



Young Guides for Hartford's Oldest Site

This summer, eight Hartford school students have been giving free tours of the Ancient Burying Ground in Downtown Hartford to people from across the country and around the world. The six students are Pierre Augustine, Lahesha Tracey, Jennifer Medina, Melanie Perez, Nermina Mehmedovic, Shameeka Williams, Lahesha Tracey, Alia Blake and Kiana Picart. The Ancient Burying Ground opened in about 1640. For nearly two centuries, it was Hartford's only official cemetery. It is estimated that 6,000 people were interred in the cemetery, mostly in unmarked graves. Today only 400 gravestones remain. (Hart photo)

In My Opinion

Viewpoints on key issues from city leaders

Community Party Political Roundup

DAVID SAMUELS, FOUNDER, COMMUNITY PARTY

This week's column includes an update on CP's campaign to enforce the state racial profiling law and a summary of the 8/9/12 Civil Rights and Anti-Bullying Leadership Summit in Hartford, courtesy of the Connecticut Healthy Workplace Advocates. Check out CTHWA on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ConnecticutHealthyWorkplaceAdvocates>. Follow CP on Twitter @CommunityParty1. If you would like CP to speak to your group or organization, contact us at 860-206-8879 or samuelsloflo@aol.com.

Last week the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission posted a Facebook photo of acting executive director Werner Oyanadel and other LPRAC leaders posing with Governor Dannel Malloy, after Malloy signed Public Act No.12-74 into law. The Act includes three of the Community Party's five proposed amendments to the Alvin W. Penn Act, which consists of a traffic stop receipt, a ban on religious profiling and an oversight committee with community stakeholders (modified by the legislature to an advisory committee with community representation). The complete text of our bill language can be found in the Notes section of our FB page, Stop Racial Profiling-Obey the Law! <http://www.facebook.com/PennAct>. Unfortunately for the Latino and Puerto Rican community, Oyanadel and LPRAC ignored CP's request that they support our amendment which bans patrol officers from harassing motorists and their passengers about their immigration status. The reason for LPRAC's BS is quite simple. The Democratic Party power structure at the State Capitol wants to marginalize CP because we're a far left, politically independent group. Because CP represents the interests of community resi-

dents and the Dems can't control us, they view us as a threat. The result is that the Latino/ Puerto Rican community will now be even more vulnerable to racially biased policing, thanks to two significant developments. The United States Supreme Court recently upheld the racist Arizona anti-immigrant law. Also, the federal Secure Communities program, which basically sanctions racial profiling of Latinos by local police, is now up and running in Connecticut. CP's immigration language and third party reporting agency provision would have provided a layer of protection for Latinos. Our third party reporting language would empower an independent subcommittee to process and investigate racial profiling complaints. Our provision also stipulates that individuals who file complaints remain anonymous. A legislator described our third party reporting language as a minor change which would not have caused controversy. The immigration and third party reporting language would enable the State of Connecticut to identify patrol officers who use Secure Communities to engage in racially biased policing. These common sense solutions were not included in the bill simply because the Democrats don't like CP; they don't want a small group of grassroots activists being seen as the change agents of the Penn Act. So because of this political nonsense, the Latino and Puerto Rican community will suffer. We won't tap dance for Gov. Malloy in exchange for photo ops. We want to make the Penn Act law as strong as possible.

CP will return to the State Capitol in 2013 to get the legislature to pass our remaining amendments, but we'll consequently have less time to devote to other aspects of the

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Politically Speaking

A Fresh Look at Issues Facing our Region & State
BY MIKE MCGARRY

Ashley Street Redux

As we've been told by old timers, Ashley Street in Asylum Hill's Sigourney Square Neighborhood, was, in the 1940's and 50's, one of the solid bastions of Hartford's middle class. Homes were neat and well cared for and gardens stood out from front to back.

Then, in the late 1960's and early 1970's trouble hit river city. Houses were sold for low values, some were just let go. By 1975, a low point had been reached with abandonment and decay as the sad reflection of tough times. Some neighbors stayed through it all, and, all of a sudden, the local institutions woke up. All was not lost.

Connecticut Mutual, The Hartford, Aetna, Saint Francis and some bankers all got involved with a variety of tactics with a bewildering array of alphabet groups: C.H.I.F., A.H.I. Inc, NHS, SSSA, A.H.O.P., etc... Did it work? At least the slide stopped and many homes were sold to new homeowners and the solid old-timers were encouraged to stay put.

So, years went by with ups and

downs. Most of the propped up outfits (with corporate money) went South, leaving neighbors on their own after all the promises.

Finally, the corporate world decided to get involved again, stressing the most important element in the neighborhood: housing and home ownership. N.I.N.A. was born (Northside Neighborhood Institutional Alliance) organized for a step by step, house by house effort. Ashley Street (and adjoining Sargeant, Garden, Huntington and Atwood Streets) Finally, saw steps toward the stability they deserved.

Today, from Garden Street to Sigourney Street, almost all the homes are proudly maintained, and with the "landscape designers contest" held in May, front yards on those blocks have become a tourist attraction.

Hopefully, this success is a model for Hartford, and, when the book is finally written, credit will be given, especially to those who hung in for generations, guiding and encouraging this solid, diverse neighborhood.

The 40-Year Plan

Long-term solutions to Hartford's long-standing problems.
BY KEN KRAYESKE

Let's Sing Another Chorus of "The Busway Blues"

If we want integrity in our transportation systems like CTfastrak (aka the busway), then Connecticut Department of Transportation Commissioner James Redeker must reign in his DOT engineers who are creating bad faith and ill will with the community in Hartford with their strong-arm and deceptive tactics.

I admire those who sat through the full length of Monday night's DOT presentation at the Lyceum on Lawrence Street in Hartford. I embrace the mass transit project, but I walked out midway through because I could not stomach DOT ringleader Mike Sanders and his clown posse anymore.

What, you say calling them names won't get me any respect and won't help me get a solution? Yet I am only mirroring the level of respect I felt the DOT crew showed us community members.

Stalwarts supporters like Joe Barber and Jennifer Cassidy, who have been to countless meetings throughout the years, remained for the whole presentation, and afterwards they expressed displeasure to me as well.

Sanders brought his circus to the Frog Hollow NRZ allegedly to find out what the community wants to do with Flower Street. In

reality, the meeting allowed DOT to dictate to the neighborhood that Flower Street must be sacrificed for fastrak.

Construction will not hit Flower Street for several years. Fastrak will not serve passengers until 2014, but DOT wants to shut Flower Street to bicycle and pedestrian traffic like, now.

This is a major mistake. But DOT is intent on doing it. I call on the spirit of the Isham-Terry sisters and their newly-renovated house to help us. This DOT decision must not stand.

I kept asking if the die was cast, if there was no saving Flower Street, and one of Sanders' henchmen responded several times that this is not a dog and pony show, that this is not a fait accompli, this is not a done deal, that DOT is still listening to the community's input and looking for solutions.

DOT will hold a public hearing on closing Flower Street, input it welcome, we were told. The gavel has not fallen, the Rubicon has not been crossed. Okay. But why does it feel like all the evidence thrown at us is through the selective lens of closing Flower Street?

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THE HARTFORD NEWS

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The Hartford News is published weekly on Thursday by Gamut Publishing, Inc. The publisher does not assume responsibility for errors, omissions, and changes in advertising or editorial material. Advertising rates are available upon request. Deadlines: Advertisements, news releases and articles must be submitted by 5 pm on Monday for publication on Thursday Rights and Permissions: The entire contents of the Hartford News are copyright 2006 by Gamut Publishing, and no portion may be reproduced in whole or in part by any means without specific written permission of the publisher. All rights reserved. Letters and Submissions: Letters should be brief and are subject to editing. Writers must sign their names and must give an address and a telephone number for verification, although neither address or telephone number will be published. Unsolicited submissions are welcome but must be accompanied with a SASE if return is desired.