

the Staungh south side news

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Issue 33 FREE

SINGING FOR GOD

Markita Collins shares her love and faith through a life of music

Workshops for students

Sustainability is the focus of these hands-on projects

right team

Program helps youth, adults lead positive and productive lives

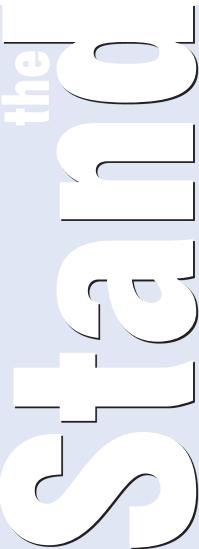
Community members, experts hash out I-81 plans

Interstate Debate on

CATCH A RIDE WITH A SMILE



INSIDE | MARCH

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THE PUBLICATION'S EDITORIAL PURPOSE AND
IN KEEPING WITH COMMUNITY STANDARDS.

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■ Cover photography of Markita Collins by Ashley Blume

CALENDAR | MARCH

What: South Side Tomorrow's Neighborhoods Today Meeting**When:** 6 p.m. Monday, March 3**Where:** South Side Innovation Center,
2610 S. Salina St.**Cost:** Free and open to all**Contact:** Email TNT@SyrGov.net or call (315) 448-8005**More Info.:** TNT Area 3 Planning Council meets regularly on the first Monday of each month**What:** Partnership for Onondaga Creek Meeting**When:** 6 p.m. Tuesday, March 4**Where:** Brady Faith Center, 404 South Ave.**Cost:** Free and open to all**Contact:** Visit www.onondagacreek.org**More Info.:** All are welcome as the group works for environmental, social and economic justice in Syracuse**What:** Looking Back, Moving Forward:
50th Anniversary Commemoration of the Civil Rights Movement, 1964-2014**When:** March 20-23**Where:** Various locations at Syracuse University**Cost:** Free and open to the public; registration required**Contact:** Call (315) 443-5019 or email swelch@law.syr.edu**More Info.:** The Conference includes discussion with cold case family members, civil rights icons such as Diane Nash and the Rev. C.T. Vivian, workshops, cultural performances, creative writing contest, and an awards dinner with musical performance by Dr. Bernice Johnson Reagan and Toshi Reagan**What:** Legends of Jazz Series: Cyrille Aimee Sextet**When:** 7 p.m. Friday, March 28**Where:** Onondaga Community College's Storer Auditorium, 4585 W. Seneca Turnpike**Cost:** \$25**Contact:** Call (315) 498-2772**More Info.:** Aimee is a French-born jazz vocalist who recently won first-place honors at the Thelonious Monk Jazz Competition, the Montreux Jazz Festival competition in Switzerland and the Sarah Vaughan Jazz Vocal Competition

March is National Reading Month, with March 3 serving as the National Education Association's Read Across America Day. And in celebration of reading, students at the Southside Academy Charter School are competing in an electronic blackout. The idea is to encourage reading instead of spending time on electronic devices.

The school's administrators, teachers, parents and the students will all work together to create reading-rich environments in and out of school by switching off TVs, powering down computers, putting down other electronic devices and instead opening up a good book. Parents are asked to turn off their television sets, video games and cellphones for at least one hour each evening and instead use the time to engage in book reading with the family.

On Friday, March 28, during the final blackout, Southside Academy will celebrate its accomplishments by hosting a reading recital where parents, students and teachers will have the opportunity to share a favorite passage from a book they have finished reading.

How about joining the reading fun?

We encourage everyone on the South Side to embrace this challenge by reading more this month. To start, turn the page and dive in. In addition, discover a new book by visiting your local library. Send us titles of your favorite books and quotes this month on Twitter @MySouthSide and tag them with the hashtag #SSReads.

In this issue of The Stand, we meet Yvonne Greene, owner of Band Aid Personal Care Service; Markita Collins, a gospel singer who recently got her own satellite radio show; a drummer known as Amali who recounts the legacy of drumming on Syracuse's South Side; and Antonio Owens, founder of Team B.S.P.M. (Building Strong Positive Minds).

Ashley Kang
The Stand Director



QUOTE FROM MY FAVORITE BOOK:

"That's the thing about books. They let you travel without moving your feet."

— Jhumpa Lahiri,
"The Namesake"

YOUR FAVORITE?

Send us titles of your top books and favorite quotes this month on Twitter @MySouthSide and tag them with the hashtag #SSReads

WRITE A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the editor can be mailed to:

The Stand c/o Ashley Kang
South Side Communication Center
2331 S. Salina St.
Syracuse, N.Y. 13205

or emailed to:

The Stand's director,
Ashley Kang, at Ashley@mysouthsidestand.com

All letters must be no more than 200 words in length and must contain the writer's full name, address and contact information.

MISSION STATEMENT

The core mission of Team B.S.P.M. is to equip youth with the tools and skills they need to be successful student athletes. Team B.S.P.M. endeavors to empower youth through education excellence, character development, leadership and health and wellness.

Learn more: Visit Team B.S.P.M. online at teambspm.com

VOLUNTEERING TEAM

Team Building Strong Positive Minds offers a free mentoring program

By | Stephen Connors
Urban Affairs reporter

Youth and adults are taught to think of themselves as individuals, not part of a group

Newspaper clippings describing various arrests and convictions decorate the wall of the steps leading to the basement of the Faith and Hope Community Center at 1029 Montgomery St. They are intended to serve as a deterrent to adolescents contemplating criminal mischief.

One clipping details the arrest of Antonio Owens. He is the founder of Team B.S.P.M., which means Building Strong Positive Minds and is meant to teach life skills to local youth and adults newly released from jail. The program works with nearly 40 adolescents, but has held events that attracted three times that number.

"For the first five years, I just couldn't understand why I was in jail," Owens said. He used the time to better himself. "What I did was read. As you're reading, your mind goes further. We start understanding what's going on, that this thing is bigger than us," he said.

Akim Betsey, the outreach coordinator for the program, also took to reading in prison. Betsey took the initiative to educate himself while in prison. "If you can't look inside yourself and see where you went wrong, then you'll be the same person," Betsey said.

The program runs Mondays through Thursdays starting at 4 p.m. The adolescent participants spend the first two hours doing homework, then the next two working out. The program also supplies them with dinner. Officially, Team B.S.P.M started in spring 2013 with that title, but the volunteers have been working with the community and with the youth for years.

Betsey said he wants to instill that same self-analysis into the program's adolescents as part of Team B.S.P.M.'s youth mentoring program. He said one of his focuses is getting them to see themselves as individuals and not as part of a larger group, and to ask themselves if this is who they really are or who their friends are.

They use role-playing skits and journal writing. Owens said the skits are particularly helpful because they record the participants acting out different scenarios, and then they get the chance to watch it back on tape to see the positives and negatives of their decisions. Owens got the idea to keep journals because he was writing a book, which he called "a therapeutic experience."

Currently, funding for Team B.S.P.M. comes entirely out of the volunteers' pockets and through donations from people who want the program to succeed. Faith and

Hope Community Center is letting the program operate out of its facility for free. Owens said this is because the center recognizes what the program is trying to do, but that he doesn't like taking up other people's space. He said they need their own building if they are to expand.

Team B.S.P.M. functions on two tracks — youth and adult. Part of the program is for felons coming back from prison. Owens said he wants to show them what people like himself and Betsey went through, and teach them how to conduct themselves for job interviews and keep their spirits high, saying that when he first got out of prison he put in 83 job applications and went on 12 interviews. He does this through the life-coaching program, in which he and Betsey, among other volunteers, offer guidance and advice to the participants in the program.

Maurisha Stenson, director of Team B.S.P.M., said that parents look forward to the events the program runs and always ask about what's next. She said that the honesty of the life coaches about their own lives and mistakes is what makes the difference in the lives of those who attend the program. Stenson volunteered at various other organizations and programs before joining Team B.S.P.M.

"It's for the children."

— LaDeena Curry

"I felt like it was important to give back because I grew up in these types of programs, like at the Southwest Community Center, so I always get involved with these programs," Stenson said. She teaches participants how to cook, sew, use computers, and other everyday tasks.

Right now, the program has 38 officially registered members, but because all of their events are open to the public, they get a lot more than that. Stenson said a Halloween event they organized drew 126 people.

LaDeena Curry, the public relations representative and fundraising representative for the program, said she immediately said yes to helping with Team B.S.P.M. when Owens reached out to her.

"It's positive, it's for the community, it's for the children," Curry said.

FOOD CO-OP

What's ahead for the local grocer, members



> Food cooperative on South Salina Street. | Shannon Rosenberg, Staff Photo

By | Shannon Rosenberg
Staff reporter

The Eat to Live Food Cooperative on South Salina Street closed its doors due to a lack of funding after being open less than three months, but its board is addressing the issues that caused its closing in hopes of reopening it this spring.

"We didn't make the money we needed to stay open," said Howie Hawkins, board treasurer for the cooperative. "We are currently in the process of rebuilding our business strategy, and once we take it to the bank and get it approved, we will be able to reopen our doors."

Hawkins says the initial opening felt rushed and more time should have been taken to prepare. However, he says the co-op's initial struggles helped the board determine its weaknesses and learn from mistakes.

Shirley Rowser, the co-op's board president, previously told The Stand that the co-op is accepting applications for a new manager to address a lack of proper management.

The co-op also couldn't accept Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, which warded off potential customers. Hawkins says the co-op is now approved to accept SNAP.

Many co-op members have decided to stick with the grocer during this transition time and patiently await the store's reopening.

"I was really impressed with some of the cashiers who worked there. Not only were they really enthusiastic, helpful and informative about the South Side in general but I saw that they were also very dedicated to the idea of a co-op," said Kira Crawford, a co-op member.

Gwendolyn Fagan, another member of the co-op, says the grocer was extremely convenient and had lower prices than corner stores. But she says she hopes the co-op will offer a better selection.

Hawkins says the co-op wants to improve its selection. He also believes the co-op's cafe will increase foot traffic once it reopens.

Jerome Sanders, a co-op member, says few residents know about the co-op or really understand what it is. He thinks that if the co-op were better advertised more people would join.

Hawkins says that the board hopes to make improvements and reopen this spring.

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HOW TO HEAR HER

You can listen to **Markita Collins** on the radio.

Markita co-hosts gospel recording artist Marcel Adams' radio show

"Marcel in the Morning" on XCEL Radio at 10 a.m. Monday through Friday.

"Speak Life with

Markita" is a show she hosts with her husband, Shaun, on XCEL Radio — www.xcelradio.com/listen-live — every Tuesday at 8 p.m. They discuss relationships, marriage, parenting, divorce, singles, business, how to have healthy relationships through communicating, and having a great prayer life.

Markita has completed her first project, **Broken Healed Whole**, which became available on iTunes on Aug. 27 and is also accessible on Google Play. She is preparing for a live recording late this summer.

Markita is also nominated for a **SAMMY** — Syracuse Area Music Award.

HER FAVORITE SONGS

- "God Will Take Care of You"
- "Is My Living in Vain"
- "I Do Worship"
- "How Great Is Our God"
- "I Appreciate You"

SINGING FOR GOD

Religious faith inspires Markita Collins in her gospel singing career



> Markita Collins is a worship leader at New Life Temple of Praise on South Salina Street. | Ashley Blume, Staff Photo

By | Phil D'Abbraccio
Urban Affairs reporter

South Side native says she was born into a life of music and has never known any other way

Markita Collins did not have a choice growing up about the role religion and music would play in her life. Her parents made those rules.

"I was not born into a democracy; I was born into a dictatorship," Collins said. "You had to go to church. You had to be in the choir. You had to sing. I was born into it. I don't know anything else."

Now 33, Collins has spent almost 30 years combining her love of God and love of singing. She is a gospel singer and leads the singing of worship services as a minister at the New Life Temple of Praise located at 5013 S. Salina St. in Syracuse. Collins just recently started her own radio show "Speak Life with Markita" on Tuesday nights on XCEL Radio and also co-hosts gospel recording artist Marcel Adams' weekday morning radio show "Marcel in the Morning" on XCEL Radio.

She has one mission in life, she said, and it's to spread the word of Jesus Christ — particularly through her singing.

"It means everything to her," said her husband, Shaun Collins, who is a backup singer in the worship group that Collins leads. "She lives and breathes God. For her, it's an honor to bring people into the presence of God."

Collins grew up the oldest of three daughters on Midland Avenue on the South Side. Her mother sang in a choir and her father plays bass guitar at the Greater New Testament Missionary Baptist Church at 1121 S. Salina St.

Sunday was always Collins' favorite day of the week. Each Sunday morning before church, her family would tune in to the FM 88 radio station to listen to the gospel show from 7 to 9 a.m. They would switch to the "Bobby Jones Radio Show" at 9 a.m. and head to church shortly afterward.

From the age of 4, Collins sang in the choir at her grandfather's church, the Greater New Testament Missionary Baptist Church, which is just three miles north of the New Life Temple of Praise, where Collins sings now.

The sight of her grandmother singing and the whole church joining and clapping along sealed the deal on Collins' aspirations for the future. She knew she wanted to be a gospel singer right then. "I love all types of music,

but gospel music is definitely my first love," she said.

As she grew older, Collins broadened a growing singing career, starting out by singing at churches, weddings, corporate events, conferences and more. She feels comfortable singing gospel music in any setting, because the result rarely changes — her listeners say they find her inspiring.

"Her exuberance and love of God comes out when she sings and in everything she does," said Elton Cadogan, a regular attendee at the New Life Temple of Praise. "She's been a blessing for this church ever since she and her husband came here."

Now in her fifth year at New Life Temple, Collins opens the weekly 10 a.m. Sunday worship services with a pair of songs, performing before a congregation of more than 100 people. She sings with a choir of four backup singers — including her husband — and performs with a pianist, percussionist and guitarist throughout the services.

"I enjoy her passion," said Bashir Bivins, who attended a recent worship service. "It prepares me to get ready to worship."

Collins is the mother of five — including one stepchild — and hopes to expand her travels as a singer. She has ventured up and down the East Coast to spread the word of God through her singing. The West Coast is next, she said.

"In order for people to know about Jesus they have to hear me, and not just me but artists across this world," Collins said.

"In order for people to know who I am outside of my local region and my local city, they have to see me in other places. It's exciting. It's fun. It's a fulfilling life."



> Markita Collins hosts her own weekly radio show, co-hosts another show and also has an album available on iTunes. | Ashley Blume, Staff Photo



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CONGA DRUM

The conga is a tall African drum with a single head. Musicians beat their hands on the drum to produce a sound.

The drum is popular in many forms of music, including salsa and reggae.

PLANTING A SEED

South Side drummers reflect on time playing, teaching in Syracuse



> Anthony Williams, a South Side resident, plays his drums. | Valerie Crowder, Staff Photo

By | Jacob Pramuk
A Friendly Five guest writer

Anthony Williams plans to leave Syracuse and hopes his drumming has sparked wider interest

AnTHONY WILLIAMS bought his first conga drum 44 years ago, paying all of \$5 for it. At the time, he wanted the drum because he saw the way girls flocked to his brother, who played in a band.

Williams, now 62, has been playing ever since. On Syracuse's South Side, he has played with dozens of drummers in many groups. He wants his percussion to leave a mark on the community and his fellow musicians.

"I've left my legacy here in terms of drumming and teaching," Williams said.

Before another winter sets in, Williams wants to move to Myrtle Beach, S.C. Most of the individuals he played with have left Syracuse, and interest in drumming has waned in recent years. Williams said he hopes the groups he has played in have contributed to the South Side's culture.

"There's some drawing factor about the drums," said Robert Jasper, Williams' instructor, who now lives in Endicott, N.Y. "When people hear the drums, they want

to come see what's happening."

A big part of drumming is teaching techniques to students, Williams said. When he started drumming, Williams received no formal training, but he listened to James Brown and other soul staples, improvising rough rhythmic patterns to complement the musicians in the record.

While working maintenance at the Syracuse Community Folk Art Gallery on East Genesee Street, Williams met Jasper, a drummer and Syracuse University student. Jasper taught Williams technique and they tried to bring others to play.

On a recent weekday, Jasper visited Williams. Their black hair and beards are now speckled with spots of gray. They reminisced about their playing days.

Williams and Jasper played nearly every night when they first met, and Williams' style developed from roughshod improvisation to nuanced patterns influenced by African, Puerto Rican and Cuban music. Williams gained experience playing for a couple of years with the jazz band at the State University of New York at Oswego.

They took on nicknames they created. Jasper was Kash'ka O. Muata, and Williams was Amali.

They organized weekly rehearsals that attracted

BEHIND THE NAME

Reggie Seigler's "A Friendly Five" column is named in memory of a singing group in which his two uncles — Mango Gray and George Gray — were members.

The group was called "The Friendly Five," and his uncles moved it from Clarksdale, Miss., to Syracuse in the 1950s.

beginner and advanced drummers alike. Drumming served as an immersive hobby that musicians would fit around work and school.

They played with many other drummers, from elementary school boys to middle-aged men. Often, students would start young as their parents hoped to encourage community involvement and good behavior. Williams made young drummers bring report cards to rehearsals and sent them home if they weren't earning good marks.

"We're their big brother, we're their father when their father's not there," Williams said. "We helped these kids grow to make the right decisions and become men."

Early Syracuse drumming groups in the late 1960s influenced Williams and Jasper. They played their first major show at Kirkland College in the mid-1970s.

Often, dancers would join the drummers on stage. Performers would wear handmade outfits. Williams and Jasper mentioned a particularly memorable 1977 show at the Syracuse Civic Center in which the group sewed outfits, made programs and designed props.

These elaborate productions have largely faded away. Williams plays organized shows considerably less often than before. He still plays at annual Juneteenth events, which commemorate the announcement of slave emancipation in Texas. He also drums at Black History

Month and Kwanzaa functions. But maintaining a group to play regularly has proven difficult in recent years.

"Especially in a city like Syracuse, people have to worry about survival more than taking part in events that aren't really sustaining their families," Williams said.

Once he leaves Syracuse, Williams wants to establish a "drum orchestra" that incorporates layers of various drums and rhythmic patterns. Williams suffered two strokes in the past five years, so his hands don't move as quickly as before. But he continues to play, largely to keep time for whomever plays with him.

When he can no longer play, Williams will be satisfied to pass his craft on to less experienced drummers. And as they let go of the spot they carved in the South Side's culture, Williams and Jasper hope that their contributions will make drum groups significant in Syracuse once more.

"We like to think that we've planted a seed," Jasper said. "It may not grow next season, it may take years to sprout, but hopefully someone will come along and continue the tradition."

*Have A Friendly Five suggestion? Contact Reggie at
reggie@softspokenband.com or (315) 479-9620*

CULTURAL SOUNDS

Anthony Williams has traditionally played at events to commemorate Juneteenth during his time in Syracuse.

The holiday, which takes place June 19, is the oldest known celebration of slavery's end in the United States.

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TRANSPORTING CARE

Syracuse native Yvonne Greene operates Band Aid Personal Care Service



> Band Aid Personal Care Service, owned and operated by Yvonne Greene, provides medical transportation arrangements. | Ashley Kang, Staff Photo

By | Josh Hyber
Urban Affairs reporter

South Side resident keeps busy with three jobs, including a local transportation business

Yvonne Greene does not like down time. So much so that she works three jobs.

Greene, a 49-year-old Syracuse native, owns Band Aid Personal Care Service, a transportation service that includes curb-to-curb, door-to-door, door-through-door, one-way and round-trip options. The South Side resident also works part time with the NYS Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs and helps run a daycare center.

"I don't like the desk scene," Greene said with a smile.

Greene has lived in Syracuse for all but one year of her life. She attended Dr. King Magnet Elementary School and Grant Middle School as a child and Henninger High School as a teenager. After working for

a year in Cortland, N.Y., Greene came home and has made it her goal to help out her hometown in any way possible.

For 15 years, Greene worked as a school bus driver in the city of Syracuse, and beginning in 2001 has worked with the Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs. In September 2011, she combined those two jobs to create the Band Aid Personal Care Service. Since then, she's been putting smiles on faces one drive at a time.

It's people like Donna Reese who see the passion Greene has for her work. Reese, who is visually impaired, began using Greene's transportation service only last summer, but already calls her a friend.

Reese recalls the first time Greene arrived to pick her up and says she immediately noticed Greene's sincere care. Their bond was sealed when Greene turned on a CD of Diana Ross' performance of "Home" in the final scene of the musical play and movie, "The Wiz"—Greene's favorite song from one of her favorite movies.

Greene also drove Reese the week before the anniversary of Reese's mother's death. It was a tearful ride, and Greene listened and consoled her friend. It is something Reese says she will never forget.

"She genuinely cares about people," Reese said. "And that means a lot to me."

Greene works three days a week — Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays — at the NYS Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs. It took almost two years of applying over and over to get the job, but her persistence paid off. Just two weeks before she would have to retake the application test and apply again, she was hired.

Greene helps run a daycare service. She's been a bus driver. She's run a limo service. But, she keeps striving for more. She aspires to open a weekend restaurant in Syracuse that would attract an after-work crowd.

Syracuse Common Councilor Bob Dougherty said it is people like Yvonne Greene and efforts like hers that bring hope to Syracuse's under-achieving areas.

"I think oftentimes middle-class people take things like transportation for granted," Dougherty said. "The fact that every household has 3.5 cars or something, well that's not true for places like the South Side. Boot strap efforts like these are really important for people."



> Rain or shine, Yvonne Greene will give you a ride. | Ashley Kang, Staff Photo

A close-up portrait of a young Black woman with dark hair pulled back. She is wearing light blue medical scrubs and a stethoscope around her neck. She is holding a white clipboard in her hands. The background is plain and light-colored.

BETTER STARTS HERE

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JOIN THE DISCUSSION

Interested in attending the next meeting?

When: 7 p.m. Monday, March 31

Where: DeWitt Community Room, 148 Sanders Creek Parkway, in East Syracuse

For more information or if you have questions, call (315) 416-6363 or email movingpeoplecny@gmail.com

PARTICIPATING GROUPS

Rethink 81
upstate.syr.edu

Save 81
save81.org

Moving People Transportation Coalition
acts-cny.com/moving-people-coalition

ONGOING ROAD TRIP

Interstate 81 discussion continues with panelists, resident questions



> From left, Mark Nicotra, Marc Norman, Andrew Schuster and Barry Lentz respond to questions posed by residents during the I-81 forum. Nearly 50 people showed up to voice their concerns about the highway's future. | Maddy Berner, Staff Photo

By | Maddy Berner
Staff writer

Moving People Transportation Coalition hosts first forum about declining state of highway

The future of Interstate 81 remained shrouded in uncertainty following a public forum in February hosted by the Moving People Transportation Coalition.

Held at the Tucker Missionary Baptist Church, 515 Oakwood Ave., at 7 p.m. Feb. 13, the forum allowed about 50 residents of Syracuse's various neighborhoods to voice their concerns and questions about the state of I-81. The forum included presentations and a panel discussion held by a director in Syracuse University's School of Architecture and three members of different transportation organizations. The meeting lasted about two hours.

The panelists included: Marc Norman, director of UPSTATE: A Center for Design, Research, and Real Estate at SU; Mark Nicotra of Save81.org; Andrew Schuster with Rethink 81; and Barry Lentz with the Moving People Transportation Coalition. Councilors-at-large Pamela Hunter and Jean Kessner, Common Councilor Bob Dougherty, and Green Party member Howie

Hawkins were also in attendance.

The suggestions discussed during this forum will be given to the Department of Transportation, said panel moderator Peter Sarver. A representative was at the forum, but Sarver did not make his or her presence known.

"Something has to be done," said Norman about the state of I-81. "There's no scenario where nothing happens."

Norman went on to present findings from a project by School of Architecture students. Through different seminars and design studios, the students studied the history of I-81 and precedents set by other cities — ones that tore down highways and others that repurposed them. The students also posed their own questions about the highway.

"We, as citizenry, have the ability to ask these questions," Norman said.

Before residents stepped up to a microphone to voice such inquiries, the panelists explained their organizations' own views on the state of I-81.

Nicotra, town supervisor of Salina, said his group, Save81.org, wants to keep the interstate as a highway running through the city. Schuster, of Rethink 81, said people should remember that the I-81 debate is more a

regional transportation issue, not just about a road. Lentz said the Moving People Transportation Coalition strives to achieve several objectives, such as a more normal street grid and preservation of neighborhoods.

"We want to focus on moving people, not cars," Lentz said.

Afterward, residents raised concerns such as certain neighborhoods being affected, transparency from the DOT and the need for more renderings to help visualize the possible outcomes.

A common complaint among residents was the traffic during events at the Carrier Dome. Mark Watkins, of the Outer Comstock neighborhood, said he was worried that tearing down I-81 would result in Dome traffic being rerouted through his neighborhood.

Resident Arleen Fordock expressed frustration that traffic from Dome events congested the downtown area. She suggested giving the Dome its own access lane off of I-81 so that downtown traffic is not affected and city policemen are not doing more than necessary.

Another gentleman said he was concerned about the air pollution left by idling cars trying to get home from games.

"So the rerouting of traffic — is this project going to be done in such a way where it's user friendly for everybody?" he asked the panel. Lentz responded by saying his organization is all about making sure the DOT is aware of these questions.

Nicotra added: "It's information that is the key here. We all need to stay informed. We all need to press the DOT to ask all the questions that are on our minds."

Hawkins stepped up to discuss the issue of mobility. A large percentage of people walk or bus to work; the solution to the I-81 problem should involve mass transit to reduce the number of cars, he said.

In an interview after the forum, Hunter said she would have preferred having a DOT representative present so community members could get answers to their questions.

If community members remain fragmented on the situation, she said, the DOT will make its own decision, which is not ideal.

"My most important issue is that it really involves the community where it will affect it the most," she said.

Sarver, who moderated the event, said the forum pushed the I-81 conversation forward. This was the first public forum for the Moving People Transportation Coalition, but Sarver said the group will host one each month until June.



> Marc Norman, of SU's School of Architecture, presents a project students worked on about the pros and cons of different futures for I-81. | Maddy Berner, Staff Photo

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WILDER COMPOUND

Workshop schedule:

March 1

11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Build a bike-powered phone charger, at 601 Tully

March 22

11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Build an Earth oven, at Southwest Community Farm, located at Midland and Bellevue avenues

April 5

11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Build a geodesic dome greenhouse, at Southwest Community Farm

April 19

11 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Grow your own food, at Southwest Community Farm

SUSTAINING THE CITY

Canary Project launches Wilder Compound environmental workshops



> From left, Philip Wong, junior at Syracuse University; Michael Zhang, freshman at SU; and Julian Velandia, sophomore at Nottingham High School, contemplate what makes them proud of Syracuse during a photo scavenger hunt outside of 601 Tully. | Valerie Crowder, Staff Photo

By | Valerie Crowder
Staff reporter

Local high school and college students begin seminars on climate change awareness

From building websites to growing food, students from Syracuse University and the city's high schools are practicing ways to sustain themselves and their communities through a workshop series, which began last month at 601 Tully.

"We put all these different workshops together that would be kind of a nice balance between more technological skills — we're going to do Web design today and bike repair — to more so-called primitive skills, like gardening or building a structure," said Susannah Sayler, co-director of The Canary Project.

The Canary Project, an arts organization that works to deepen public awareness about climate change, received a grant from The Rockefeller Foundation to finance the series, which is called Wilder Compound. Six workshops throughout the spring will teach participants skills, such as building a bicycle-powered phone charger and building an earth oven and a greenhouse for the Southwest Community Farm.

Around 20 students attended the first workshop, which began with participants writing their hopes for the program on bright orange, yellow and pink note cards. Some of these included: Learning about urban gardens, building communities, becoming a vegetarian and, of course, having fun.

Later in the day, participants went on a photography scavenger hunt and posted their pictures on the group's blog. They also learned how to navigate Squarespace, a Web-hosting service. Throughout the series, students will add more content to the website, said Jill Peterson, a design instructor in the series.

"Do we want to add an Instagram gallery over here? What other features would be good? Eventually, we can put video in really easily," Peterson said.

Visitors to the Wilder Compound's site will also find details about each workshop in the series. Philip Wong, a junior studying environmental engineering at SU, looks forward to constructing a geodesic dome and gardening.

"You can be more resilient if you grow your own food. You can cook your own food if you make your own earth oven," Wong said.

He also expressed excitement about building a bicycle-powered phone charger. "What if you get a blackout?

You'd just find your bike, charge your phone and call someone to get you out of there," Wong said.

For some students, the workshops are primarily about having fun. Rashon Isaac, a sophomore at Nottingham High School, is excited about the opportunity to interact with other people.

"All of these people from college are probably going to help me with which college and what major I want to do," he said.

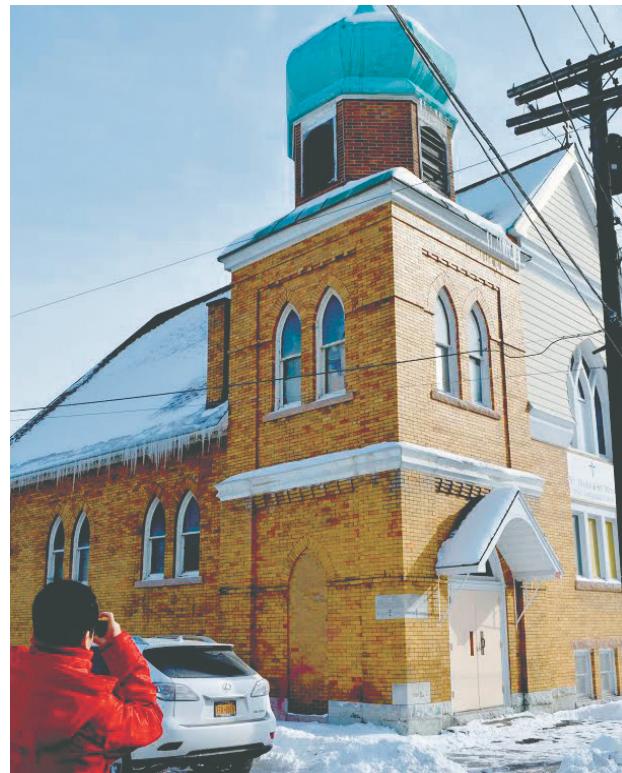
In April, students will build a 14-foot geodesic dome, which will serve as a greenhouse for the Southwest Community Farm. The structure will extend the urban garden's growing period so crops can survive through the winter, said Susannah Sayler, co-director of the Canary Project.

"They [Southwest Community Farm] had a stated need for a greenhouse," Sayler said. "They had plans to build one and then their funding fell through."

In addition to contributing to the South Side community, the series seeks to help students become more self-sufficient, Sayler said. Resiliency is a popular topic among environmentalists.

"Particularly after Hurricane Sandy, because people found that they couldn't do the things they needed to do to function, like charge their cellphones or get around," Sayler said.

That disaster pushed the group to start thinking more about resiliency. "There's going to be a need for



> Syracuse University freshman Michael Zhang photographs St. Mary and St. Mina Coptic Orthodox Church as part of the Wilder Series' scavenger hunt. | Valerie Crowder, Staff Photo

that more and more in the future," Sayler said, "as we have unstable ecological situations."

CONTACT, CONNECT

To find out more about the workshop, visit:

The Canary Project:
canary-project.org

Wilder Compound:
wilder-is.squarespace.com

Southwest Community Farm:
southwestcommunityfarm.org

If any college or high school student wants to sign up for a future event in the series, contact Ethany Uttech at eauttech@gmail.com or (917) 502-8530.

"What I like about *The Stand* is the information it gives you about the South Side and hearing about what leaders are doing in the community. I try to send one home with each customer, putting an issue in their bag when they check out."

— Gwendolyn Fagan, owner of Suit U Now

How to purchase an ad

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www.mysouthsidestand.com



ATTENDING THE EVENT

What: A live reading of "The Deer Lovers," an original story by Barbara Streets, will be accompanied by West African dance and drums

When: 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. Saturday, March 29

Where: Beauchamp Branch Library, 2111 S. Salina St.

Cost: Free for all ages

DANCE AND DRUMS

A live reading of an original story will highlight West African culture

By | Kristin Ross
Staff reporter

"The Deer Lovers" tells a story of love and loss, asking audiences to deal with emotional issues

Accompanied by African dance and drums, the pages of a storybook are being brought to life at Beauchamp Branch Library.

"The Deer Lovers" is a fictitious love story set in a West African village and has seven main characters: two deer, two villagers, a wise elder woman, the forest and drumbeats. The story aims to celebrate the West African community's oral traditions, dance and music, as well as address "universal themes of sacrifice, loss, trust and transformation," according to a press release.

"Instead of seeing the pictures on a page, you're seeing the pictures in real life," said Barbara Streets, author of "The Deer Lovers."

Streets, an assistant professor at the State University of New York at Oswego, said she was inspired to write this story because of independent research into African dance and drum. Her travels to Guinea and Ghana

furthered her understanding of West African culture and made her want to share it with others.

Because Streets said the story asks questions like, "How do you pick yourself up after an emotional loss?," the performance will be followed by a discussion with the audience. Streets, who is also a psychologist, said the discussion is especially important for all ages to attend since it is "a way to talk about these things in a safe place."

Streets said the library setting for the performance is ideal because it is a central hub in the community. She said she hopes the event will help promote literacy and introduce West African culture to others.

CNY Arts, which promotes cultural events in Central New York, has chosen Streets as a recipient of a 2014 Decentralization Award for "The Deer Lovers," according to its website. The 2014 award winners were chosen by a panel of more than 40 people.

Much of the assistance that CNY Arts provides comes in the form of grants that help artists produce new projects. The organization's website states that it hopes to "connect the general public to a rich array of arts and cultural opportunities in the area."

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