



# OAKLAND

Business Improvement District

VOLUME 6, EDITION 12

DECEMBER 2007



## BID-Bits

### Pitt Student Wins Passport to Oakland Grand Prize

Stephen Yen, a University of Pittsburgh freshman, won two airline tickets to fly anywhere in the United States through the OBID's Passport to Oakland marketing project. Stephen is working towards a business degree at Pitt's College of Business Administration.

The Passport to Oakland grand-prize winner was chosen through a drawing held at Oakland's Farmer's Market on October 12. Passport to Oakland contestants were required to visit at least 20 of the 34 participating businesses in order to be eligible for the drawing. "I visited a lot of businesses I did not know existed," said Yen. "I did not know that there was a CD Warehouse in Oakland. Also, I did not know about all of the different restaurants in Oakland."

Yen, who was born in Boston but most recently lived in Shanghai China, enjoys living in Oakland. "It is very different from Shanghai," said

Yen. "It is nice that Oakland is kind of centered around the Pitt campus."

Although Yen is excited about having two tickets to fly anywhere within the United States, he has not decided where he wants to go yet. The tickets were provided by STA Travel (118 Meyran Avenue) in partnership with the OBID.



### After 34 Years, Pete Leventis and Peter's Pub Going Strong

"I saw an opportunity to start a business that would grow," said Peter's Pub owner Pete Leventis on how he became interested in becoming a business owner in Oakland. Having bought the property in 1973, Leventis saw the potential Oakland presented as a place that would grow. "I thought this was a good place because of volume and people," said Leventis. "Plus I was the property owner. My timing was perfect." In addition to the University of Pittsburgh's 1966 transition from a private university to a public university, Leventis lists a variety of factors that allowed Peter's Pub to become a successful business. "We had Pitt Stadium up the street, and we had the 1976 National Championship team," said Leventis. "Also, Chancellor Posvar put Pitt on the map, increasing enrollment and the quality of the students."

Peter's Pub has also benefited from the more recent growth of UPMC under Jeffrey Romoff and the University of Pittsburgh under Chancellor Nordendberg. Leventis also sees the higher quality of students being accepted by Pitt as having an impact on business. "I see business expanding because the caliber of people is going up.

However, it used to be that the average number of years a Pitt student was in college was seven years; I liked those students, they stayed around longer. Now, the students study harder and are out of school in four years." The fact that Peter's pub has a large lunch and dinner menu, as well as a variety of domestic and imported beers, has allowed Leventis to cater to many different kinds of patrons. "We have college students come in at night, and university and hospital staff come in during the daytime."

Along with this growth, Leventis foretells opportunity in the future of the Oakland market. "I see there being a four or five year period of transition for the businesses after Children's Hospital moves to Lawrenceville.

After running a successful business in Oakland for the last thirty four years, Leventis knows that it takes a lot of work. "People see these businesses and all of these people and assume that it is easy to make a profit - it's not. It's not a slam-dunk in Oakland." Leventis has been able to maintain his success by making his business decisions in response to the changes that he sees taking place in Oakland.

- In partnership with PennDOT and the University of Pittsburgh, OTMA will be hosting a Commuting Alternatives Day as well as a public meeting for the Boulevard of the Allies Bridge reconstruction project. The meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 12, 2007 at Alumni Hall, Connelly Ballroom, 4227 Fifth Avenue. The Commuting Alternatives Day will begin at 10am and the public meeting will begin at 11:30am. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact OTMA at (412) 687-4505 or [mrainey@otmapgh.org](mailto:mrainey@otmapgh.org).
- A special thank you to Peter's Pub and Joe Mama's for hosting the OBID's Pitt versus CMU bar challenge on Friday, October 26. Also special thanks to Bob Reppe (CMU) and Jim Williams (Pitt), the two university guest bar-tenders. This event raised over \$600 for the Oakland Kiwanis and the Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children.

## T-Mobile Opens Its Doors in Oakland

One of the Oakland Business Improvement District's newest stores, T-Mobile opened its doors on November 11, 2007 at 3807 Forbes Avenue. "With the universities and hospitals, T-Mobile sees a lot of potential for growth at this location," said store manager Nicholas Song.

In addition to offering T-Mobile activation service and a wide assortment of phones for sale, the new T-Mobile store also has some promotional services available to its customers. One of these promotions is at home service. "At



home service is an unlimited number of phone calls from any WiFi service," explained Song.

Between November 23 and November 25, any customer who activates with T-Mobile at the 3807 Forbes Avenue store with a qualifying rate, will receive a free-airline ticket to forty nine different destinations in the United States.

Keep T-Mobile in mind when doing your holiday shopping.



### BIZ-Bits

- Pittsburgh Celebrates Glass, the same organization that brought you Chihuly at Phipps is holding a raffle! You can purchase tickets for \$10 at the Ask Glass Kiosk at Phipps Conservatory or at the Carnegie Museum's gift shop! Ticket sales have begun and will continue until December 23rd. Three grand prize winners will receive a museum-quality piece of art. The piece by Dale Chihuly is worth \$10,000. The other artists are Therman Statom and Kathleen Mulcahy. Raffle tickets cost \$10 a piece or you can buy three for \$25. For more information, please visit: [http://www.pittsburghcelebrates.org/event\\_detail.asp?id=1157!](http://www.pittsburghcelebrates.org/event_detail.asp?id=1157!)



- Be sure to stay on the look-out for Holiday sales at the Oakland businesses during the month of December.



## Touch of Gold and Silver Helping Oakland to Shine Bright

For a quarter century, Touch of Gold and Silver has been providing an array of jewelry to the many visitors and residents of the Oakland neighborhood. Touch of Gold and Silver closed its doors in December of 2004, only to be reopened one block down Forbes Avenue on the corner of Oakland Avenue and Forbes Avenue. The new location, 3800 Forbes Avenue, is located on the corner of Pitt's Sennott Square Office Building. Store owner, Berni Parrish, sees this new location as an asset as it has display windows wrapping around one side of the store. "The old store was long and narrow with a window in the front of the store. This location allows us to get more exposure," said Parrish.

With a staff that is very friendly and well educated on jewelry, Touch of Gold and Silver deals in a plethora of different kinds of jewelry. "We have everything from diamonds to watch batteries," said Parrish. "We also have sterling silver which is popular among the college students." Touch of Gold also carries stainless steel jewelry, a variety of hand bags, and some special designer products. "We have a lady from Siberia," said Parrish, "who comes in periodically to bring designer Russian jewelry." In addition to providing many different jewelry items, Touch of Gold and Silver also does on-site jewelry repair and design. They have also stocked up on a great selection for holiday gift giving as well.

Although Touch of Gold and Silver has a number of loyal clientele, "business is very unpredictable," remarked Parrish. Before becoming owner of the Touch of Gold and

Silver three years ago, Parrish had worked at its former location for over 20 years.

"Oakland has changed a lot. We lost a lot of the men who worked in the offices in Oakland," said Parrish. However this loss of one segment of the population has been coupled with an influx of hospital workers, Pitt employees, and students as UPMC and Pitt increase in size. "We get a lot of students and a lot of the women who work out here," Parrish commented on the changing customer clientele.

The prices at Touch of Gold and Silver are relatively inexpensive. "A lot of people see a jewelry store and assume that they can't afford the jewelry. That's not the case with us; our prices are very affordable," said Parrish.

With a new and inviting location and always unique and changing merchandise, Touch of Gold and Silver plans to be open for, at the very least, another quarter century.

