

# the **Stand** south side news

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Syracuse, NY

**NOVEMBER 2016 Issue 54 FREE**

## READING PIONEER

Ruth Colvin's milestone birthday party will raise money for LiteracyCNY

## Youth learn life skills

South Side Communication Center has many offerings

## flood maps

Changes by FEMA have residents fearful of higher insurance

**Music legend**  
Bobby Green turns 80, celebrates by performing

## 3 MORE TINY HOMES UP





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PHOTOGRAPHERS

STUDENTS AT THE  
S.I. NEWHOUSE SCHOOL OF  
PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

SPECIAL THANKS THIS MONTH

DEAN LORRAINE BRANHAM,  
DEAN BEA GONZALEZ,  
JULIANA WALSH

CONTACT US

SOUTH SIDE NEWSPAPER PROJECT  
(315) 882-1054  
ASHLEY@MYSOUTHSIDESTAND.COM

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SOUTH SIDE COMMUNICATION CENTER  
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SYRACUSE, NY 13205

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IMPROVING  
PERCEPTIONS

Chief of Police Frank Fowler speaks to residents about crime and gun violence statistics during a community dialogue organized by the brothers of Prince Hall Masonic Temple on Oct. 18. At the discussion, "Improving Perceptions Between Police & The Community," Fowler said that while crime in the city is down, shots fired and murder incidents are up. He said residents can help police by reporting criminal activity and by communicating constructively. "I may be a lot of things, but clairvoyant, I am not," Fowler told the group. | Perry Aston, Staff Photo



- Cover photography by Tony Curtis of adult literacy pioneer Ruth Colvin, posing with a cake to illustrate her upcoming 100th birthday

EVENTS | NOVEMBER

**What:** Bone Marrow Registry Drive for Baby King  
**When:** 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 17  
**Where:** Ed Smith School, 1106 Lancaster Ave.  
**More details:** Benefits local 3-year-old African-American King Nazir Leon, known as Baby King, who was born with CD40 Ligand deficiency, a hereditary immune disease that will be fatal without a bone marrow transplant. To join the registry and see if you might be a match, you must fill out paperwork and provide a cheek swab. It all takes just 15 minutes of your time. Must be between the ages of 18 and 44 and meet health guidelines.  
**More Info.:** Email [info@wgpfoundation.org](mailto:info@wgpfoundation.org)

**What:** Believe in Syracuse General Meeting  
**When:** 5:30 to 7 p.m. Monday, Nov. 14  
**Where:** South Side Innovation Center, 2610 S. Salina St.  
**Cost:** Free and open to the public  
**More details:** Attend to meet all the committees and teams within this newly formed organization. Each committee will share updates. New members are encouraged to attend to learn how to become a volunteer.  
**More Info.:** Visit [believeinsyracuse.org](http://believeinsyracuse.org)

**What:** Truth Tellers Speaker Series: Oren Lyons  
**When:** 7 to 9 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 12  
**Where:** ArtRage Gallery, 505 Hawley Ave.  
**Cost:** Free and open to the public  
**More details:** As a closing event for the center's exhibition of Robert Shetterly's "Americans Who Tell The Truth" portraits, Oren Lyons, a member of the Onondaga and Seneca nations of the Iroquois Confederacy, will speak on serving as an activist for indigenous and environmental justice.  
**More Info.:** Call (315) 218-5711

**What:** Teen Advisory Board  
**When:** 3:30 to 5 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 16  
**Where:** Central Library, 447 S. Salina St.  
**More details:** Central Library's Teen Advisory Board is a group that helps plan programs to make the downtown library a great place for teens to hang out. New members are always welcome.  
**More Info.:** Call the library at (315) 435-1900

This month, we highlight people, places and efforts that have either had a lasting impression on Syracuse's South Side or have just started making an impact.

One story features locally known blues, R&B and old-school guitarist Bobby Green. He performed four times over his 80th birthday weekend last month, including a stop at the B&B Cocktail Lounge. He has performed for 63 years in Syracuse, and many community members came out to hear him play, reminisce on old times and celebrate his big day.

In our cover story, you can also meet another local changemaker who is set to celebrate a milestone birthday. Literacy pioneer Ruth Colvin will be honored with a 100th birthday party celebration this month — thrown by the local agency she launched 55 years ago. Her early efforts to increase adult literacy grew to an international movement, but started simply through community networks right here in Syracuse. The agency, now known as LiteracyCNY, continues Colvin's mission. The birthday celebration is intended to raise money for an endowment, ensuring that her legacy of supporting adult literacy will continue.

In the following pages, also meet this month's featured father, who encourages his daughter's love for reading. Learn about the next set of tiny homes — being unveiled this month on South Salina Street — that will provide affordable housing for homeless veterans. Also read about expanded programming happening at the South Side Communication Center and much more.

Ashley Kang



## CLARIFICATION

In the story, "Surviving Trauma" (October 2016) about Najah Salaam Jennings-Bey, she should have been referred to on subsequent references as "Salaam Jennings-Bey" (not "Jennings-Bey"). Also, in a reference to the homicide of a student athlete, the story should be clarified to say "a popular student" (not "that student") seemed to be valued over others.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I pray this email finds you in good health. The purpose of this correspondence is to express a few issues I take with the article recently published ("Surviving Trauma," October 2016).

I feel that it is important to clarify that the crisis plan implemented at Dr. King was the result of what was gathered from participants' overwhelming response on what they believed was needed to help them grieve and be successful in school; they needed a process to grieve.

Also, the plan was initially started during this past year's summer school program after a young man was murdered in the tenement houses adjacent to the school. As the administrator of that program, the crisis plan was implemented with my team at that time. The intent this year is to implement the same crisis plan schoolwide.

Secondly, you place Kate in the middle of a feature article on me. The information she offers is valuable, but personally I believe it should have been a stand-alone article, as the trauma being addressed with our students is specific to neighborhood violence.

The article reads as if she is attached to the work I'm doing; she's not. I am aware of her work, but the Trauma Response Team and Street Addiction Institute, Inc., directly work with us at Dr. King addressing neighborhood trauma. It is important to acknowledge current organizations we work with.

For the integrity of the article, I do believe that the above concerns need to be clarified.

Respectfully,  
Najah





## NEED HELP?

According to calculations by LiteracyCNY based on national figures, an estimated 60,000 adults have extremely limited literacy or English language skills here in Onondaga County.

### Know someone LiteracyCNY can help?

The first step to enrolling is to meet with staff members, who will gather important information.

This initial intake will determine three factors:

- Current level of skills
- Availability
- Location

Once the student's skill level is known, along with the person's schedule and where the person lives, LiteracyCNY can determine which class or tutor will be the best fit.

To make an initial appointment, contact Betsy Lang at [blang@LiteracyCNY.org](mailto:blang@LiteracyCNY.org) or (315) 471-1300 ext. 172

## HOW TO HELP

To volunteer as a tutor with LiteracyCNY or to make a donation, call the agency at (315) 471-1300 ext. 170 or email [info@LiteracyCNY.org](mailto:info@LiteracyCNY.org)

# A REASON TO PARTY

*Literacy pioneer's 100th birthday celebration to fundraise for adult literacy*



> Ruth Colvin, shown in her home, has devoted more than five decades of her life rallying for adult literacy. She continues to be active in the movement, serving on the boards of LiteracyCNY and ProLiteracy. | Tony Curtis, Staff Photo

By | Ashley Kang  
*The Stand* director

## Local activist explains how age is just a number as she continues to devote life to local charities

At one point, Ruth Colvin stopped telling people her age.

She thinks it was in her 80s that she grew tired of answering the age question. Then one evening at a party she was introduced to a woman.

“Slumped over a walker, she approached me and shared how she was too old to participate. I asked her age and learned she was 16 years my junior,” Colvin recalled.

“Aah, you’re merely a kid,” Colvin told her.

Colvin, known for founding a literacy movement — now existing as the local LiteracyCNY and the worldwide ProLiteracy, both based in Syracuse — thinks age is nothing more than a number.

“When I told the woman my age, suddenly she stood up straighter,” Colvin said. “She now knew she wasn’t the oldest one in the room.”

Now at 99, Colvin plays golf three times a week; goes to the gym twice a week, flowing through 15 machines and completing 30 reps on each; serves on the

board of her two literacy groups; participates in three book clubs; is active in her church; still writes books; and volunteers as a one-on-one tutor. Her current student, who is 37 and from Hong Kong, knows Colvin simply as Aunt Ruth.

Colvin stresses it’s what you do with your number that matters. “I just happen to have a big one,” she said.

On Dec. 16, her number will expand to three digits. But Nov. 18 is when Colvin will embrace the significance of reaching 100 by rallying for the cause she’s been most passionate about for more than five decades — adult literacy.

The board of LiteracyCNY, the legacy holder of Colvin’s local work she began in 1961, convinced her that a bash in her honor would serve three key purposes.

“First, to honor her legacy and achievements in her 100 years,” said Marsha Tait, executive director of LiteracyCNY. “Secondly to establish the Ruth J. Colvin Endowment Fund and (thirdly) raise awareness in the community about the work our agency does.”

The agency — formerly the Literacy Volunteers of Greater Syracuse, which was housed upstairs at Beauchamp Branch Library from 1985 to 2012 — serves students who read at or below a sixth-grade level and new English language learners. Tait, who is also a member of

Greater Syracuse HOPE initiative — Health, Opportunity, Prosperity and Empowerment — said that many of their clients are South Side residents who are plagued by generational poverty.

When the agency moved to the Syracuse Educational Opportunity Center at 100 New St. in 2012, the partnership helped to streamline moving low-readers into work-training classes to gain employment and a sustainable future. This program year, the agency is offering seven classes; it continues one-on-one volunteer tutoring.

The endowment to be established from ticket sales and donations raised during the celebration will be used to create a sustainable financial future for the agency.

“This issue in our community is not going to go away in my lifetime,” Tait said. “The demand is very high and over our entire 50 some years of history here, we never took that step to look to the future. We want to ensure we continue this program ... 20, 30, 50 years down the road.”

Colvin will be the first to say she is not a fundraiser, so the efforts of the board won out over her embarrassment of being thrown the “Birthday of the Century.”

“I couldn’t refuse,” Colvin said. “The only thing I can do is let people know that they are changing lives. Not only the lives of the students, we’re changing the lives of the tutors,” she said.

She explained that volunteers are often working with someone of a different race, different educational background and different religion. Despite those differences, she finds the pairs discover they have much in common.

“That can change attitudes,” she said. “Breaking down barriers — economic, cultural and even age.”

When Colvin was told that ticket sales — \$100 each, which she believed to be too high — go directly to the endowment in her name, she asked about the costs of such a large party.

“Who will pay for the dinner, the wine, the space, decorations, stamps for invitations and a cake?” Colvin asked. The answer: Donors.

“I was astonished,” Colvin said about how the committee obtained donations to cover all expenses.

“These people have gifts and skills that you can’t buy,” Colvin added in describing the Birthday of the Century Committee co-chairs, Bob Dewey and Doreen Kingsley.

Since March, a dozen members of the celebration committee, along with a number of volunteers, have met regularly to plan the event. It will begin with a cocktail reception, followed by dinner and a program. Musical entertainment will be provided by members of Colvin’s church — the Pebble Hill Presbyterian Church in DeWitt.

Dan Cummings, anchor with NewsChannel 9, will serve as master of ceremonies. Gregg Tripoli, executive director of the Onondaga Historical Association, is compiling a tribute montage.

“The video will be one of the centerpieces of the



> A nonworking refrigerator in Ruth Colvin’s basement held early Literacy Volunteers materials. Today this image hangs in the current office as a reminder of those early beginnings. | Photo Provided

program, highlighting Ruth’s gifts to the community, Dewey said.

The celebration will be at the Marriott Syracuse Downtown (formerly Hotel Syracuse). With a room capacity of just over 400, the newly renovated hotel’s Grand Ballroom appears set to sell out.

“Ruth has a very strong following of people who adore her,” Dewey said.

Adore is likely an understatement. Among the accolades given to Colvin over the years: 2006 Presidential Medal of Freedom from George W. Bush; a President’s Volunteer Action Award from Ronald Reagan in 1987; and induction into the National Women’s Hall of Fame in 1993.

One fan, former first lady Barbara Bush, shares Colvin’s dedication to improve literacy. Not able to travel any longer, Bush agreed to serve as honorary chair for Colvin’s celebration. In the forward to Colvin’s fourth edition of “A Way With Words,” Bush wrote: “I continue to advocate for literacy ... but the real work is being done by people like Ruth Colvin, who work tirelessly for this great cause.”

From the time Colvin read a newspaper headline in 1961 stating there were 11,055 functional illiterates in her home city, she initiated a literacy movement.

Tait, of LiteracyCNY, addresses that initial start.

“I don’t know what spark or characteristic someone has that allows them to almost unintentionally found a national and international movement — but that’s what she did,” Tait said. “Ruth will tell you she never imagined it to get to this level, she was simply helping a few people out of her home.”

## BIRTHDAY GALA

**What:** Birthday of the Century

**When:** 6 to 10 p.m. Friday, Nov. 18

**Where:** The Grand Ballroom at Marriott Syracuse Downtown, 100 E. Onondaga St.

**For tickets:** Visit eventbrite.com and search for “Birthday of the Century” or send a \$100 tax-deductible donation to LiteracyCNY, 100 New St., Syracuse, NY, 13202 with the notation: Birthday of the Century

**More Info.:** Email RuthColvin100@gmail.com or call (315) 682-0003



### MEET A STUDENT

Want to learn more about LiteracyCNY?



Visit mysouthsidestand.com to read a story about LiteracyCNY and to meet a current student



## PHOTO CLUB

Teens 13 to 18 years old are invited to join the downtown library for its monthly photography club. This club is shaped by teens' interests. The first themed photo session was based on the novel "The Double Bind" by Chris Bohjalian.

**When:** 3:30 to 5 p.m.  
Wednesday, Dec. 7

**Where:** Central Library,  
447 S. Salina St.

**More Info:** Contact Rene Battelle, teen librarian, at [rbattelle@onlib.org](mailto:rbattelle@onlib.org)

# MOMENTS IN TIME

*ITC seniors join students, coaches at SU to create media projects*



> Zau N-Hkum and Gabe Theiner were the youngest students at The Fall Workshop. | Jeff Newell, ITC media teacher



> The Fall Workshop was held at Syracuse University, and groups of students were guided by professional photography coaches. | Jeff Newell, ITC media teacher



> Two ITC students trained before creating a video, "Orange Nation," about SU tailgating. | Jeff Newell, ITC media teacher

By | Jeff Newell  
*ITC media teacher*

## High-school students learn from professional photography coaches in rigorous workshop

Two Institute of Technology at Syracuse Central media seniors, Zau N-Hkum and Gabe Theiner, successfully completed The Fall Workshop held last month at Syracuse University's S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications.

The Fall Workshop is a rigorously scheduled photography and video workshop that runs for four days. Young photography students from SU work with professional photography coaches, who hail from all over the United States.

Zau and Gabe were the youngest and only high-school photography students to participate. They were placed on the "Emerging Artists" team with their coaches Mike Roy, Linda Epstein, Michelle McLoughlin

and myself, who participated as a volunteer coach.

They spent the weekend taking photos around SU's campus, critiquing those photos and ultimately presenting them to all of the coaches and participants by the close of the workshop.

Their multimedia project titled "Orange Nation" covered the Syracuse vs. Virginia Tech tailgating on SU's campus.

Zau has been passionate about photography, especially since starting media at ITC. After graduating, he plans to pursue a career in photojournalism and teaching. Zau is from Burma and hopes to make a difference in the world with his photography.

Gabe was enrolled in ITC's photography summer enrichment class this past summer. He worked on a photo series that captured images of "urban decay," including photos outside old or abandoned buildings in the Syracuse area. Gabe plans to pursue a career in film and to study filmmaking next year at the college level.

# Dashawn Fair

*Nominated by South Side writer  
and actress Tammy Reese*

By | Ashley Kang  
*The Stand director*

**Q: What did it feel like when you became a father?**

A: Adrenaline. Then responsibility. The maturity side is the sacrifices of your own freedom for the greater good of your child. Working when you know you have to because it's no longer just for yourself.

**Q: What can you share about your daughter?**

A: She's an avid reader. She genuinely loves to read. She's very polite, and is a huge daddy's girl. And she understands that she has that power over me. She can say, 'But, oh, daddy,' and her voice will change ... so now I go to the stores, and I'm always buying extra stuff. Her name is Natahj.

**Q: What stood out over the past six years?**

A: The satisfaction of seeing the smiles and hearing dada. I just like how everything is new to them. I showed her a cup when she was a few months old. She didn't know what a cup was. Just showing her any object and watching her be fascinated to see it, examine it and learn. Then when she got older, learning colors. We'd take walks and then point out colors — this is black. Then to see her look around and start to point it out, then notice no, that's not black, that's another color. Oh, wow, daddy I learned a new color. Just watching her because everything is new.

**Q: What was your relationship like with your father?**

A: Our relationship was about activities and very sports focused. Every time a season was going out, a new one would begin. He kept me active because that was his way of keeping me out of trouble.

**Q: Why are fathers important?**

A: Mothers are nurturing, and fathers are the rule enforcers. Dads must be stern and lead by their example. They are the person to look up to in the household and that motivates me to go harder with my books, to be successful for her. Every book I write, I dedicate to her and put her picture in it. It's a silent motivation. When everything else fails, you know you can't give up because someone is relying on you. They don't know about stress, consequences or responsibilities. All they know is you. That keeps me awake a lot of nights and makes me wake up early many mornings.

**Q: As a father, is there anything you do that would surprise people?**

A: I'm the biggest kid with her — Play-Doh, sidewalk chalk, coloring books, monkey bars. I have no problem laying down on the floor with a coloring book and seeing who can color the best. I color outside of the lines and mix green hair with red hair ... and she loves to see that silly side of me.



**MEET FATHER Dashawn:** Fair, 28, is dad to 6-year-old Natahj. He is a published author of urban fiction and runs ThaAuthor Publishing Co. to help other local writers reach the goal of being published.  
| Ben Cleeton, Staff photo

**Q: What's your opinion about commonly held stereotypes about black fathers?**

A: I think when people blame African-Americans for faults that happen across races, I don't condone that. I believe that everybody is equal. So if a father is going to be there, he is. And if a father is not going to be there, then he's not — that happens in every race.

**Q: Any advice for first-time dads?**

A: Be the biggest kid because memories last a lifetime. My number one tip is to always call mom or grandma. They can answer any question because they have experienced everything. So when in doubt, call grandma. You can't go wrong with elders' advice.

**Q: What has been a favorite moment?**

A: When they fall asleep in the car and you have to carry them in the house. I don't know what it is, but that makes me melt. The whole droopy body and arms wrapped around you ... their head on your shoulder and the weight of their body. Then you have to carry them to the house and open the door with the key, then lay them down and get them into pajamas. That gets me every time.

*“When in doubt, call grandma”*



## TEAM MEETINGS

Interested in joining the effort? Attend a future meeting of the South Side Neighborhood Team of Believe in Syracuse.

**When:** 5:30 to 6 p.m. every fourth Monday of the month. The next meeting is Nov. 28.

**Where:** South Side Innovation Center, 2610 S. Salina St.

**Details:** Open to all residents who want to volunteer to improve the South Side

**More info.:** Visit [believeinsyracuse.org](http://believeinsyracuse.org) or connect directly with the South Side team on Facebook by searching for 'South Side Neighborhood Team of Believe in Syracuse'

# CARING CLEANUP

*South Side nonprofit changes perception by beautifying neighborhoods*



> The Believe in Syracuse South Side Neighborhood Team collected many bags of trash recently. From left: Pete Nicolini, Nyah Waters, Je'Niece Gallishaw, Denise Baker, Sarah Evans (mostly hidden), Jerome Sanders and Arlene Brodbeck. | Aubrey Moore, Staff Photo

By | DeArbea Walker  
*Urban Affairs reporter*

**In the past few months, Believe in Syracuse has held three cleanup events in the city**

**I**nspiring residents and beautifying the South Side neighborhood is the sole purpose of a South Side cleanup team that's been active for a few months.

"We found many people weren't involved in any neighborhood organizations, so that's how we started our South Side team," said John DeSantis, founder and executive director of the nonprofit Believe in Syracuse.

Over the past three to four months, the Believe in Syracuse South Side Neighborhood Team has held three cleanup events, he said.

"We've gone out and beautified the neighborhood and picked up trash, cleaned up gardens and encouraged volunteers to make the South Side more beautiful," he added.

DeSantis spotted litter and trash on the edge of the road and knew he wanted to survey the community to see if he could help. A year and a half ago, he distributed a survey to residents, igniting the birth of Believe in Syracuse's South Side Neighborhood Team. The nonprofit has also organized cleanup teams citywide.

"We want to make the South Side better than what it is," said Arlene Brodbeck, captain of the cleanup team. "We wanted to show people the South Side is something. It's not just the bad side of town."

In survey responses, residents said the proximity of neighborhood parks was a positive draw, and many people favored organizing community cleanups.

"There are a lot of things they love about their neighborhood parks — walkability, great assets we have in Syracuse," DeSantis said. "But one improvement was picking up trash and making the neighborhood more beautiful."

When people see volunteers out in the streets, it encourages more people to join the cleanups and attend meetings, DeSantis said.

"If you walk into a neighborhood and see boarded-up houses and trash on the side of the road, you will think, 'This is where I can sell drugs, engage in criminal mischief ... any type of mischief,'" DeSantis said.

He believes that cleaning up the community has a lasting effect, and he hopes the volunteer efforts will let residents know their worth.

"It's not just about the environment or making things look pretty," he said. "It's about uplifting the community and inspiring people. When you're out there picking up your community, it shows that we care."



# COMMON INTERESTS

*Citizens wish Council meetings happened when they could attend*

By | Jasmine Gomez  
Staff reporter

The Common Council is working to stream their early afternoon meetings for constituents

At the Southwest Community Center, a man in a blue janitor shirt sweeps the floors and takes down tables. In his down time, James Cotton talks to kids who run through the halls. He gives them advice, teaches them manners and aims to make them feel their voices are heard.

But while Cotton gives voice to the youth, his voice remains unheard. Cotton says his long hours, sometimes 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., prevent him from attending Common Council meetings to advocate for the issues that are important to him.

As the council moves to deliberate new legislation, more people want to provide their input on decisions local officials make.

The accessibility of meetings has long been an issue for working people and students who are often in class when council meetings are held, at noon or 1 p.m. on a Monday or Wednesday.

Cotton said his involvement in local politics comes down to a simple choice — whether or not he wants to pay his bills.

“You have to weigh your options, like will my voice be heard if I go and lose money from work, or should I just go to work and just not be heard at all and keep living my life,” Cotton said.

Councilor Susan Boyle says the council does not have a choice but to host meetings during normal work hours so heads of city departments can attend.

John Akins, who works with Syracuse Healthy Start, a program that aims to provide fathers with the tools they need to be effective parents, has a flexible schedule that allots him the time to attend council meetings.

“You can’t convince me that these politicians and these big wigs who are attending these meetings can’t get out of their 9-to-5 schedule and go to a meeting,” Akins said. “They choose not to.”

But Boyle said councilors must get community input in other ways, such as by attending neighborhood watch group gatherings. Boyle said she attends about 10 to 15 evening meetings a month.

“[We] try to make sure we have all of the input from the people as far as how they want us to represent them,” Boyle said, “and then when we go to study sessions, we bring that information with us to the departments and to the general conducting of business within City Hall.”



> James Cotton says he can't participate in local government because of his work hours. | Jasmine Gomez, Staff Photo

The council also periodically calls special public meetings for items of great public interest, Boyle said.

The Common Council is currently working to stream meetings live, Boyle said.

The council's IT department is currently bidding quotes on networking services that would establish a connection to WCNY, according to Stan Ayres, a specialist at the IT department.

Sharon Owens, the executive director of the Southwest Community Center, has long been a proponent of getting council meetings streamed.

“It’s another step moving in the direction for accessibility because right now you don’t have anything. And here we have Time Warner and WCNY and Newhouse in this community, it’s inexcusable that we don’t already have that mechanism available in our chambers,” Owens said.

But to Akins and Cotton, streaming is not enough because it does not allow for active participation at a meeting.

“The reality is you can’t please all the people, all the time,” Akins said, “but I think that what really should happen is before they decide what times and what days these Common Council meetings are, they should get a consensus from the public as to what the public feels is an appropriate time.”

## MEETING TIME

**When:** Common Council meetings are typically held at noon or 1 p.m. on Mondays or Wednesdays

**Where:** City Hall, 3rd Floor, 233 E. Washington St.

**Why:** Constituents are able to voice their input on public matters that affect their lives

## CONTACT YOUR COUNCILOR DIRECTLY

**Office:** Common Councilors and Councilors At-Large are located in Room 314, City Hall

**Phone:** (315) 448-8466

**Fax:** (315) 448-8423

**District 4: Khalid Bey**  
Term expires December 2017

**Email:** kbey@syr.gov.net

**District 3: Susan C. Boyle**  
Term expires December 2017

**Email:** SBoyle@syr.gov.net

**Councilor At-Large: Helen Hudson**

Term expires December 2019

**Email:** hhudson@syr.gov.net

**Councilor At-Large: Jean Kessner**

Term expires December 2017

**Email:** jkessner@syr.gov.net





# ‘Playing keeps you refreshed’

> Bobby Green, right, performs with a member of A Cut Above at the B&B Cocktail Lounge for his 80th birthday. | Ben Cleeton, Staff Photo

By | Reggie Seigler  
*A Friendly Five columnist*

## At 80 years old, legendary guitarist Bobby Green is still A Cut Above the rest

As I pulled up to the scene at about 7:15 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 16, the parking lot was nearly full and there was a stretch limousine in front of the B&B Cocktail Lounge. I knew then that the party was going to be nice.

By 8 p.m., the bar at 310 South Ave. was packed. Everyone had arrived to celebrate the 80th birthday of local guitar legend Bobby Green.

Bobby has been playing the guitar par excellence

around Central New York for better than 60 years. It's a self-learned skill that began with a little early coaching amid some taunting from an older relative. The coaching ended when Bobby released the relative from his band.

“Then he began the taunting,” Bobby explained. “You will never be able to play the guitar without me,” Bobby recalled his uncle, Furman “Duke” Kearse, telling him. Duke, now deceased, was not only wrong but would never have imagined that Bobby, at 80 years old, would be filling a room with people waiting to hear him play.

“My uncle Duke would be real proud of me now,” Bobby said.



Bobby and his seven-piece band consist of Kevin O'Donald, drums; Gil Copes, bass; Glen McArthur, guitar; Berny Williford, keys; Ambrose White, percussion; and Greg Collins, lead vocals. At the party, they played some of Bobby's staples to get the crowd going.

The partygoers danced and swayed and tapped their feet to the music.

Any unsuspecting "newbie" walking into the B&B Cocktail Lounge that night might have mistaken the bar for a nightclub in "gentrified Harlem" or some other establishment patronized largely by whites.

"We run a good business here," said Bill Denham, one of B&B's owners. "We've been in business for 27 years. If we didn't, we would have been closed down many years ago."

He went on to say that despite some bad press over the years, "what many don't know is that everybody's welcome here, and everybody comes here." He believes people come to the B&B with a common purpose — to socialize, hear good music and have a good time.

On that night, good music was plentiful along with good vibes. Everybody socialized.

Bobby isn't slowing down much and still keeps a grueling playing schedule. That same weekend in October, he performed Friday night at the Bridge Street Tavern in Solvay with the Trumptight315 band. Then, Saturday, he performed his long-standing annual birthday bash at Shiftys with his regular band called "A Cut Above." The Shiftys gig at 1401 Burnet Ave. has been a tradition for about the past 15 years.

Playing a gig both Friday and Saturday night would have been enough for most musicians, but for Bobby that's only half the weekend. Sunday morning, he played for the Antioch Church, and ended his weekend later that evening with his special birthday show at B&B. The Sunday night show featured both Trumptight315 and A Cut Above bands.

I called him the next morning to see if he would be worn out. He relayed that he was a little tired.

"But I had a good time," he reassured me.



> Bobby Green's performance with A Cut Above at the B&B Cocktail Lounge was one of four over the same weekend, as he celebrated his 80th birthday. | Ben Cleeton, Staff Photo



> A partygoer grooves to the music of Bobby Green at the B&B Cocktail Lounge. | Ben Cleeton, Staff Photo

Bobby doesn't want to waste time being tired. He said that he felt he still had some time to go and wanted to spend it playing his guitar. He mentioned a couple of other guitarists who had gone on to perform up on the big stage in the sky: Roosevelt Dean and Jeff Houston.

"When it's my time to go," he said, "I want to go out like they did — playing."

Bobby shared a few tidbits with me as to how he keeps going.

"I never smoke," he started, "and I only drink on rare occasions." He said that he didn't hold grudges and that "vengeance belongs to God." He feels that if you spend your time hating another person because of your differences, the other person wins.

And he believes that God will always bless you if you keep your faith. He gave the following example: "One time the doctors thought they'd found prostate cancer," he said. After that news, Bobby went home and prayed on it; he returned to the doctor's office for testing with a scope, and the test was clean.

"Playing keeps you refreshed," he said, "and praying keeps you blessed."

*Have A Friendly Five suggestion?*

*Contact Reggie at*

*reggie@softspokenband.com or (315) 479-9620*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**What:** Charles Cannon's Gospel Hour presents the 36th Radio Anniversary and Sixth Annual Food Drive

**When:** 6 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 5

**Where:** Tucker Missionary Baptist Church, 515 Oakwood Ave.

**Cost:** \$25 and a donation of a nonperishable food item

**More Info:** Contact Charles Cannon at (315) 469-1605, Keith Cannon at (315) 574-0087 or Kelvin Cannon at (315) 807-3153

**What:** Extraordinary LIVE! Support the next generation of rising stars. Join Carrie Lazarus in celebrating the most talented young performers in Central New York by enjoying an evening of singing, dancing, musical entertainment and fun.

**When:** 7 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 12

**Where:** The Oncenter Civic Center, 421 Montgomery St.

**Cost:** Free

**More Info:** Call (315) 435-8000



# PAL PROJECTS

Current and upcoming events sponsored by the PAL Project:

**What:** Art gallery featuring PEACE West Side summer program participants

**When:** Oct. 10 through Nov. 21

**Where:** The Link Gallery at the Nancy Cantor Warehouse, 350 W. Fayette St.

**Closing reception:** 4:30 to 6 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 17

**Theme:** Smile ... Or not!  
**Cost:** Free

**What:** Art gallery featuring Ed Smith School sixth-graders

**When:** Nov. 25 through Jan. 13

**Where:** The Link Gallery at the Nancy Cantor Warehouse, 350 W. Fayette St.

**Theme:** Super Powers and Super Heroes  
**Cost:** Free

# DIGITAL EXPRESSION

14 young students displayed their artwork at Syracuse University



> Anthony Kirkman describes his piece, inspired by an exercise: “I seem to be, but I really am ...” | Riley Bunch, Staff Photo

By | Riley Bunch  
*Urban Affairs reporter*

Summer program gave local children the opportunity to experiment with photography

The Link Gallery at Syracuse University’s Warehouse recently displayed the artistic work and creativity of 14 young people who had been enrolled in a summer program at the Southwest Community Center. Equipped with cameras, armed with Photoshop techniques and determined to write about their experiences, the adolescents had worked with Syracuse University faculty to create their art.

“This program teaches them to be creative at a young age,” said Halston Canty, who works with young people at the center. The work, he added, also helps them “just tap into skills they might not have believed that they had, which is very important. If they can sit here and put this stuff together, they can think about the life skills they are going to need: ‘I can start driving,’ ‘I can read this book,’ ‘I can go to college,’ ‘I can do anything.’”

Work shown at the gallery event in September included self-portraits, poems and graffiti images. Eight-

year-old Anthony Kirkman created a piece so vivid that the gallery used it as advertising for the event. Anthony said he had to stop and do a double take when he picked up the flier for the first time.

This summer’s Journey to Manhood Program at the Southwest Community Center ended with the art exhibition “Just Never Give Up” at The Link Gallery and centered on young men from an economically disadvantaged community.

In an exercise — “I seem to be, but I really am” — students picked generalizations or stereotypes people have associated with them. Then, on the final line, they said who they really are, who they see themselves to be and what their interests are in life.

“I duplicated myself three times, plus my writing,” Anthony said. “It’s about what I seem to be and what I really am. I seem to be mean but really I am nice.” Anthony’s second piece makes a call to his community: “Love me and stop the violence.”

Phil Haddix, co-facilitator of the Photo and Literacy (PAL) Project summer session, talked about the variety of communication options the students can use to express themselves: “The recipe is looking at different ways to engage students to increase literacy,” Haddix said.



Canty, who is also the youth specialist for the Journey to Manhood Program, stressed that the program aims to shape the boys into positive pillars in their communities. "We work with them, help them with development skills, coping skills," Canty said. "Allowing them to step outside of their neighborhood, step outside of the box a little bit, see things that are different besides just wanting to be a basketball or football player."

Nonetheless, the common thread of sports icons seemed to stream through the artwork as inspiration. Juelz Jackson, 11, talked about how his art was influenced by his role model, NBA player Stephen Curry of the Golden State Warriors. "I like Steph Curry," Juelz said. "I think he'd like my art."

Stephen Mahan, director of photography and literacy projects, taught the program's class at The Warehouse over the summer. It is similar to classes he teaches at SU. Students of his, many of whom are enrolled in the College of Visual and Performing Arts, work with the school-age youth to enhance their media skills.

"The idea being if you can take a picture of it, then it's easier to write about it," Mahan said. "It's a whole other story-telling device rather than words."

Mahan found it an easy task to get the kids engaged in the new forms of digital expression. "They're so digital savvy, the kids," he said. "You show them once and ten minutes later, they're showing you a better way to do it."

Canty agreed: "It's a little bit of a challenge," he



> Juelz Jackson "dabs" in front of fellow program participant's sports-themed piece. | Riley Bunch, Staff Photo

said. "But if you ... speak to them positively, you give them the right advice, and you show them how they can be a leader, how this can change your life, change your neighborhood ... sky's the limit."

Although the summer class has ended, Mahan continues to work with youth from the community during the academic year, with participation from students in his Literacy, Community and Media classes.

Haddix said there's no better environment to spark the creative talents of the youth. "A lot of African-Americans who do not see SU as an accessible building for them, we're bringing them dead center," he said.

## IF YOU ATTEND

**A special note about the PAL Project events:** The Link Gallery is accessible to wheelchair users via a street-level power-assist door adjacent to The Window Projects Gallery on West Fayette Street. For more information or for groups with special needs, please contact PAL Project staff at (315) 443-0463.

**Event parking:** Limited parking is available in The Warehouse Lot (WHSE). Call SU Parking Services for details (315) 443-4652. The gallery is on the Connective Corridor Free Shuttle Route; see Centro #543

ON THE SIDE

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## CENTER OFFERINGS

The South Side Communication Center offers programs and activities for local youth

**Location:**

2331 S. Salina St.

**Hours:** 3 to 7 p.m.  
weekdays

**Programs:** Chess, sewing, poetry and after-school activities

**More info:** Contact site coordinator Rachielle Scrivens to learn more at (315) 314-6303 and to check on holiday hours

# 'THEY CALL ME MOM'

*Local woman creates after-school program to prepare youth for life*



> John'daezia and Nadia work together on a graphing homework assignment during an after-school program at the South Side Communication Center. If they disagree on an answer, the site coordinator, Rachielle Scrivens, sends them to a computer to find out the correct answer. | Dominique Hildebrand, Staff Photo

By | Eileen Jevis  
*Guest columnist*

The students aren't just brushing up on their arithmetic — they're learning life skills, too

The South Side Communication Center is much more than a safe place for middle-school and high-school students to gather after the school day ends. The center — which opened in January 2011 through a partnership with the Southside Community Coalition, South Side Initiative Office of Syracuse University, and Home Headquarters — offers computer access, tutoring support, mentoring and positive reinforcement.

Rachielle Scrivens, site coordinator, runs the center as she would her own home — reminding students of projects due, to treat people with respect, and requiring them to start over if they've interrupted someone without first saying, "Excuse me."

"They call me mom," she said.

The center, a two-story house at 2331 S. Salina St., is open from 3 to 7 p.m. on school days and averages 12-15 students daily.

"Students are coming from different life experiences and different demographic backgrounds," Scrivens said.

"They may be taking care of themselves as well as their siblings at home. Our goal is to give them a sense of direction on where they want to go and put them on a path to move toward that goal."

Scrivens says she teaches the students that they don't have to be a victim of their circumstances.

"They only hear what they can't do. They need to hear that they can succeed in life," she said.

"We are here to support and encourage them. We look at the individual student and determine what their barriers are," Scrivens said. "We act as a liaison between students and teachers, or parents and students, to make sure they are getting what they need. We want them to know that there is someone in their life that cares about them."

The students have taken cooking classes, learned cursive writing and even how to play chess. They also participate in the "Economy Game of Life," which teaches them about practical life skills they will need in the future.

"We have them look up the salary of different jobs and how they would pay their bills on the income of that job," Scrivens said. "Can they afford to buy a house? A car? Do they have enough money to get their nails done? They are surprised at the outcome and have more under-



standing of the choices their parents make.”

General Educational Development (GED) and job preparation, English as a second language (ESL) services, drug prevention, and leadership training are just a few of the programs that take place at the center due to the newly opened satellite location of Liberty Partnership Program (LPP), which is run through SU’s School of Education. The program served 279 students in grades 6 through 12 last year. Students in the LPP program had a 91.8 percent graduation rate.

“When we had an opportunity to open a satellite office at the South Side Communication Center, we knew it would be a great fit,” said Chandice Haste-Jackson, Ph.D., director of LPP. The site is especially beneficial because many students don’t have transportation to campus for evening and weekend programs. Additional services offered through LPP are a result of a survey sent to parents.

“We asked the parents what they needed. Now we are offering “Parent Power” — a program that offers engagement, advocacy and support for parents/caregivers,” Haste-Jackson said.

During the school year, academic programs are the priority, but in summer, the staff can focus on enrichment programs such as self-esteem, poetry, team building and outdoor recreation.

One of the summer programs offered at the center was learning how to sew. The first instructor quit after two weeks, but Scrivens says she was fortunate that an SU student, Maisa Young, came to her door one day to drop off some donations.

“When I told her our sewing instructor quit, she offered to teach the students herself, and she’s been here ever since,” Scrivens said.

The students learned more than the mechanics of sewing. They learned patience and perseverance that resulted in a feeling of accomplishment.

“They thought they couldn’t do it. They couldn’t thread a needle and didn’t know how to run the machine,” Scrivens said. “At the end, the majority of them successfully completed their project.”

Ronnaeysia Goodwin, an 11th-grader at Nottingham High School, was eager to sew. After watching “Project Runway” on television, she wanted to learn to make her own clothes.

“My aunt makes her own clothes, and I wanted to learn the process. When I completed the skirt, I knew it was something I could do,” she said.

As a result of making a complete outfit, Goodwin was the winner of the sewing contest and received a new sewing machine. Now she’s making hair bows and bow ties for her friends.

Goodwin’s goal is to obtain a business license and open her own shop — a combination of cosmetology services and fashion design.

Like Scrivens, Haste-Jackson said the students experience a family atmosphere at the center. “They have somewhere to go after school that is safe and feels like home,” she said. “There’s a sense of belonging.”

*Eileen Javis is public relations manager at University College of Syracuse University*

## GRANT AWARD

**Southside Academy Charter School** received a \$1,000 Garden Grant Oct. 20. The grant, presented by BirdSleuth K-12 team and Alaska Fertilizer, will help develop a garden project at the school. The grant also includes the BirdSleuth curriculum kit “Habitat Connections” to support student efforts.

More than 500 applications for the award were received from teachers of all fields and grade ranges.

Last year, the charter school was awarded a Celebrate Urban Birds grant through Cornell Lab.



> Jamal and Nyshaun are coached by Al Freedman (center) and Charles Pierce-El (far right) at their weekly chess club meeting. The club began this year in the hope it will help young people who attend programs at the South Side Communication Center to think carefully and critically about all of their actions. | Dominique Hildebrand, Staff Photo

## RIBBON CUTTING

**What:** South Salina Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

**When:** 3 to 4 p.m. Friday, Nov. 11, Veterans Day

**Where:** 4351 S. Salina St.

**More details:** Join A Tiny Home for Good as it celebrates the completion of three homes and welcomes new residents, who are veterans

## HOW TO HELP

**Donate:** Mail a tax-deductible donation to:

A Tiny Home for Good, Inc., 189 Baldwin Ave, Syracuse, NY, 13205

**Get involved:** To help build a tiny home, support residents on move-in day or if interested in inviting a representative from A Tiny Home for Good to speak to a youth or adult group, contact the organization

Reach the executive director, **Andrew Lunetta**, at: [alunetta@atinyhomeforgood.org](mailto:alunetta@atinyhomeforgood.org)

Or visit **online** at: [atinyhomeforgood.org](http://atinyhomeforgood.org)

# HOMEGROWN HOMES

*Syracuse nonprofit finishes its second round of tiny homes*



> This is how one of three tiny homes on South Salina Street looked before insulation and dry wall were installed. Each home has 240 square feet of living space. | Dominique Hildebrand, Staff Photo

By | Liam Sullivan  
*Urban Affairs reporter*

## Veterans Day unveiling of South Salina Street homes is fitting for residents, who are veterans

In a lot at 4351 S. Salina St., three new houses stand not quite finished and not quite the size of a regular home, but upright nonetheless. Cars zoom past, their drivers not giving a second look to the work or to the one man on the construction site, tirelessly working in the early-morning sun.

Andrew Lunetta, who works alone on the lot, steps back from his workbench, wipes his brow, and smiles at the tiny house coming together under his workmanship. At 240 square feet, the structure will be a permanent home for a homeless veteran.

Lunetta said he doesn't want attention; he only wants to continue his quest to provide homeless veterans with access to an affordable, permanent shelter to call home.

"I just thought that with all the vacant properties in the area and the homeless population in this area, that there is a great opportunity for change here," Lunetta said of the tiny homes.

He described the alternative to affordable, permanent housing. "A lot of people will move back into a shelter because the only places they can afford to live are bed-bug infested, hazardous and just not safe," he said.

Lunetta, 27, founded his nonprofit, A Tiny Home for Good, in November 2014 with the goal of providing the homeless of Syracuse a place to live and call their own. He serves as its executive director. Before he could build anything, Lunetta needed money, land — and the goodwill of neighbors, not always a sure thing.

The fight to obtain and build on the properties wasn't easy. The Tiny Home team was forced to abandon two other sites after objections from neighbors.

Lunetta said the labels "alcoholic" and "drug addict" are used too often by people to describe the homeless without anyone even trying to understand their story. Residents feared that homeless people moving into their neighborhood would deflate property values and make their neighborhood less safe.

In July, A Tiny Home for Good unveiled its first tiny home, located at 112 Rose Ave. It is one building containing two separate living units, now occupied by two veterans who were homeless. The residents were recom-



mended to Lunetta through his involvement in the community. Each living unit contains a bedroom, kitchen, bathroom and small closet.

The nonprofit then turned its attention to the South Salina Street property. The national advertising firm Lamar Advertising had donated the lot after deciding that a billboard located on the site was failing to generate revenue from advertising sales.

The ribbon-cutting date for the three tiny homes on South Salina Street will be held Nov. 11, which is Veterans Day. Plans are in the works for more tiny homes to be built.

While Lunetta and volunteers were the sole laborers on the project's first site, the local construction firm Hayner Hoyt Construction Company donated its services to assist in building the tiny homes on South Salina Street. The company helped coordinate the installation of the plumbing, electricity and more while getting the contractors to assist without charging A Tiny Home for Good. The Hayner Hoyt team has helped expedite the construction process, moving up the unveiling on the home, Lunetta said.

"I think taking care of our veterans and taking care of our homeless are two critical causes," said Michael Lane, A Tiny Home for Good board member who helps with insurance, finance and risk management for the organization.

"They're a reflection on the community and who we are as a city," Lane said. "If we're not taking care of those two groups, then what are we doing?"

Beth Scanlon, A Tiny Home for Good board member and Le Moyne College campus minister, said Lunetta has a history of selflessness and community service, originating during his childhood and continuing through his time as an undergraduate at Le Moyne.

"Without Andrew, none of this would be a reality," Scanlon said. "He is constantly working to fix injustices, to help people and to make a difference in this community.

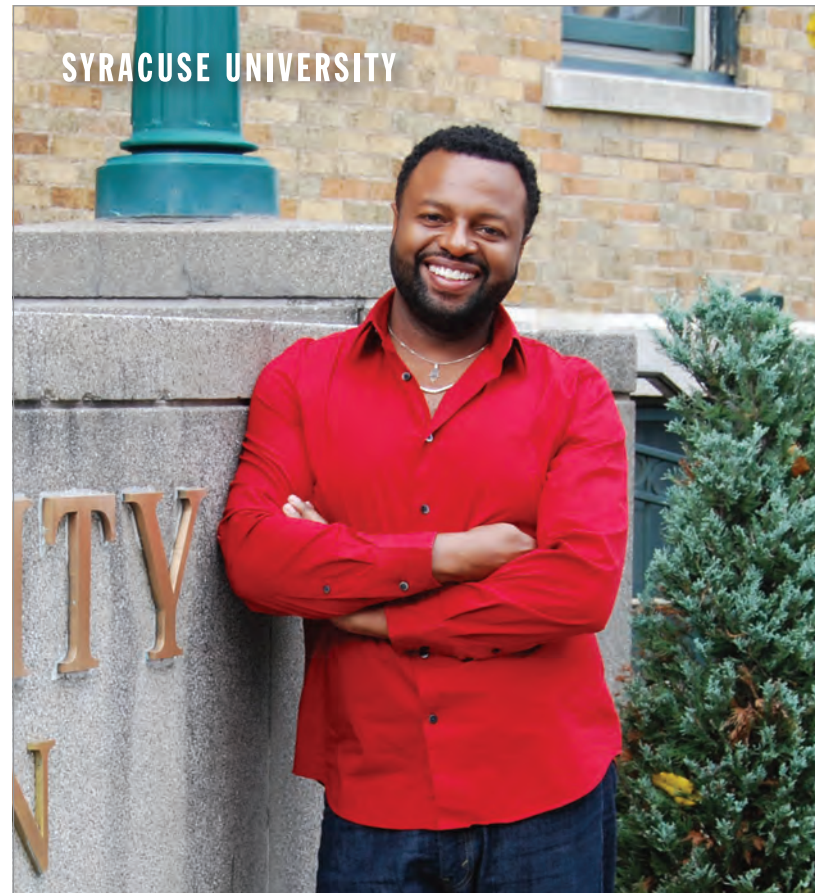
"He's just an incredible force for good," she said.

The organization is in the process of acquiring seven more vacant lots on the South Side for the team's spring 2017 construction, Lunetta said.

"A lot of my friends are still living in shelters. A lot of my friends are still living under bridges. A lot of my friends still don't have a safe place to live long term," Lunetta said. "I feel really strongly about this and know that the fruit of this labor is helping this community."



> Alex Gorbunov rolls up extra cable used to wire the electricity in three new tiny homes on South Salina Street. Each home has one unit of living space with 240 square feet. | Dominique Hildebrand, Staff Photo



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## SUN MEETINGS

**Syracuse United Neighbors** is made up of four coalitions on the city's South, Southwest and Near West sides, and meetings are held monthly

**What:** Southside Coalition and Southwest Action Council

**When:** 7 p.m. every second Tuesday of the month

**Where:** Brady Faith Center, 404 South Ave.

**What:** West Side Coalition of Neighborhood Associations

**When:** 7 p.m. every third Monday of the month

**Where:** Brown Memorial United Methodist Church, 228 Davis St.

**What:** Skunk City Neighborhood Association

**When:** 6:30 p.m. every third Wednesday of the month

**Where:** Mundy Branch Library, 1204 S. Geddes St.

Call the SUN office at (315) 476-7475 to verify time, date and location

### CONTACT FEMA

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region II Office can be contacted about flood risk and risk mitigation. If you have questions, contact Amber Greene at (646) 522-9271 or by email at [amber.greene@ogilvy.com](mailto:amber.greene@ogilvy.com)

# MAPPING TROUBLES

*Some residents overwhelmed by new flood insurance requirement*



> Gwen Chaffin, a community organizer from Syracuse United Neighbors, reviews a map of flood zones in Syracuse that have been newly designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. | Jasmine Gomez, Staff Photo

By | Jasmine Gomez  
Staff reporter

**Community group Syracuse United Neighbors is seeking information about the required fees**

About two and a half years ago, the Federal Emergency Management Agency designated Cheryl Leavens' home in Oswego, New York, as part of a flood zone, requiring her to enroll in a mandated flood insurance program.

The fee was added to her mortgage, making her monthly payment go from \$264 without taxes to \$349, averaging a new yearly expense of \$1,000.

"Between that and my taxes and everything else going on, I don't know. Some months I just pray that I can hold on," Leavens said. "I'm considered retired, but I still have to work just to pay the mortgage, the taxes, and that extra \$1,000 a year."

Many Syracuse residents now share Leavens' sentiments. The addition of 876 properties to FEMA's flood zone map of Syracuse — most located in low- to moderate-income neighborhoods along Onondaga Creek on the South and Southwest sides — has residents searching for methods to cover the new expense and politicians scurrying for ways to alleviate the burden before the maps take effect Nov. 4.

On Oct. 24, the Syracuse Common Council passed a resolution asking state legislators to give affected homeowners a break in property taxes on a sliding scale, from a 5 percent exemption for households earning \$37,400 or more to 50 percent for those making less than \$29,000.

But to many, including Councilor Khalid Bey, the tax exemptions might not be enough. The flood insurance requirement will add a new expense — between \$200 and \$2,000.

"That could be an immediate solution to people, but even still we're going to lose some people through the cracks," Bey said.

Bey anticipates that the inability of some to pay the new expense might lead to many losing their homes.

"When you get these persons on fixed income, who may at some point had a decent job, you could very well be putting these people out of their homes," Bey said. "If the bills become too much, the potential for them to fall back on their taxes is troubling."

The home of Joanne Stevens, a retired home health aide, was newly added to the flood map list, but even after repeated inquiries and attending a FEMA informational session, she still does not know what her monthly payment will be. Stevens said the public was not given enough time to resolve their new expense.

"We heard in August that we were going to have



to pay flood insurance in November. That's a few months. I'm on a fixed income, and I'm retired. Had I been working, I might have been able to do something," Stevens said.

Her fixed income includes a pension worth \$754 a month and extra money she gets from renting an apartment in her home, but she's afraid she still won't have enough to cover the flood insurance.

"The only thing I can do at this point is just pray. Throw the bills in a hat and pull the ones out for that month and whatever comes out that's what I'll pay. When you're faced with that, what do you do?" Stevens said.

Gwen Chaffin, a community organizer from Syracuse United Neighbors, also thinks there's a problem with lack of information.

"If you call an insurance company, they can't tell you anything because they don't know anything," Chaffin said.

SUN distributed nearly 500 fliers about the two FEMA informational meetings back in September, but she says they were poorly attended. If people have not seen the FEMA-related postcard alerting them of their flood zone status, they may still be unaware of the new expense they will have to incur, Chaffin said.

"I have a feeling when November comes, we're going to be getting a lot of calls," Chaffin said.

SUN has reached out to several officials, including Congressman John Katko (R) and Senators Chuck Schumer (D) and Kirsten Gillibrand (D), and has received responses from Katko and Schumer.

One of the solutions SUN thinks the government should look into is dredging Onondaga Creek. Bey said the city already dredged it in the past, and might look into it again.

"We hope that FEMA or the feds allow us the funds to do it," Bey said. "The city doesn't have that kind of ability, you have to outsource that service."

Onondaga Creek does not have a history of flooding — except for once in 1974 due to a burst pipe, not a natural disaster — leaving residents like Stevens and Bey to wonder why flood insurance is mandated in the first place.

"We were told that the data was based on history, but if our data's based on history and the city's creek has never flooded, you'd expect that the prediction would be closer to the history, not some idea that it would someday flood," Bey said.

Stevens thinks the Council should take money from other projects, like the Onondaga Creekwalk, and put it toward this.

"We're getting ready to have to pay all of this money and flood insurance and you're talking about building a creek walk," Stevens said.

Bey said the city cannot help.

"The city doesn't have the money to bail people out in terms of their homes when we can't even fix infrastructure and we don't know what that bill is going to look like," Bey said. "The feds who created this are the ones who are going to have to put the solution in place."

Abdul Shakir, chaplain of Syracuse's National Action Network and whose home was not included in the flood zone, said it should be up to the homeowner whether to purchase flood insurance.

"You shouldn't be forced to pay something that you don't have the funds to purchase," Shakir said.

Bey is in talks with Congresswoman Maxine Waters' office, which is working on legislation to address flood insurance affordability, but the proposal would not come until 2017.

"This is a very bad situation," Bey said. "The government needs to act fast."

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