
ALLEGHENY WEST GAZETTE

August 2012

HOW TO DEAL WITH A PROBLEM PROPERTY

Timothy Zinn, President

Lately, I have received several emails regarding problem properties in our neighborhood. These complaints include graffiti on buildings, vacant and unsecured buildings, overgrown lots, stagnant water, air conditioners on street-facing windows, and trash piles in backyards and side lots. As an affected property owner or concerned neighbor, you should call 311, which is the Mayor's Response Line, and report the problem. To reach the office, simply dial 3-1-1 within the city of Pittsburgh, or 412-255-2621 from outside of the city. You can also submit an on-line 311 complaint and even attach a digital photo of the problem at this web address: <http://pittsburghpa.gov/311/form/>. Online submissions sent with a valid email address will receive an email response with a ticket number for tracking purposes.

In addition to reporting the problem via 311, please be sure to forward your complaint to Councilman Daniel Lavelle's office -- <http://www.pittsburghpa.gov/district6/contact>. Informing the Councilman's staff of 311 complaints will usually result in quicker action and enforcement. If a situation poses health risks (mosquitos, rodents, etc.), an additional course of action is to report such cases to the Allegheny County Health Department. Finally, I do appreciate these concerns being brought to my attention as I can then file my own complaint. Multiple complaints from various neighbors will also produce faster results!

While far from perfect, the 311 response line is the best tool we have to report non-emergency concerns or questions. Those of us that use it regularly know its shortcomings and are frustrated with its non-transparency—how it creates a veil of secrecy shielding real city workers from real tax-paying city residents. Some requests are answered in a matter of days, some in a matter of weeks, and some are apparently ignored for several years. I equate it to a slot machine—you place your wager, pull the lever, and sometimes you get three cherries, sometimes you don't, and sometimes, it just seems to steal your quarter. For better or worse, however, this is the process we have and following the outline above should maximize your results. Remember to be persistent, use your tracking number to follow up with phone calls or emails, encourage your neighbors to report the same incidents, and inform the civic council of your 311 submissions so that we know what neighborhood concerns exist. When bringing these concerns to the attention of AWCC, please realize that AWCC has no enforcement powers. AWCC will not and cannot make demands on property owners or tenants—we can report violations, but can do nothing to enforce compliance. Only the City of Pittsburgh has enforcement power through its various departments.

Please be reminded that **there will be no August general membership meeting**. We decided to take a summer break.

I appreciate the opportunity to serve the Allegheny West neighborhood. I am always available and look forward to receiving your comments, at tzinn106@msn.com

AWCC

August/September Calendar

AWCC General Membership Meeting

Calvary United Methodist Church
(Beech Avenue Entrance)

August – NO MEETING

Tuesday, September 11 @ 7:30 pm

Combined Housing & Planning and North Avenue Committees Meeting

857 Western Avenue

Thursday, August 21 @ 7:30pm

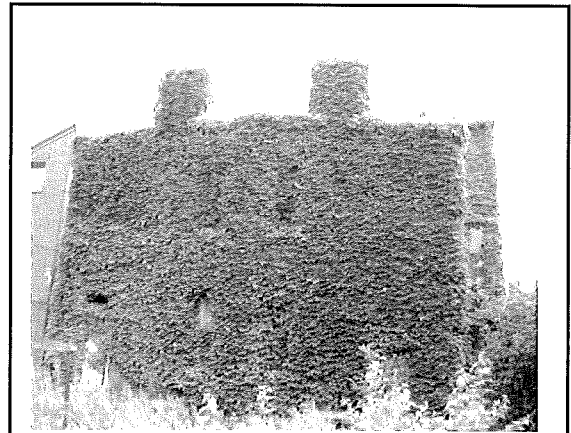
Tuesday, September 18 @ 7:30 pm

AWCC Executive Committee Meeting

832 Western Avenue

Tuesday, August 28 @ 7:30 pm

Tuesday, September 25 @ 7:30 pm



Rear of 928-930 Western Avenue, owned by Wylie Holdings of Lawrenceville, showing all three floors of the building and its roof covered in ivy. This property has been reported numerous times for several years by multiple property owners for broken windows, unsecured doors, a trash dump in the rear yard, homeless squatters in the buildings, and an overgrown rear yard. After repeated 311 calls and submissions with no results, Councilman Daniel Lavelle was able to have the trash pile and rear yard cut in 2011. The situation continues to worsen.

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh – Allegheny
1230 Federal Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15212
412-237-1892
allegheny@carnegielibrary.org
<http://www.carnegielibrary.org/locations/allegheny/>

The Allegheny branch of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh offers fun, free programs for all. The following programs will be offered in August. Please contact the Library at allegheny@carnegielibrary.org or 412-237-1890 for more information.

Beginning Email

Tuesday, August 14 / 10 am

Learn to create and use a Yahoo email account. *Registration is required.*

Friends of the Library, Quarterly Meeting

Saturday, August 18 / 9 am

All members are welcome. Not a member? It's easy to join! Just ask for an application.

Millionaire Scavenger Hunt!

Saturday, August 18 / 1-3 pm

Explore the Northside and discover hidden secrets. Great for adults and families! Prizes. Refreshments. *Registration required by Saturday, August 11.*

Save the Date! Friends of CLP Allegheny Wine Tasting Fundraising Event

Friday, September 28 / 7 pm

Please join us for food, wine and good friends. Tickets on sale August 1st. \$55/per person

Tai Chi

Tuesdays / 6 pm

This system of exercise can be helpful in achieving a state of physical and mental relaxation while also strengthening the cardiovascular and immune systems. Instructor, Cecelia, is certified and has taught classes at the YMCA. Comfortable clothing and registration is required.

Weekly Wise Walk

Thursdays / 10 am

A weekly walking program geared towards adults 50+ (but all are welcome to participate). Participants receive a pedometer and a t-shirt. Sponsored by Allegheny County Library Association, AARP and Highmark PALS. Light refreshments.

Nintendo Wii

Thursdays / 1-3 pm

Don't let the kids have all the fun! Try your hand at the library's video games. For beginners and gamers!

Hip Hop Abs

Saturdays / 11 am

This six-week program focuses on strengthening abdominal muscles through dance. Class leader Tawanda will lead the class in a 45 minute DVD workout.

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TO LOSE SLEEP,
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THE GAZETTE

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Editor: *Gloria Rayman*

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or call 412-323-8884. Submission does not guarantee publication.

Ad rates: \$10 – 1/8 page, \$20 – 1/4 page, \$40 – 1/2 page