



Northside United

Issue #5: Spring 2016

Get to Know Your Neighbors: Ducson Nguyen and Amber Gilewski

It was fun to interview Ducson Nguyen and Amber Gilewski, a lively and engaging young couple who have lived in the Northside area for the past three years. Many in the Northside community will recognize Duc (as he is known by friends) as our local representative on Common Council. He is also a software engineer who works for GrammaTech, Inc.

Amber is an Associate Professor of Psychology at TC3. She is also a social justice activist and went on a Interfaith Peace Builders delegation to Israel and Palestine last year. And to use up even more energy, she runs a one bedroom vegan homestay called Tuxedo Cat Bed & Breakfast. She provides hospice care in their home for cats with feline leukemia. When asked how he felt about the cats in the house, Duc smiled and said, "It's a little demanding, but I

have gotten used to it."

Duc and Amber chose the Northside area first because a co-worker of Duc's was selling the house and they knew about it before it was listed. But they liked the idea of living downtown and being near Gimme Coffee. They have only one car and they like to walk a lot so the accessibility of everything downtown is appealing.

Duc has enjoyed getting to know people in the neighborhood and he hopes to represent them well in local government. He was drawn to running for office when he realized that rising housing costs were causing problems especially for low income people. He began to research how other cities are handling this problem and felt he could



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Duc and Amber, the day they closed on their Northside home.

News from the Hood

As everyone has noticed, the demolition of the old supermarket structure on Hancock Street is done. Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Service (which has designed a new apartment/town house complex for the site) and Hahner Hoyt, the construction management company, met with Northside United on February 1 to bring residents up-to-date on the progress of the project. The following issues were discussed:

- Installation of the piles will take about a month beginning in mid-April. Six piles a day will be installed

by a vibration method which is less noisy than the conventional method first proposed. Northside United brought this concern to INHS and they responded with this alternative. Seismometers will be set up around the site to monitor the vibration and detect if there is too much.

- Pre-pile installation foundation inspections will occur in mid-March in homes within 100 feet of the site. This will be measured from the perimeter of the construction site which means it is more than required.

- Lake Avenue will be fenced off throughout the project. Common Council

has voted to permanently close that block of Lake Avenue and the half block of Adams Street. Those streets will become green space, extending Conley Park.

- Construction noise will be greater during the initial phase starting in mid-May and into the Fall. Then construction will move inside.

- Scott Reynolds, INHS project manager, encourages residents with complaints/issues to contact him directly. **Scott's cell number is 379-2029, his work number is 277-4500 ext. 217 and his e-mail is sreynolds@ithacanhs.org.**

- Northside United mem-

bers, Carol Cedarholm (ccedarho@gmail.com), Jeff Collins (tsultrim312@gmail.com) and Linda Holzbaaur (lindaholzbaaur@gmail.com) have volunteered to help residents who feel that their concerns about the Hancock Street project are not being addressed. Please contact them with any frustrations.

- The Future Renters committee of Northside United has developed a document about the Hancock Project packed with information including the number and types of units, who is eligible,

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Report from the Playground Committee

On February 10, Northside United and Beverly J Martin Elementary School sponsored a meeting with neighborhood families to plan the playground for the Hancock Street project. The meeting was coordinated by Serenity Dixon, a Northside neighborhood middle school student who initiated this project and Beth Myers.

Dr. Susan Eschbach, Principal of BJM, invited children in that school to participate. Many ideas were bounced around including swings, a twisty slide, monkey bars (a big YES), rock climbing wall, a bench, a secret passage, a big rock, trampoline, things that make music (a soundscape like the Science Center has), WiFi, Port-a-Potty, Hot Dog stand, and laser tag. More planning meetings will be announced as they are arranged.

A special thank you to Dr. Susan Eschbach, Principal of



Serenity Dixon

BJM, for her support of the playground project and for encouraging the children of that school, most of whom come from our neighborhood, to be involved in planning. This is a grass roots enterprise and we appreciate her help in making that happen.

Thanks also to Joe Bowes from INHS and James Fruechtl from Trowbridge Wolf Michaels Landscape for working with Northside United and listening to the input from the young people.



Dr. Susan Eschbach (far right) with BJM children at the Playground Planning Meeting.

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bring some good ideas to the table. Since being elected he has also become interested in infrastructure issues and transportation. He is currently serving on the TCAT board of directors.

Both Duc and Amber are pleased with Northside United. They have met new people and are encouraged by some of the changes that have occurred such as getting crossing signs on Cascadilla Street and the help with the Hancock Street project. Amber remarked, "I have now met people who express an interest in living on Northside." They both would like to see more big neighborhood events such as block parties and the Community Celebration.

Other interesting facts about this delightful pair are: they met online at Match.com and married in Pennsylvania using the state's Quaker-derived self-uniting marriage process; they love to go to the drive-in movies (and there still are some around in Elmira and Auburn); and they like to explore the small towns and cities of Upstate New York. It is a pleasure to have them in our community.

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and how to sign up for a unit. INHS will be asked to do a mailing to Northside residents and Northside United will advertise the information through its website and the newsletter.

We need Block Stewards!

We still need more block stewards to get information out to the neighborhood and to see what needs there are that are not being met. Anyone interested in more information about this, can contact Melynda Wissar at mwissar@realtysusa.com. It is a good way to meet your neighbors!!

Mark your calendar!

Don't forget—you all are invited to the free Monday night dinners, held the first Monday of each month at the Friends Meeting House on the corner of Third Street and Madison Street. Dinner, deliciously prepared and brought by your neighbors, will start at 5:30 p.m. A convivial meeting will start right after dinner where we get to know each other better and work on community projects. Dates for the next few months are April 4, May 2 and June 6. We would love to see you there.