

the Stand

south side news

www.mysouthsidestand.com

Syracuse, NY

WINTER 2019-2020 Issue 79 FREE

I-81: WHAT'S NEXT?

How eminent domain affected CNY's oldest minority-owned business

I-81 VIADUCT PROJECT

Learn how it could offer thousands of well-paying jobs

freedom commons

New supportive housing complex offers a fresh start for its residents

CNY Triathlon Club moves its winter training facility

Basement of bikes

HIGHWAY ROBBERY



INSIDE | WINTER

the Stand

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FATHERHOOD | Meet former 'Lost Boy' Chol Majok, who now holds office in Syracuse and is a father of five.

COMMUNITY | Read about the grand opening of Freedom Commons, a \$14.6 million supportive housing complex.

FEATURES | Learn how eminent domain affected the Garland family and shapes the way the current generation feels about the future reconstruction of I-81.

FEATURES | Read Julius L. Lawrence Jr.'s poem "Salt City" that examines the ideals Syracuse is most known for.

FEATURES | Hear directly from community members about their I-81 concerns and goals.

FEATURES | Commuters take note: The Dunkin' on the 100 block of Almond Street will need to relocate if and when the I-81 viaduct comes down.

SPORTS | Find out where the new home of the CNY Triathlon Club's winter training facility is located.

■ Cover photography of by Justin Fogarty

CALENDAR | DECEMBER

What: Syracuse Black Expo Holiday Marketplace
When: Noon to 5 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 14
Where: Syracuse Community Connections, 401 South Ave.
More Details: This annual event will feature over 40 vendors from the Syracuse area and beyond and include a mini health expo by providing health information to the public. In collaboration with 411 Publication & Media, a business directory of local Black-owned businesses will be distributed.
Cost: Free to attend
More Info: Contact Sean Herring at (315) 878-2763 or theblackexpo@gmail.com

What: The Hip Hop Nutcracker
When: 7:30 p.m. Monday, Dec. 30
Where: The Oncenter Crouse Hinds Theater, 411 Montgomery St.
More Details: Directed and choreographed by Jennifer Weber, this remixed production of Tchaikovsky's classic music is performed by a cast of a dozen all-star dancers, a DJ, a violinist and MC Kurtis Blow, one of Hip Hop's founding fathers.
Cost: Tickets range from \$37 to \$67; additional fees may apply.
For Tickets: Go online at Ticketmaster.com or in person at the Solvay Bank Box Office at The Oncenter, 760 S. State St.

This issue features six pages on I-81, starting with a historical look at eminent domain and its impact on the Garland Brothers Funeral Home. Next, South Side resident Julius Lawrence shares a poem, and members of groups set to be directly affected by the highway's future contribute three letters. And, The Stand's columnist Jeff Kramer visits the drive-thru Dunkin' built next to the 81 viaduct to see what lies ahead for its customers.

Our Winter issue also spotlights Chol Majok, who recently won Syracuse's 3rd District Common Council seat, in our Fatherhood Q&A. Majok has been married to his wife, Abiei Gai, for 10 years. Both were African refugees who attended Fowler High School. Majok remembers approaching Gai there, telling her she would one day be his wife. Disturbed by his forwardness, she turned him down. Six years later the pair reconnected while Gai studied International Relations and Majok studied Political Science at Syracuse University. The two started dating in 2009 and in 2010 were married. "She is the melody of my heart," Majok said. When asked what finally won her over, Gai says it was his determination. The couple now has five children.



The Stand is excited to welcome a new photo volunteer Justin Fogarty, who has lived in Syracuse his entire life. His interest in photography began in early childhood. Today he integrates visual documentation into his daily life. Shooting for The Stand, he says, is appealing to him because of our penchant for covering stories in a community that is often represented poorly by other media outlets. "I feel there is no substitute for the closeness and open ears they have towards the communities that they report on," he said.

We're also excited to share that the Gifford Foundation awarded us funding through its "What If ..." mini-grant to offer community journalism workshops in 2020 and pay for gift cards that we'll giveaway to residents who participate in our focus group to share feedback on the redesign of The Stand's website.

Currently, a team of students in Newhouse Professor Adam Peruta's Designing Interactivity course have dedicated five weeks of the semester to help us re-envision our website to better serve our readers and ensure it is accessible to all. The class's final project will influence the work to be completed by our new web developer intern, Dana McMullen, who officially started this winter. She'll work under the guidance of professional volunteers serving as her mentors and then share her final designs in a focus group with readers to collect feedback before launching our new site.

Then in March, The Stand reaches a big milestone: 10 years in print. We've been working on a special anniversary issue and planning a community gallery show of some of the best photos captured over the past 10 years. This photo exhibit will also include a collection of images from our 10th Annual Photo Walk.

Prints from our annual Photo Walk were also up for grabs during Dunbar's fourth annual Live and Silent Winter Art Auction held Dec. 5. We donated several images from our 2018 gallery show that captured life on a typical summer day in Syracuse's South Side.

In our next print issue — published in February — we plan to again feature local couples in love. If there is a couple you'd like to see profiled, send your nomination to Ashley Kang at ashley@mysouthsidestand.com or mail a letter with details about the couple, their full names and contact information to The Stand, 2331 S. Salina St., Syracuse NY 13205.

— Ashley Kang

WIN TICKETS

Dec. 30

Go to see 'The Hip Hop Nutcracker' on us

The Stand has four pairs of tickets to giveaway to see the one-night performance of "The Hip Hop Nutcracker" at 7:30 p.m. Monday, Dec. 30, at The Oncenter Crouse Hinds Theater.

This contemporary dance version of the production features classic characters such as the Sugar Plum Fairy and the Mouse King who pop and lock to Tchaikovsky's timeless music. This unique mash up is for the entire family.

Directed and choreographed by Jennifer Weber, the production features a dozen dancers, a DJ, a violinist and MC Kurtis Blow, one of Hip Hop's founding fathers who released "Christmas Rapping" in 1979.

To be added to the drawing to win tickets, email your full name and mailing address to ashley@mysouthsidestand.com or mail to The Stand, 2331 S. Salina St., Syracuse NY 13205.

Four lucky winners will be chosen by Dec. 16, so be sure to enter soon.

Chol Majok

Nominated by David Chaplin

By Matti Gellman
The Stand Reporter

Q: How did it feel when you became a father?

A. I looked at my kids and could not imagine them going through a lifetime by themselves. Growing up without a father, I knew I had to make a choice. A choice to be there for my kids, to support them, to discipline them. It was a lot of pressure, but I was so thankful. I have such a beautiful wife and kids. I want to show them whatever you do, you always have a choice.

Q. What can you share about your children?

A. I sometimes sit down with them and just have a conversation. And I always say, wherever you are, always do your best and always be strong. I remember Akau used to ball every time his mother dropped him off at school. One night I sat him down and said 'When momma takes you to school, you have to learn to be strong for daddy; don't cry.' And we do this thing where we show each other our muscles and Akau said 'I want to be strong like you.' Now he does not cry when he gets dropped off at school. He says he wants to be strong like me. It's a responsibility, being a father, they look up to you and I remember that when I'm with them.

Q. What was your relationship like with your father?

A. The little bit I learned today I learned from my father in the eight years I spent with him. Where I came from, it's very patriarchal. You learn to be a man through your dad. My father was one of the first people to be drafted into the first infantry. My father was not absent by choice. It was necessary to fight. Many fathers were drafted into the war and never came back... When he was there, he was there. He gave his life to serve his country and showed me the discipline of public service. He is why I am where I am today.

Q. How did his absence affect you?

A. It has affected my confidence ... it deprives you of things that you need to learn as a man. There's certain things now as an adult that I catch myself doing that if my father was around I would have learned not to do early on. I try to remember to be sensitive. All my life I had to protect myself. It was not until I met my wife



MEET FATHER CHOL MAJOK: who was recently elected to the Common Council's 3rd District seat. He works as a program manager with the Alliance for Economic Inclusion. He has been married to Abiei Gai for 10 years. Together the couple has five children: Akau, 2; Gop, 7; Akuch, 8; Majok, 5, and infant Yar. | Matti Gellman, Staff Photographer

that I learned to be vulnerable. If you do not learn to be vulnerable, to be open, you cannot love.

Q. Did he have a saying?

A. One time my father sat me down. We were farming. And he said to me 'Chol you're going to be somebody great one day.' That stuck with me. More than anything my dad was special to me. Because I came from that culture where as a young son, you got to be like your father.

Q. What is your opinion about the commonly held stereotype on Black fathers?

A. There is a difference between father's here and fathers where I come from. When a father was not in the picture where I come from that is because the war had taken them away. But, when I came here, I saw so many boys that were fatherless. I realized that there is something about fathers' disciplining their sons ... Men have to be disciplined, otherwise all of that aggression becomes different. If that aggression is not disciplined and contained, it can become a problem. This society is very unforgiving. It's hard to climb back after you slip up and our system is so punitive to the point where you don't get a lot of second chances. We need to be strong. We are today's keys for our sons to be better fathers tomorrow.

Q. Final thoughts?

A. I could have came here and felt this life is hopeless for me. If you have lived the life I have lived today, you know as long as you are still breathing, you have a chance to make a choice about how you want to live your life. Do you see yourself as a victim, or do you see an opportunity? I hope my children can thank me in the future for showing them that, that hard work and public service is the means of a fulfilled life. That is what my father showed me, and even though he passed in 2003, I will always thank him for that.

"TURNS **TCHAIKOVSKY** ON HIS HEAD
IN THE COOLEST POSSIBLE WAY." - CBS

THE

HIPHOP

Wintercracker

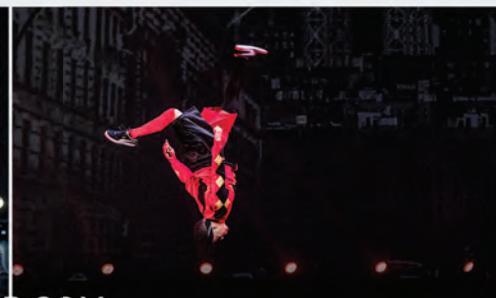
Featuring MC KURTIS BLOW, one of hip hop's founding fathers.



DECEMBER 30

7:30 PM

THE ONCENTER
CROUSE HINDS
THEATER



TICKETS AT THE BOX OFFICE AND [TICKETMASTER.COM](https://www.ticketmaster.com)

MOVING FORWARD

WHAT IS MEANT BY SUPPORTIVE HOUSING?

Supportive housing is affordable housing with onsite services that help formerly homeless, incarcerated and disabled tenants live with dignity in the community.

Freedom Commons includes 43 apartments for families and individuals with household incomes at or below 50 percent of the area median income.

The project also has 11 permanent supportive housing units for individuals and families with household incomes at or below 30 percent of the area median income and whose head of household was formerly incarcerated.

NEW HOUSING MODEL

Freedom Commons to help formerly incarcerated reintegrate with support



> Michael Hein prepares to cut the ribbon with Bill Simmons, Mayor Ben Walsh, Van Louis and family, Pamela Hunter, David Condliffe, JoAnne Page and others. | Matti Gellman, Staff Photographer

By Matti Gellman
Staff Reporter

State-funded project addresses growing need in Syracuse for quality and affordable housing

Since moving into Freedom Commons Aug. 29, Van Louis says he has found a place to finally call home. “It’s been wonderful,” he said. “I have been incarcerated and homeless. It was a second chance for me.”

These new apartments that provide 54-units for families and people re-entering society following incarceration were unveiled Nov. 14 during a ribbon cutting ceremony with such notable attendees as Mayor Ben Walsh, Sen. Rachel May and Assemblywoman Pamela Hunter. Louis stood next to Walsh during the ribbon cutting. Following the ceremony, he said he hopes this is just the beginning. “I wish that everyone can come out and be a part of this,” Louis said. “And I hope they keep making places like this.”

Freedom Commons, a \$14.6 million housing complex, is referred to by residents such as Louis simply as

the Commons.

“It might be cold outside but our hearts are warm today,” said Michael Hein, commissioner of the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance. “This model will provide supportive housing to formerly incarcerated individuals, who are struggling with histories of substance abuse disorder, mental illness or both.”

In his speech, Hein said the housing project comes as part of Gov. Andrew Cuomo’s commitment to invest \$20 billion in the development of affordable and permanent supportive housing for New Yorkers throughout the state over the next five years. He noted the project is Upstate New York’s first attempt to replicate the supportive housing model created by the Fortune Society for formerly incarcerated individuals in West Harlem.

“This all came to be out of a conversation with the Deputy Secretary of Public Safety who said there is no re-entry housing in upstate New York... When they get out of prison, where do they go?” asked JoAnne Page, executive vice president of the Fortune Society.

Like the project in Harlem, Freedom Commons will serve both those who have had trouble securing permanent affordable housing as well as individuals being

released from prison. The three-story structure includes 43 units of affordable housing and an 11-bed emergency shelter.

“It’s a place you drive by and say ‘I want to live there too’. I think we need to get past that point where the beautiful things are only for the wealthiest or most privileged people in our community,” May said of the finished product.

Those living in the permanent units cannot make more than 50 percent of the median income within the county to be eligible, according to a management analyst with Freedom Commons. Temporary housing units are consolidated within their own wing to allow residents there to slowly acclimate to life out of prison in a program called the Freedom Academy. This serves as an alternative to Syracuse homeless shelters such as the Mission.

In his speech, Walsh spoke of the limited options formerly incarcerated individuals have when going through re-entry. “This project is a shining example of the burgeoning revitalization of the South Side,” Walsh said, “and will serve as a beacon of hope to those seeking a second chance.”

Residents of Freedom Academy will be chosen based on interviews conducted prior to release of prison where they have shown a willingness to participate in 35 hours of community service and counseling, according to the Project’s Director Phyllis Riles. Riles says Academy residents are expected to move in by Dec. 1.

“Everyone thinks these projects happen overnight, but there’s a lot of arm twisting and begging to make this come together,” said Bill Simmons, executive director of the Syracuse Housing Authority, as he thanked those at the Community Center for Alternatives (CCA) and The Fortune Society for their service to the community. “I just said if not us, who will?”

“We have been doing a lot of community engagement over the years



> Freedom Commons is the first adaptation of an innovative model of housing launched by the Fortune Society. | Miguel Balbuena, Staff Photographer

and the generosity we received during this project has been incredible,” added Kelly Gonzalez, deputy director at CCA, as she thanked her staff and Syracuse service agency partners. “This really is a testament to what a scrappy agency can do.”

As the speakers shared their final thoughts, community members filtered out of the tent to prepare for the ribbon cutting. Residents of the Commons stood shoulder to shoulder with those who had spoken, commemorating the finished project as a community.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Stroke? Heart Attack? Say, “Take Me to Crouse.”

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- Door-to-cardiac treatment times among the lowest in the region
- Only area hospital designated by American Heart Association as a *Mission: Lifeline Gold* provider
- Close teamwork with local and regional EMS partners

Comprehensive Stroke Center

- One of just 12 in New York State
- Aggressive door-to-treatment times exceed national average
- Earned *Gold Plus–Elite Honor Roll* status from American Heart/Stroke Association

Advanced Facility, Advanced Care

- Highly efficient triage for all medical situations
- High-quality care delivered promptly and with Carepassion®
- Modern design allows us to move patients faster – and more comfortably

This all adds up to **superior emergency care** from the hospital you trust – Crouse Health.

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GARLAND BROTHERS

Benjamin G. and James L. Garland started Garland Brothers Funeral Home in Albany in 1929.

In 1936, Benjamin moved to Syracuse and opened a funeral home on East Fayette Street.

Benjamin H. Garland Jr. took over the business in 1965 and moved it to its present location at 143 W. Castle St. in 1972.

Today the funeral home is located at 143 Dr. Martin Luther King West, the street formerly known as West Castle Street. Castle Street residents saw their addresses change to Dr. Martin Luther King East and Dr. Martin Luther King West in 2013 when Castle Street was renamed in honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

FAMILY OBLIGATION

How the Garland Brothers Funeral Home survived eminent domain



> Charles Garland, the funeral director at Garland Brothers Funeral Home, is the third generation of his family to run Syracuse's first Black-owned funeral home. | Justin Fogarty, Staff Photographer

By Utkarsha Laharia
Staff Reporter

This South Side business was one of the few to relocate and go on to thrive

Garland Brothers Funeral Home is the oldest minority-owned business in Upstate New York. It was established in 1929, and was also one of the very few businesses that continued in Syracuse after displacement due to the initial construction of Syracuse's highway that cuts through the city's urban core.

It was originally located on Syracuse's East Side for more than 30 years at 813 E. Fayette St. Then it was forced to relocate to its current location at 143 Martin Luther King Way due to eminent domain — the right of a government to seize private property for public use. In 1968, the business was one of 125 buildings taken to make room for the 409-unit Kennedy Square apartments.

Now the funeral home is managed by Charles Garland, the grandson of the original owner.

"We're talking about generations," Garland said. "At least three generations ... this lays the foundation for any family. You've got that self-esteem; you've got that sense

of security, and by moving everybody out — everyone scattered."

Garland's grandfather and his brother opened their first funeral home in Albany and later expanded to Syracuse in 1936. Everyone in Charles's family used to live in the area, including his mother's side, but by the 1960s most of the family had moved to different places. He said he has lived in Rochester then Detroit before moving back to Syracuse to help with the funeral home.

"They took our funeral home, they took our land, but it wasn't just us," Garland said about other businesses and homes lost when the highway was constructed.

Garland doesn't want to see history repeat.

"Back in 1968, after Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated, most of the cities were having riots; we had the white flight fleeing the city and flying out into the suburbs," Garland recalled. "It took us a few years to find another spot because nobody white wanted to sell to anybody Black at that time. We had to hire somebody white that we knew, and they helped us to relocate."

Now his biggest concern with the looming reconstruction of the aging I-81 infrastructure is the displacement that will take place for area tenants and the compensation that people might or might not receive if their land is taken away.

POETRY

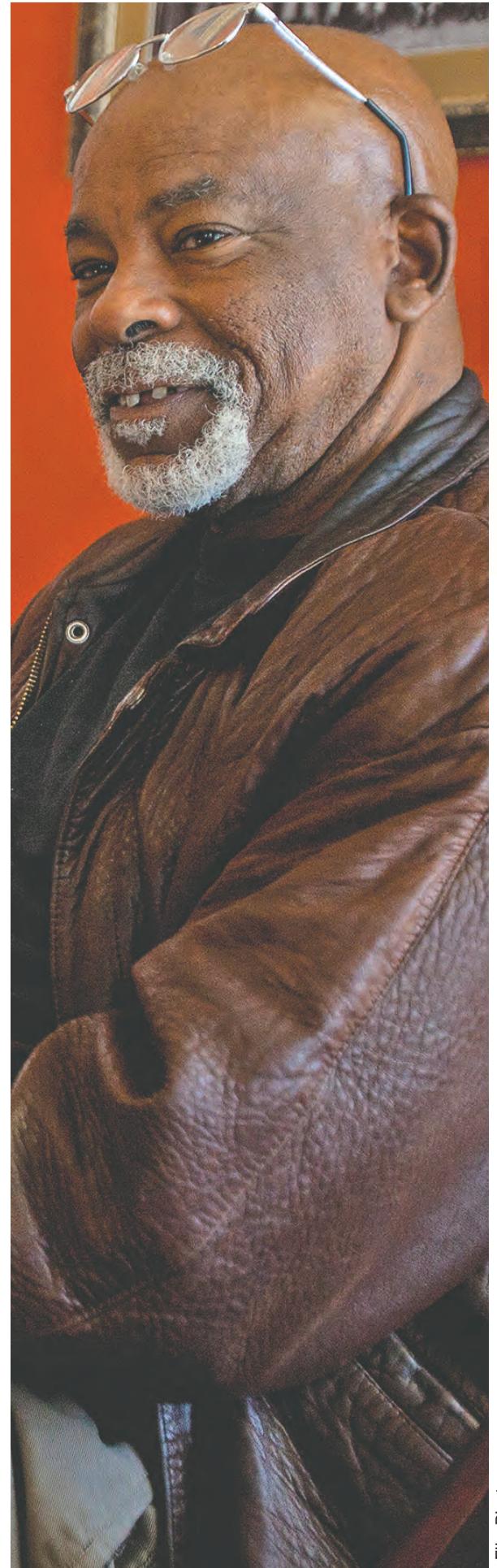
Salt City

*Salt City Syracuse, You dwell in Mid State,
You are used for testing new products,
Rebuild, rebuild where you are,
15th Ward East, South Side of town,
81 came it decimated you,
No Home you no more,
81, Upstate Med is now,
What is the emotion of families you dislodged,
Highway robbery some may say,
Hundreds of families—many of color,
Forced to relocate, nowhere to go.*

*Now it has run its course,
Time to come down, down,
15th Ward, would you be renewed,
Urban Renewal to the rescue,
Who will come now,
Viaduct, Community Grid, Orange Tunnel concept,
Which one will it be,
Do the City have the key,
Or at what fee,
SCS*, open your eye for us,
Families displace you see.*

— By Julius L. Lawrence Jr.

* Salt City Syracuse



ON THE SIDE

SPEAK OUT

The Stand welcomes Letters to the Editor. Letters exist to provide a forum for public comment or debate.

When drafting your letter, there are a few guidelines to follow.

Letters must be no more than 200 words. While it may be helpful to use other sources or talking points as resources for your letter, it is advised not to simply repeat what others have said or written. Use your own voice and sign with your name. All letters must be attributed to an author and provide full contact information in the submission to be verified. The Stand will not publish unsigned letters.

If you are an affiliate of an organization, think about who may best represent that organizational viewpoint.

Note that letters may be edited for length, grammar and accuracy.

To submit a Letter to the Editor, e-mail works best (ashley@mysouthsides-stand.com), but you can also mail items to:

The Stand
South Side
Communication Center
2331 S. Salina St.
Syracuse, NY 13205

Voices on I-81

Community members share their concerns on future project

A recent reader survey told us less than 20 percent of South Siders surveyed remember seeing a South Sider quoted in the last article they read about the I-81 project.

This lack of coverage on how residents feel about the future of I-81 is problematic because much of the neighborhood will be disproportionately affected by the construction to either replace — or more likely remove — the elevated 1.4-mile stretch of the interstate currently cutting through the city.

Of course, every story in The Stand quotes South Siders. We work to bring as many South Side voices on to the fore as possible, especially on a project as controversial as I-81.

Here are three letters from Vincent Love, who was named CEO of Blueprint 15 this past July; Jackie LaSonde, a volunteer with the Central New York Chapter of the New York Civil Liberties Union, and Deka Dancil, president of the Urban Jobs Task Force.

Located within the 15th Ward is a Public Housing complex called Pioneer Homes, where I was born and raised. I was somewhere around 10 to 12 years old when the construction of I-81 brought dramatic change to the neighborhood that I called home.

Familiar landmarks I had become used to were no longer there. Gone were some of the homes and the people who lived in them. Even if I didn't remember all their names, they were still part of my neighborhood.

Also gone, were some of the store fronts of small business, churches and other places that served as landmarks to me as young man, letting me know I was in familiar territory. Walking paths that led me to Crouse Hospital, Syracuse University Women's Building Gym, SU Library and Archbold Stadium were now blocked by fences, concrete walls or other obstacles. The construction of I-81 not only altered the environment but also limited my ability to move about and restricted my access to resources in the community that were contributing to my development as a young man. The negative impact brought upon this community back then is still painfully present today but has



> Vincent Love with his mother, Donna Wilson, who raised her children in Pioneer Homes. As the CEO of Blueprint 15, Love pledges to be transparent, inclusive and effective in advocating for residents of the neighborhood. | File Photo

snowballed into a much larger problem.

So now we are back to the same place in a different time. Talking about what to do with I-81 and how it will impact the neighborhood. My approach to this conversation is a bit different because I believe we must look at this question from a holistic approach that goes beyond the I-81 project and consider the neighborhood as a whole.

Understanding that I-81 is past its useful life means doing nothing is not an option. So, there will be disruption to the neighborhood in some form.

Therefore, we should use this as an opportunity to do a greater revitalization of the whole neighborhood and create an environment that brings back the resources and opportunities for healthy, productive lives for all current and future residents.

Vincent B Love
CEO of Blueprint 15 Inc.

I have been involved with the I-81 Project. I discovered the bridge a topic of conversation and then learned of the three options offered: repairing or replacing, the community grid or a tunnel. I moved here in 2016 and purchased a home not far from I-81 which is near my backyard at the end of my dead-end street of Corning Avenue.

I volunteer with the Central New York Chapter of the New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU) with Lanessa Chaplin, a NYCLU attorney, who heads up a community group.

It has been challenging to get more continuous communication involvement and engagement. I have attended several workshops and informational meetings held since last year. Unfortunately, there is a short attention span for this project due to the many times it has been discussed over the years. We continue to go to different community lectures and informational sessions hosted by either NYCLU or the New York State Department of Transportation (DOT).

Currently our NYCLU group continues to provide postcards to all South Side residents. We ask them to share their specific concerns such as relocation plans or job availability for community residents to when the bridge project will happen and a host of others. The NYCLU realized South Siders' concerns need to be presented to inform DOT that our concerns and demands are unlike our neighbors to the North and West, who seem to center worries around traffic and the residents getting home later than usual due to assumed gridlock.

The irreparable community disassembly and landlocked harm that has occurred and continues to occur needs to be corrected, because we will be able to see Syracuse University and have accessibility to it for the youth and progressive people in this community. Not to mention the environmental pollution that will dissipate when the street level community grid is in place. This option is an environmentally friendly transportation system with plenty of trees to absorb the harmful emissions which have plagued the playgrounds and homes in I-81's path.

I feel it is high time to move forward in a better manner and not continue the concentration of poverty, limited transportation and lack of walkability issues. This is a step in the right direction to remedy the environmental devastation that is taking place here up to this moment.

Respectfully,
Ms. Jackie LaSonde



> Wilson Park, a 2-acre park with an open field, two basketball courts, a playground and seasonal swimming pool, lies next to the I-81 viaduct. The grid proposal includes plans to build a basketball court and splash pad, an outdoor water feature for children. | Justin Fogarty, Staff Photographer



> Deteriorated sections can be seen along the viaduct. | Jerome Dexter, Staff Photographer



> Truckers across New York state rely on I-81 daily, but their routes will likely be diverted to I-481 after reconstruction. | Justin Fogarty, Staff Photographer

ON THE SIDE

HOUSING HELP

Central New York Fair Housing is drafting the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing for Onondaga County and the city of Syracuse. This local nonprofit wants to hear from residents and service providers about the barriers to fair housing choice in our communities.

A \$50 Visa gift card will be raffled off to one of the participants of the resident survey. To take the resident survey, visit bit.ly/205qz7e

Another survey is for service providers and can be completed online at bit.ly/2QI7NnY

Note each link is case sensitive.

All responses are due by Wednesday, Dec. 11. You must include your email address to be entered into the gift-card drawing. The winner will be notified via email on Friday, Dec. 13.

You may also take a hard copy of the survey at the CNY Fair Housing office to share your feedback directly and be entered. The office is located at 731 James St.

You may reach the office with questions at (315) 471-0420

Did you know that the I-81 Viaduct Project is about to bring thousands of good paying, I'm talking \$30/hour or more, jobs right here to our city in Syracuse? Not dozens, not hundreds, thousands. Did you also know that if you live in the city, you probably won't have a shot at even applying for one of those jobs? Now you are probably asking yourself, why the heck not?!

Let me ask you another question: have you ever paid attention to who was working on the never ending number of construction sites in our city? According to the Urban Jobs Task Force and Legal Services of CNY's Racial Equity Impact Study, our construction trade industry is made up of mostly white males who live in the suburbs. That is why they are who you will mainly see working on those sites.

So what does all this mean? It means that if the I-81 viaduct project construction started today, a very small percentage of Syracuse residents would work on the project. We have heard many community leaders and elected officials going around saying the project will be a "job changer" for Syracuse. That's not entirely true. The I-81 viaduct project can be a job changer, but that will only happen if we take action as a community.

Let me repeat the urgency of this issue one more time for the people in the back. If we do nothing, our city will lose out on thousands of good-paying jobs.

Whatever the case COULD be, we know that it IS a fact that only ONE person can make sure some of that \$600 million in wages goes into the pockets of Syracuse residents. Who is that person? That person is you, dear reader.

So what can you do to ensure that Syracusans are able to work on the I-81 project? Go to www.ujtf.org and sign our petition and become a UJTF member. Tell everyone you know about this. It is time to revitalize our city, not just the infrastructure and business economy, but the people too.

Deka Dancil
President, Urban Jobs Task Force



> Syracuse Housing Authority's main office is just feet away from the I-81 viaduct at 516 Burt St. | John Adams, Staff Photographer

RUNNING ON FUMES

Drive-thru Dunkin' would have to relocate when I-81 viaduct comes down



> The Dunkin' located at 110 Almond St. serves an estimated 800 vehicles a day. | Jeff Kramer, Staff Photographer

By Jeff Kramer
The Stand Columnist

Manager says coffee spot loved by commuters could be picked up and moved when needed

There's a glimmer of hope for the popular Dunkin' double drive-thru at Almond and Water streets. But here's the catch. Once the I-81 overpass comes down, assuming it does, the store might stand somewhere else.

"They told us they can just pick it up and move it someplace else," Shakeema Robinson, a crew member at the kiosk, disclosed to *The Stand*.

How Coolata would that be?

Franchise owner Tom Santurri confirmed the possibility of re-locating the 400-square-foot building, which he described as "only a slab."

"You just have to jack it up, lift it and you could move it," Santurri said. "We're open to anything at this point."

The store, which opened about five years ago adjacent to the elevated highway before the 81 decision process began in earnest, is unusual as a drive-thru-only business located in a downtown. Santurri said the location has a loyal "niche market" of commuters, with Robinson estimating that 800 vehicles a day visit. On a recent weekday morning, the wait was nearly 20 minutes even with both lanes open.

Under the Community Grid option favored by the

state, this Dunkin' and the overpass would be eliminated. The third-of-an-acre parcel of land is just one of four containing actual structures that would be seized by eminent domain verses 127 parcels that don't have buildings.

The owner of the parcel, Developer Ed Wolak of Falmouth, Maine, a major Dunkin' franchisee, has plans to add 14 apartments there, but that project remains on holding pending a final decision on the 81.

At City Hall, the initial proposal to build the Dunkin' prompted some head-scratching in 2013 given the uncertainty surrounding the future of the elevated highway. Some speculated that it was a money grab designed to artificially inflate the parcel's value and leave taxpayers with the bill. Others countered that it was unfair to leave property owners in limbo, unable to develop their land as the 81 process dragged on for years.

Santurri said the company — like the public in general — is just waiting to see what happens. "Anyone familiar with eminent domain knows it's not really a money-grab scenario," he added.

Meanwhile, the long lines at Syracuse's most unlikely Dunkin' show no signs of disappearing, proof enough that the location was viable and perhaps a sign that by being light on its feet, this little Dunkin' could outlive the elevated monster next door.

Jeff Kramer has written newspaper columns for many, many years in Syracuse and elsewhere. To contact him with story ideas, call (315) 420-2619 or email jeffmkramer@gmail.com

NAME CHANGE

Dunkin' Donuts is now just Dunkin'.

The company made the change official in January 2019.

The change is part of a major rebrand the company is testing that includes a new store design, drinks like nitro-infused cold brew and digital ordering kiosks.

CONTACT THE CLUB

To contact the CNY Triathlon Club, visit cnytriathlon.org or send an email to club president Sam Sampere at president@cny-triathlon.org

CYCLING FORWARD

CNY Triathlon Club relocates its winter training facility to the South Side



> Rich O'Neil, a board member with the CNY Triathlon Club, leads riders on base training. | Cheryl Beckles, Staff Photographer

By Jeff Kramer
The Stand Columnist

After eviction from ShoppingTown Mall, club finds home in Dunk & Bright's basement

A low-cost indoor cycling experience has arrived on the South Side just in time to help vaporize extra holiday calories and spin away the winter blahs.

Dunk & Bright Furniture on South Salina Street became home to more than home furnishings in November after the company started leasing space to the CNY Triathlon Club for its off-off-season cycling workouts. Memberships cost just \$40 a year, although you'll need your own bike.

The club was forced to relocate on short notice from its longtime home at ShoppingTown Mall in DeWitt. The mall, owned by Moonbeam Capital Investments LLC, has been fading into virtual eyesore status for years amid a tax stand-off with the town. Nonetheless, Club President Sam Sampere said the club enjoyed its time there and rent was always paid on time, despite a leaky



> CNY Triathlon Club members train in the club's winter training facility, which recently relocated to Dunk & Bright Furniture. | Cheryl Beckles, Staff Photographer

roof that required water buckets on the floor to catch drips. The mall gave no reason for evicting the club, and took eight days to reply to Sampere's calls.

“We don’t have to give you a reason,” Sampere recalls being told by ShoppingTown Operations Manager Leon Williams Jr. “Because we want you out of there.”

Mall officials did not respond to repeated requests from The Stand for comment.

But DeWitt’s loss is the South Side’s gain. A bit of good luck and a long-standing personal relationship helped make it happen. Initially, Sampere tried to phone Dunk & Bright’s owner, Jim Bright, a former tri-club member, to return some furniture the company had loaned the club years before. Sam instead ended up talking to Jim’s son, Joe, who is Dunk & Bright’s president.

“I got Joe on the phone, and I asked him: ‘Do you happen to have 4,000-square-feet you’d like to lease out to the triathlon club?’”

“As a matter of fact I do,” Joe replied.

And that was that. On a wintery Veterans Day evening, about 15 club members carried their bikes through the club’s dedicated entrance and into a spacious lower level storage floor for the second workout at the new location. Furniture that had occupied the area had been stashed elsewhere, and rows of stationary bike trainers — which hold a bike upright and apply resistance to the back wheel — were in place. The vibe was cozy and low-key but serious as the riders warmed up with a Eurhythmic song pumping through the sound system. A floor fan was propped on a makeshift sawhorse formed by two metal folding chairs.

Among the athletes getting ready for the hour-long workout was Jill Walsh, a retired state trooper and elite Paralympian who competes in the trike division due to MS-related balance issues.

“Hopefully I’ll be in Tokyo in 2020,” she said, referring to the Paralympic games, her thoughts already having moved beyond the water buckets at ShoppingTown. “I was kind of expecting it,” she said of the eviction.

In addition to the 50 stationary trainers, the club offers, for a small additional fee, access to six computerized or “smart trainers” that measure pedaling efficiency and other performance benchmarks. Two dressing rooms, not fancy but functional, sprung up almost overnight thanks to the volunteer efforts of several members. There are also storage racks if you prefer to leave your bike at the spin studio.

Meanwhile, the novel use of Dunk & Bright’s space has added interest and intrigue to the working environment there.

“It’s different,” Joe Bright said. “It brings energy.”

The triathlon club partners with the Onondaga Cycling Club, whose members also have access to the workouts. Classes will continue through April, with five sessions offered per week plus some extra ones thrown in during the winter months.

The price of membership includes summertime outdoor training events — twice-a-week mini-triathlons and twice-a-month open water swims at Green Lakes State Park and Jamesville Beach. If members prefer to concentrate on one activity such as cycling, that’s fine, Sampere emphasized.

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> Club member Ned Roulspoon practices. | Cherilyn Beckles, Staff Photographer

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