City, since 1996 BACC has been designated the entity to handle the painting and repainting of the sign. The original painting was done after the City agreed and the City's Art Council approved the design.

The painting has been repaired and touched up by the same artist four times, each time because of graffiti or its removal. Due to the deterioration of the painting, BACC decided it was time for a redo. We began with public meetings. We were told The Wall was unstable, so we had it tested by City engineers, who determined it was stable. Saying that is so simple – having done was not.

When we began the meetings, we considered the illustration a mural and worked on getting information to go in that direction. However, because the City informed us it is considered a welcome sign, we could not proceed as though it were a mural. So we began again. We had another meeting and the complete requirements currently in place were distributed to everyone who attended. While it is a bit complicated, it is doable. It is also expensive. The City will not give permission for volunteers to work on The Wall, based on a determination regarding the potential danger of the location

and work and insurance requirements.

Estimates on the cost vary. It will require some fundraising on the part of BACC depending on the extent of the project, which will depend on the design (old vs. new). Because BACC was not planning on fundraising, its 501(c)(3) status (needed for the fundraising) had not been maintained by the organization. In order to fundraise, it was decided to ask South Pittsburgh Development Corporation to be a conduit for the project monies. Thanks mostly to SPDC president Ryan Askey, a contract was worked on and signed by all parties.

Another stumbling block was the address, or lack of one. “No, The Wall did not have an address. No, it could not be worked on without one. Yes it had been worked on in the past without one but not now.” Thanks to the help of SPDC board member Eileen Papale, it now has an address and the City now acknowledges it.

The area in front of The Wall was until the last clean-up day a mess. The City was supposed to clean it up, but SPDC and University of Pittsburgh volunteers did the job during the fall clean-up day, for which there is much gratitude and appreciation.

Writing this seems so simple, but it has all taken an amazing amount of time. A recent outbreak of outrage on Facebook over the length of time it is taking was discouraging if understandable but BACC persists with the support of SPDC. We will redo The Wall and hopefully add some smaller ones at other entrances to Brookline.

Updates are given at the monthly SPDC meetings on the third Monday of every month (see pg. 3 of this Newsletter, under “January Community Meetings,” for specifics.) We don't expect there to be updates of much importance in January due to the weather. Thank you for your attention.

The Brookline Area Community Council

Representative Harry Readshaw



In November, Gov. Wolf signed Act 144, to restore Unemployment Compensation for approximately 44,000 workers who make most of their annual salary over a limited timeframe. This Act has not yet passed the State Senate

A law passed in 2012 to stabilize the Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund changed the income percentage limits for many workers who have a “busy season,” such as construction workers. That change required workers to earn at least 49.5 percent of their salary outside their peak quarter and affected 44,000 workers.

This law would correct that problem by restoring quarterly earnings to the pre-Act 60 limit of 37 percent outside the highest earning quarter.

That’s why I voted for the law.

This change would pay for itself and does not affect the solvency of the program.

By restoring these cyclical workers to the program, an additional \$44 million can be collected from their employers as unemployment compensation taxes. This law would also now requires employers who over-utilize the fund to contribute more to the fund.

Representative Dan Deasy



Pennsylvanians shopping for health insurance have a new tool available to explore their options. The Pennsylvania Checkbook website -- <https://pa.checkbookhealth.org/hie/pa/2017/> -- allows consumers to compare plans available on and off the federal health insurance marketplace, based on these factors:

- Estimate of average monthly and yearly total cost, based on an actuarial estimate of premium and out-of-pocket costs for a consumer with the same family size, ages, health status and other characteristics;
- Cost of plan in a high-use year, which estimates out-of-pocket costs if the consumer needs to make frequent use of the plan and the likelihood of that occurring;
- Overall quality of plan, based on feedback from plan members;
- Doctor availability, which lets consumers enter the names of their physicians to see which are in-network for each plan; and
- Formulary availability, which allows consumers to enter prescription drugs that they take to check if they are covered in a plan.

The site features information for plans available through the health insurance marketplace and directly through companies, so you can compare plans and view options side-by-side.

Representative Dan Miller



Unemployment compensation is a necessary reality for many families. Over the last couple of years, Harrisburg has struggled to correct certain inequities in our system – one in particular that related to seasonal workers where it did not adjust appropriately for reoccurring industry slowdowns.

Towards the end of session, a bipartisan deal was reached in the House that would address that issue and others. To be clear, the bill was not what either side wanted, but it was a compromise that would provide needed assistance for over 40,000 working people and their families and provide a possible framework for future action if underfunding was a problem.

This plan passed the House on a vote of 175-13 and had Governor Wolf’s support.

Unfortunately, the majority leadership in the Senate ended session without allowing a vote on the bill. Their inaction brought further damage to the state by failing to fund our unemployment centers – which has led to about 500 furloughs. We have been told that the Senate inaction was due to an internal policy where they don’t bring up bills after an election in November. Their rigid adherence to a guideline has laid off hundreds of people, closed centers that helped others, and allows our flawed unemployment system to continue.

I am urging all sides to get this issue resolved as soon as possible! In the meantime if you have any questions about this or any other state government-related issue, please don’t hesitate to contact my office at (412) 343-3870.

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Council Woman Natalia Rudiak



Our Pittsburgh Bureau of Police has been working with too few staff for too long. Part of the problem was an aging training facility which was too small to accommodate recruitment classes, had little parking, and had little room for physical fitness or defensive tactic training. In addition to all of these issues, it was prone to

flooding!

The City's new interim training facility is a 32,000-square foot building (formerly the site of CCAC's former visual arts center.) The space is large enough to house driving and firearms video simulators, and has classrooms large enough for exercises on emergency scenarios.

Because of this large new space, the City has dramatically increased recruiting numbers and added classes. Since moving into the building last September, 108 recruits have come through the facility. As of December of 2016, we had 875 sworn officers and 58 recruits in training. We are budgeted for 892 total officers.

The 2017 Budget also brings on 20 new Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs). And although the Fire Bureau has been budgeted to employ 656 firefighters city-wide since 2013, we have not achieved this number. In 2017, we are projected to finally meet it.

In addition to recruiting and training more public safety officials, the Department of Personnel is working closely with the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police to increase minority hiring. The current recruit class is composed of nearly 30 percent women and minorities. Minority recruitment is up significantly over the past decade.

We are working hard to make sure the City has the police officers, fire fighters, and EMTs it needs to be safe and livable for all.

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Senator Wayne Fontana



Heroin and opioid-related overdoses are the leading causes of accidental deaths, killing more Pennsylvanians than traffic accidents. Right here in Allegheny County there were 422 accidental overdoses in 2015 alone. Prior to the conclusion of the 2015-16 legislation session in a bi-partisan manner, the General Assembly passed a series of bills that were signed into law by Governor Wolf in an effort to begin combatting the opioid abuse epidemic.

The new laws include: allowing for the safe and complete destruction of unused prescription drugs by permitting for drop-off sites at certain locations; requiring state and medical schools to develop curriculum on safe opioid prescriptions and pain management; requiring dispensers or prescribers to complete continuing education in pain management or in the prescribing practices of opioids; limiting opioid prescriptions for individuals seeking treatment in emergency rooms or urgent care centers to seven days, unless the medical practitioner in his/her judgment, deems the patient to have an acute medical condition or pain associated with cancer; and puts safeguards in place for the prescribing of opioids to minors. You can read more about these new laws in greater detail by visiting www.senatorfontana.com and clicking on the Nov. 29 edition of my "News & Views."

In November, I was happy to have Allegheny County Sheriff Bill Mullen's office in my office collecting unused/unwanted prescription medications as part of his Project D.U.M.P. initiative. This program allows individuals to contact a Sheriff's Office Evidence Custodian who will report to their residence and take possession of any unwanted medications. I encourage anyone with unwanted medications to contact Deputy Joe Cirigliano at 412-459-5000 to make arrangements to have the medications properly disposed of through Project D.U.M.P.

As we begin the new year, I will continue working with my colleagues at all levels of government, medical professionals, community leaders, and other stakeholders to raise awareness on this issue and work to find solutions.

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Carnegie Library of Brookline January Events

For Kids

- *STEM: Imagination Builders* - Wednesdays • 3:30 p.m. - imagine, design, construct! Critical thinking, teamwork and motor and communication skills. Grades K-5
- *Storytime: Toddler and Preschooler Tales* – Thursdays • 11 a.m. - interactive stories, songs and rhymes. Children 18 months to 5 years

For Adults

- *Word Games* – Tuesday, January 3 • 6:30 p.m. - fun with words playing classic board games like Scrabble, Boggle, Upwords, and Scattergories. Adults 18 and older

- *Monthly Movie Showdown* – January 10 • 6 p.m. – join us for fun, relaxed conversation over movie-inspired treats.
- *Game Night* – Tuesday, January 17 • 5:45 p.m. – traditional board games and quest-based adventure games.
- *Color Your World* – Tuesday, January 24 • 6 p.m. - coloring is a great way for adults to relax, relieve stress and have fun. Limited supplies will be provided. Adults 18 and older
- *Book Discussions*
 - *The Buzz* – Thursday, January 27 • 6 p.m. – unconventional fiction, nonfiction and graphic novels.

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

Brookline Memorial Recreation Center

Day-Off-from-School Fun Camp

Grades K-5. Monday Jan. 23, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Enjoy your day off from school with this fun one-day camp. Register now and tell your friends! Breakfast and lunch included. \$5

Playstation Tournaments

Ages 12-17. Wednesdays beginning Jan. 11 (NBA2k17) and Fridays beginning Jan. 13, 7-9 p.m. Sign up for brand new Madden NFL 17 and NBA2k17 tournaments. Join us every Wednesday and Friday night for a season-long tournament. Championship rounds will feature a pizza party and a gift card for the winners. \$10/player for 1 game. \$15/player for both games.

Youth Dodgeball League

Ages 10-15. Fridays, January 13 to March 3, 5-6 p.m. Bring a team or bring yourself. Each team will have 5 players. All participants get a t-shirt. \$5

Kinder Sports

Ages 5 and younger. Wednesdays, 10 a.m.-Noon. Very young boys and girls will have a blast with our ongoing Kindersports program. Activities include gym time with games and sports, arts and crafts, storytime, and snack. Drop in any time! FREE

Tabata

Ages 18+, Thursdays 5:45-6:30 p.m. and Fridays 5:30-6:15 p.m. Through Feb. 23 and 24. This high-intensity workout is designed with 20-second intervals of intense exercise followed by 10 seconds of rest, repeated 8 times. These bursts of intense work will burn calories and strengthen your entire body. Registration is limited. \$20 for 1 class per week; \$30 for 2 classes per week.

Men's Pick-Up Basketball

Ages 18+. Every Tuesday 8:30 p.m. to 10 p.m. \$3 per night.

Total Body Conditioning for Women

Ages 18+, Mondays, Jan. 9-Feb. 27, 5-6 p.m. This class will focus on a variety of formats to keep you motivated while improving your overall fitness. Each class will focus on a total body workout using a variety of strength, cardio, and core exercises. Open to all levels. Registration is limited. \$20

Knitting Club

Mondays, beginning Jan. 9, 9:30-11 a.m. Come meet new people, try new knitting patterns, and enjoy a community of knitters. This club is open to all levels and can provide beginner instruction. Please bring your own materials. Light refreshments provided. FREE

For more information, call 412-571-3222.

January Events on the Boulevard

At 824: The Consignment Shop

See what's in store for you in 2017 at a Tarot Reading Event with Psychic Mary Patrella! Refreshments provided. Sat. Jan. 7 from 6:30 – 10 p.m. Price per ticket is \$40. 824 Brookline Blvd. 412-440-8245

Learn to knit a washcloth with Knitter Extraordinaire Pamela Grabowski. Refreshments provided. Sat. Jan. 21 from 2-4 p.m. Price per ticket is \$15, which includes a handmade soap from Crystal Soaps.

At Brookline Teen Outreach/American Legion Bldg.

Brookline Community Open Mic., Wednesdays, 8-10:30 p.m. For all ages. 520 Brookline Blvd.

Heritage Players Theater News

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

Special in February:

50 Shades of Shakespeare: Love comes in many forms and the Bard explored nearly all of them. Please join The Heritage Players for a night of theatre, featuring some of Shakespeare's most famous (and infamous) scenes. Directed by Bob Scott, who will be honored with the first ever Heritage Award for his contributions to Pittsburgh theatre. Performances February 24 and 25 at 8 p.m. at the Seton Center, 1900 Pioneer Avenue. Admission is \$10. To purchase tickets, please call 412-254-4633 or email heritageplayers@yahoo.com.

2017 Season:

Sense and Sensibility. Adapted by Jon Jory, based on the novel by Jane Austen. May 12-14 and 19-21.

Winnie the Pooh. Lyrics by A.A. Milne. Music by Allan Friedman. Adapted by Kristin Sergel. August 4-6 and 11-13.

Lost in Yonkers by Neil Simon. September 8-10 and 15-17.

Into the Woods. Music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim. Book by James Lapine. November 3-5 and 10-12.



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Carmalt News



Carmalt Principal Mr. Lewandowski
Photos courtesy of Carmalt PreK-8

(Editor's note: This month, we welcome Carmalt PreK-8 to our round-ups from local schools!)

Students Thomas Cherry and Jason Sippey recently had the pleasure of interviewing the school's new Principal, Mr. Lewandowski, and Vice Principal, Dr. Miles-Brown. They are excited to join the Carmalt family and come with a vast total of

experience in the education field.

Even though Dr. Miles Brown spent the 2015-2016 academic year at Pittsburgh Obama, and Mr. Lewandowski worked in Central Administration, their journeys in the field of education are quite different. Mr. Lewandowski began his career as a special education teacher, then assistant principal, and lastly the principal of Pittsburgh Roosevelt where he worked for ten years before joining the staff at central office.

Dr. Miles-Brown began her career as a kindergarten and first grade teacher in the Atlanta Public School District. Ten years later, she began teaching pre-kindergarten in the Pittsburgh Public Schools prior to becoming an administrator.



Carmalt Vice-Principal Dr. Miles-Brown

When asked about the strengths of the Pittsburgh Carmalt family, both highlighted that the cohesive staff, rigorous work of students, and positive student behavior are a few of the things that make Carmalt great. During the coming year they are looking for ways to infuse Carmalt with new opportunities such as fieldtrips, math/science nights in which parents come and experience the new curriculum, and ramping up science/technology programs within the school to help students become more competitive in the global economy.

What's Happening at Brookline PreK-8

by Amy Cornelius Dembosky, Parent Volunteer

Happy New Year from all of us at Pittsburgh Brookline PreK-8! We had a great time in December. Our chorus performed at the Allegheny County Courthouse again this year. Their repertoire included "America the Beautiful" along with selections representing different holiday traditions. Chorus and instrumental students were also featured at our evening concert on December 15. Every Brookline student had their visual artwork on display that evening, too. Thank you to everyone who attended!

Our character education focus for the month of January is "best effort." We want students to try their hardest to be successful.

The Latest from St. John Bosco Academy

by Holly Victor, Parent Volunteer

The Christmas season is always a fun one at SJBA. There were several memorable events during our holiday season. The PTG hosted a Winter Family Night in the gym on a Friday night. Guests were able to write letters to Santa and play games while enjoying snacks and each other's company. Volunteers for the function included some of the 8th grade students, parents, teachers and even a few alumni.

A pancake breakfast with Santa himself was held in the cafeteria from which the St. John Bosco Athletic and Brookline Little League associations benefited. The band dazzled its audience with a festive music concert held at St. Sylvester's school gym.

And, of course, my favorite annual tradition--the all-school carol sing-along. Every year on the last day of school before the Christmas break, the SJBA community gathers in the pews of St. Pius X church and sings the songs of the season led by the students. Each classroom takes a turn at the front of the altar and leads the crowd in a sing-along. After all, as Buddy the Elf says, "The best way to spread Christmas cheer is singing loud for all to hear!"

The families, faculty and staff of St. John Bosco Academy would like to wish a very happy new year to the subscribers and supporters of The Brookline Newsletter.

Brookline Quiz Answers

1. Carmalt, 1937, 2. Brookline Plumber, 1905, 3. DeBor Funeral Home, 4. Johnny Unitas, 5. Porky Chedwick, 6. Hanging hoses to dry after use, 7. The Brookline Pub

We know that students cannot be successful if they are worried about having enough to eat. Did you know that one in five children in Pittsburgh doesn't have access to enough food to keep them healthy? At Brookline PreK-8, we are starting a weekend Backpack Initiative to help our students in need. Beginning Friday, February 3, we will be sending home packs of non-perishable foods to help students get through the weekend. Would you like to help? You can drop off donations of food at the school (single-serving packages are best) or contribute cash instead. Please call the school at 412-529-7380 for more information about receiving a weekend backpack, or about making a donation. Thank you for your support of this important program!

What's Going on at Pittsburgh West Liberty?

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

It's hard to believe how quickly the holidays pass. It seems that at the blink of an eye they become a memory. We at West Liberty hope you and your family had a wonderful holiday season and that you have many warm memories to help you endure the cold winter months ahead.

Our first semester will be completed this month. The children will have a small break at the end of the month as they prepare for their second semester at school.

We've had a new addition to our family. We'd like to welcome Rickie Fink who is our new tutor and has been assigned to West Liberty. She has been very busy helping the children and the staff as we meet each day's challenges. We are happy to have her join our staff while we say goodbye to Mr. Thompson.

This month we will be having our STEAM night activity. Last year's STEAM night was a great success. STEAM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math. The night will include some special guest visitors, treats and activities in each of the above-mentioned disciplines. We are looking forward to another great night just like last year.

Also, occurring this month is our celebration of Black History Month. During this time, each of our Social Studies teachers will focus on famous people in Black History, and our teachers will be sharing this important information with their classes. Our students will perform skits at our morning meetings to help teach us about a famous historian in Black History.

That's all for now. Try to stay warm and remember Pittsburgh West Liberty is "Where Learners Excel and Character Counts."



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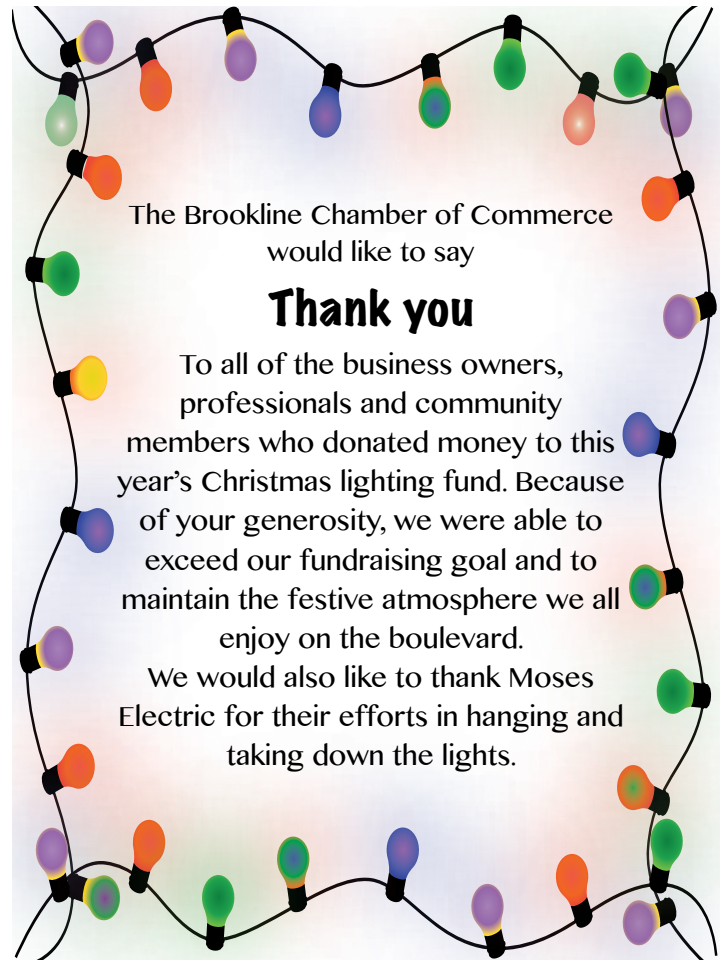


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The Brookline Chamber of Commerce
 would like to say

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To all of the business owners,
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 members who donated money to this
 year's Christmas lighting fund. Because
 of your generosity, we were able to
 exceed our fundraising goal and to
 maintain the festive atmosphere we all
 enjoy on the boulevard.

We would also like to thank Moses
 Electric for their efforts in hanging and
 taking down the lights.