SWPC Offices Get a New Look

By Robert Boyd

The South Wedge Planning Committee’s (SWPC) first floor got an astounding makeover through the creative style and hard work of Board member Donna Roethel Lenhard and her team of helpers. SWPC’s goal was to make the 224 Mt. Hope headquarters more inviting and create a “social space” that can be used by the community.

Her goal was to make a big impact at a small cost, and she did just that! Roethel Lenhard used leftover paint from friend’s and neighbor’s home projects and looked for contributions of furniture and decorations. She made many trips to Mt. Second’s Bargain Outlet, Goodwill, and Volunteers of America. She organized and planned the makeover to include a hallway “gallery” space that will provide a place for local artists to display their works.

A large number of people volunteered their time and talents to remodel SWPC’s first floor meeting room, kitchen, bathroom, and Tool Library office. In addition to planning the transformation, Roethel Lenhard put a huge number of hours in painting and building a beautiful space for everyone to enjoy.

The makeover team also included Cheryl Stevens, Doug Root, Lyha Wilton, John “JD” Dennis, Chris Jones, Jim WELL, Ben Munson, Tom Kor, George Lorson, Bob Boyd, Phinis “Butch” Horton, Tanya Zwahlen, Sarah Johnstone, Sean Montes, Rachel Chaffee, Frank Logan, Dave Halter, Janet Stanford, and many others who supported us with encouragement and contributions.

Please stop by and check out the new space. It’s now available for community meetings. If you are an artist and want to hold a show at SWPC’s new art space, please contact Robert Boyd, Executive Director, at 585-256-1740, Ext 102.

The makeover team also included a “social space” that can be used by the community.

The Executive Team

The South Wedge Planning Committee, Inc. kicked off the New Year and decade with an open house for neighbors and friends on Friday, January 22. The Board of Directors and professional team hosted over 150 people in the newly renovated first floor of the SWPC office on Mt. Hope Avenue. People enjoyed appetizers and cookies from Mis En Place Market and Premier Pastry.

A goal of SWPC in 2010 and beyond is to engage more people into the activities of the organization to make the South Wedge a better place to live, work, and play. This is also an invitation to everyone in the community to join a SWPC team and have fun while making a difference. The Executive Team will be focusing on making sure each team has new members and reflects the community.

SWPC has organized their work in a number of important areas. Volunteers are needed in many areas:

- The Marketing and Membership team seeks people to help build block clubs.
- The Community Engagement team seeks people to help build block clubs.
- The Wedgestock 2010 team seeks help in turning the event into a street festival that appeals to all ages.
- The South Wedge Farmers Market seeks help to bring new people to the market and encourage healthy eating in our community and to expand its role as a community gathering place.
- The South Wedge Victory Garden is looking for gardeners and volunteers to help build a new garden if gardeners request one.
- The Commercial and Business development team is working to obtain NYS Main Street funds to continue the building and street improvements in the area of South Ave. and Gregory St. The team is working to improve the South Wedge business advising program and then to develop a “business” recruiting process to bring the businesses you want to see into the community.

The Housing and Structures team is continuing its work on improving the quality of the housing stock and encouraging the availability of diverse housing options. The team is working to encourage more owner-occupied housing in the South Wedge. The South Wedge Tool Library needs assistant librarians to make the tool library available to more people.

To learn more, visit www.swpc.org to read SWPC’s Annual Report and 2010 work plan. On page two, you’ll find the meeting schedule for all the teams in February and March.

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Star of the Wedge - Rev. Judy Lee Hay

By Nancy O’Donnell

Rev. Judy Lee Hay’s handiwork is visible throughout the South Wedge. She contributed in building a more vibrant commercial district, including the First Street shops, and The Wedge Newspaper. She did all this while ministering to the Calvary St. Andrews Presbyterian Parish Church congregation.

Community activist, teacher, lecturer and neighbor, her list of achievements have seldom waned over the last three decades she’s served her church, her community and her country.

When Hay was growing up in a small northern New York town of Gouverneur, New York, she envisioned three possible career paths.

"Politics, teaching and ministry," said Hay. "All came to fruition in my life."

Hay graduated from the University of Dubuque with a triple major of Sociology, Philosophy and English. She entered McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago where she discovered she had found her life’s work in "urban ministry."

"It was an exciting time," said Hay. "The Vietnam War was raging and a grassroots organization, The Young Lords, was forming the world, one neighborhood at a time."

From those controversies, grew her belief that the church had an important role in transforming the world, one neighborhood at a time.

"I see Christ as a major healing agent in society," said Hay. "His love is unconditional. I have to be a change agent in the world as Christ made a difference."

Her first ministry was at a Presbyterian Church in Alabama. In 1973, she came to serve with George Stiegler, pastor of historic Calvary St. Andrews (CSA), then a two-denominational church ministering to both Episcopal and Presbyterian congregations.

The parish was a socially active one. A center across the street housed "Soul School," an after school program, along with a community recreation program. The school would later move to the newly built building behind School #12.

During this time, Hay began studying community organizing at the University of Rochester. In 1975, she founded the South Wedge Planning Committee (SWPC). "The concept was that [SWPC] would be a power base for social change," said Hay. "The principle was that if you can get people with vested interests in the community around the table, they will be able to find a common goal."

Hay invited neighbors, local bankers, realtors and developers to an area of interest: housing and commercial development. She linked up with Rochester Institute of Technology and a City of Rochester Community Development leader, David Losenberg.

"We did a great analysis of every vacant, boarded house in the South Wedge," said Hay. "There were 120. Then we looked at the commercial district and found lots of vacant buildings or ones without the services the community want- ed."

At SWPC’s helm, Hay began working block-by-block against homeowners and landlords who let their properties become "eyesores."

"We started what we called the "squeezers." Start where it’s bad, move street by street. Linden and Cypress was okay, so we began at Alexander Street."

She contacted owners and landlords and asked them to fix up their houses. If that failed, she asked them to consider selling.

In some instances, owners put their houses on the market, in others, the city foreclosed on houses. She guided owners of three or more units through a program that offered loans for repairs.

Hay also looked at getting new sidewalks and better lighting, "said Hay.

Soon SWPC had a tool lending library and a newspaper, continued on page 5.

Letters to the Editor

Don’t toss your computers!

Recently, as I was driving down South Ave., I was shocked to see an entire truckload of old H & R Block computers being prepared to be shipped out. When I stopped to ask, I learned that they were in working condition and being sent to a recy- cling plant in Chicago. What a complete shame!

These computers could make a big difference for unemployed and needy area resi- dents. At no cost to businesses, these computers can be com- pletely cleared according to Department of Defense standards, refurbished and loaded with the latest software before being given to local residents for education and job skills training. Please help spread the word that unwanted computers can be sent to or picked up by ACD’s CommunityTech Micro- soft Authorized Refurbishing Center, located at 420 Dewey Avenue.

The Wedge is a small city, and you will see how bridging the digital divide will improve the lives of many that may now seem remote to you but will touch you in some ways or another.

Please help unemployed residents in Rochester who need these computers to get jobs; children and teens who need these computers to stay compe- tent in school; and community organizations that need these computers to provide safe and free access to community com- puter labs within at-risk neighbor- hoods.

It takes only one act of gen- erosity to make a big difference in many people’s lives. If you’d like to learn more about ACD, or want additional information on becoming a HelpTech and NextStep AmeriCorps member, please contact ACD at 244-1430.

—Maria Paris

ACD Public Relations

Manager South Avenue

A bike friendly South Wedge anyone?

It’s hard to understand why bicycles aren’t given their space on our roadways. I mean, continued on page 8.

The South Wedge Planning Committee, Inc.

February and March - Community Calendar

All meetings are held at 224 Mt. Hope Avenue, except when noted.

SWPC Board Meeting

224 Mt. Hope Avenue

Thursday, February 4, 6 p.m.

Wednesday, March 11, 6 p.m.

SWPC Executive Team

224 Mt. Hope Avenue

Thursday, February 4, 6 p.m.

Wednesday, March 4, 6 p.m.

Commercial and Economic Development

dcb @ historichousesparts.com

Tuesday, February 9, 6:00 p.m.

Tuesday, March 9, 6:00 p.m.

Community Engagement

(Neighbors and Block Clubs)

acalk @ swpc.org

Wed., February 3, 6:30 p.m.

Wed., March 3, 6:30 p.m.

Finance Team:

fcouncil @HistoricRochester.com

Tuesday, February 9, 12:30 p.m.

Tuesday, March 12, 12:30 p.m.

Housing and Structures:

mmculloughsdor @ swpc.org

Wed., February 3, 5:30 p.m.

Wed., March 3, 5:30 p.m.

South Wedge Farmers Market

SWMuesday, February 9, 2:6 p.m.

South Wedge Victory Garden

vbg @ swpc.org

Monday, March 1, 6:00 p.m.

Marketing & Membership

Group

jaukenkirk @frontiernet.net

Wednesday, February 9, 5, 5 p.m.

Location: TBD

South Wedge Farmers Market

Advisory Committee

jaukenkirk @frontiernet.net

Tuesday, February 9, 2:6 p.m.

South Wedge Farmers Market

Meeting

Tuesday, March 2, 6 p.m.

BASWA (Business Association of the South Wedge Area)

www.christhiscourthouses.com

Visit baswa.org for locations

Wed., February 10, 6 p.m.

Wed., March 10, 6 p.m.

224 Mt. Hope Avenue

(585) 256-1740

Fax: (585) 256-3117

Officers

Tanya Zebriskie, Chair

Tacy Trask, Vice Chair

Anthonybury, Secretary

Board Members

Donuts, SHB, SUGFG, Rachel Cheifetz, Neighbor

Felicia "Be" Clark, Neighbor

Dave Hillsen, Business

Chris Harrison, Stakeholder

Chris Jones, Business

Tom Kicior, Neighbor

Donna Ruskell Lehel, Neighbor

Ivan Lisen, Business

Monica McLeod, Stakeholder

Rin Makar, Neighbor

Cheryl Sances, Neighbor

Ianna Scott, Neighbor

Michael Trojan, Stakeholder

John Vasko, Neighbor

Lydia White, Business

Honorary

Vince Concil, Mitchell Dannenberg, Joe Donna, Jon Deimann, Mark McDowall

Advisory

Tony Adriani, Maria Hay, Kathy Alger, Marga Danska, Howard Kanar, Richard Peter, Patrick Schaefer, Joe Voss

Staff

Robert Boyd, Executive Director

Allison Clark, Coordinator

George Lemos, Community

Tanya John, Coordinator

Eilidh Thomas, Coordinator

Pam "Bud" Norton, Facilities

Consultant

Nancy O’Donnell, Ben White

Photography

Robert Boyd, Allison Clark

Nancy O’Donnell, Ben White

E-mail:

send an e-mail to swpc.org.

To reach The Wedge, call 244-1430.

The Wedge: a bike friendly South Wedge anyone?

It’s hard to understand why bicycles aren’t given their space on our roadways. I mean, continued on page 8.
Wedge Resident Promotes Citywide V-Day

V-Day, a global movement to end sexual violence against women and girls inspired by Eve Ensler’s play, *The Vagina Monologues,* is getting help from super-volunteer Angela Carter-Taylor, who lives with husband Paul Taylor, a glassblower and jewelry designer, on Gregory Street. Along with helping out Planned Parenthood, she also volunteers who have been exposed to domestic violence the Children’s Institute, a nonprofit family resource center run by U of R.

This year Carter-Taylor, as Special Events Coordinator V-Day Rochester 2010, adds an evening art show to V-Day events. The art exhibition, held at Rochester Contemporary Art Center on Feb. 12, will include work by RIT grad Alcia Ross.

“She’ll be showing pieces of celebrity mothers cross-stitched on cotton to help discuss issues surrounding V-Day and perceptions of motherhood,” said Carter-Taylor. “She includes exceptions of motherhood,” said Carter-Taylor, “It’s important to remember that not everyone has the same experience or perspective.”

Also planned—a silent auction featuring jewelry designed by Gregory Street jewelry designer, on Gregory Street, to help out on a film project with friends willing to help out on a film project. The company recently submitted to the 360/365 Film Festival’s (formally the Rochester High Falls International Film Festival) three minutes or less short film contest in January. The South Wedge Filmmakers Vies for Pie in the Face Prize

Indie filmmaker Johannes Bockwoldt has friends willing to help out on a film project along with taking a pie in the face. The pastry-laden film was submitted to the 360/365 Film Festival’s (formally the Rochester High Falls International Film Festival) three minutes or less short film contest in January. The short film contest theme of “Pie in the Face” led Bockwoldt to persuade the extremely agile dancer/choreographer Darren Stevenson of PUSH Physical Theater to take the role of pie carrier. Stevenson’s last performance was as food photographer Derrick Dracula in a recent GEA sell out performances.

Behind the camera for the 18-hour film shoot was cinematographer Derrick Petrus of D Train Media. Local developer and film lover John Trickey volunteered a Cornhill property for continued on page 5

The Christopher Group, 473 South Ave, 585-325-7551.

Good News/Bad News for St. Joseph Center

Executive Director Christine Wagner, S.S.J., is happy that the St. Joseph Neighborhood Center has expanded some 3,800 square feet. “We’ve added more clinical space for primary and mental health care,” said Wagner, noting also a new meeting room that looks outside onto South Avenue. In addition, the center now has Four Americas Volunteers on board.

The bad news—"We’ve had a huge increase of the uninsured and the underinsured, who have had their benefits cut, who need services," Wagner said. “From 800 a month last year, we’re seeing 1,300 a month.”

To learn more about the center, visit www.sjncenter.org/news.

Carter-Taylor, a Long Island native, moved to Rochester as an AmeriCorps volunteer. "I trained professionals who would be working with children who may have been exposed to domestic violence the Children’s Institute, a nonprofit family resource center run by U of R."

The Vagina Monologues will be performed at the School Performance Hall, 50 Plymouth Avenue North, Sat., March 13 at 7 p.m. Tickets are $20, $10 for students/children. The ROC exhibit will be held at 157 East Avenue on Feb. 12, 7-9 p.m. Admission is $1.

Think Global

Shop Local

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Think Global

Shop Local
By Allison Clark
Ellwanger Barry Nursery School Open House
An Open House will be held March 13 from 10:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m. Interested parents can meet with families and teachers.

4 East Henrietta Rd., 463-4230.

Puppeteer to Perform at Ellwanger Barry Cooperative Nursery School
Puppeteer, singer and songwriter Tom Knight will perform at a Concert Fundraiser for the Ellwanger Barry Nursery School on March 7, at 2:30 p.m. Tickets are $5/family maximum of $20. Children under 2 years old free.
The Ellwanger Barry Nursery School promotes children’s social, emotional, cognitive and physical growth within a warm and loving setting, recognizing the vital importance of play as a medium for learning and for providing a firm foundation for later academic success. Their goal is “to integrate children’s innate eagerness to learn with a deep and enduring respect for their relationship with the environment through hands-on activities such as cider pressing, maple sugaring, caring for earthworms, gardening.” Two-day program for 3-year-olds and three-day program for 4-year-olds are available. The Nursery is located at 4 East Henrietta Rd. near Strong Memorial Hospital. For more information visit www.ellbhs.com, call us at 463-4230 or e-mail nh@ellbhs.org.

By Nancy O’Donnell

Heartbeats for Life
Monthly meeting of Heartbeats for Life
Presenter Michael Warren Thomas
South Wedge offers Delicious Art!
Rocket art has a delicious new canvas: chocolate truffles.
Local company Hedonist Artisan Chocolates is collaborating with local artist Christina Nitche to create a unique Valentine’s Day confection that tastes as artful as it looks. Read more at: http://blog.hedonishtoocholates.com/chocolate/anderson-truffles-art
or for more information, contact Jennifer Posey: 585-355-7743 Jennifer@hedonishtoocholates.com.
The U.S. Census 2010: It’s in Our Hands
The Census Department is starting to hire Censuses takers to support the Census 2010. These temporary positions will start in late March 2010 and end in August 2010. Each applicant must take a 30-minute basic skills test. Census taker schedules typically include 20 to 40 hours of work per week. You must be available to work when people are usually home, such as in the evening and on weekends. More information, including a practice test, is available at www.2010censusjobs.gov or call toll-free 1-866-861-2010.

New to the Neighborhood: A Traffic Calming Team Needs You!
As a result of the September 2009 General Meeting on Safety and Security, a group of Highland Park neighbors came together to form a Traffic Calming Team. Its goal—a neighborhood that will eventually rival the best among “walking-friendly” communities across the United States. Come to the Open Meeting sponsored by The Highland Park Neighborhood Traffic Control Team to discuss implementing solutions and other issues. There will be an Open Team Meeting on Tuesday, February 23, at 7 p.m., at the NYS Office at 846 South Clinton Ave.

Don’t Pay to Borrow Your Own Money
For a tax refund of $2000, you could pay over 10% of your refund to get a Tax Refund Annuity Loan. You can get a FREE basic tax preparation offered at the Genesee Co-op Federal Credit Union. To make an appointment, call Amber at 244-2944. This offer is open to the public every Saturday thru March 13. Genesee Federal Credit Union, 395 Gregory St., 463-2230 or www.genesee.coop. See page 11 for more details.

Tango Café Hosts Rochester Guitar Club
The Rochester Guitar Club, headed by musicians Kinloch Nelson and Richard Tagliert, meet the first Sunday of each month at 7 p.m. at Tango Café & Dance Studio, 389 Gregory Street. The next two meetings are planned for Feb. 7 and March 7.

Nelson reports the evening is “mostly instrumental” played by working musicians. It is not an open mike. “We want an audience, so please stop in,” said Nelson.

For more information, contact rochesterguitarclub.com or kinloch@rochester.rr.com.

Call for Public Art Submissions
The Business Association of the South Wedge Area (BASA-WA), in conjunction with the South Wedge Planning Committee (SWPC), seeks to commission completed art work on at least nine metal traffic control boxes spanning South Avenue from Byron Street to Linden Street and also on Mt. Hope Avenue from Byron Street to Cypress Street.

The primary objective of this project is to beautify the South Wedge neighborhood and commercial district in a manner that corresponds with and complements seventeen “Parking Meter Totems”; whimsical, sculptural bike racks that were designed and fabricated by artists, and funded through two previous Decentralization grants.

Artists will be paid a stipend of $500 per box upon completion of work. Timeline is as follows:
- Postmark deadline for application materials and design submissions is April 1, 2010.
- Selection Committee will meet to review all submissions and select finalists by May 1, 2010.
- Art will be unveiled on June 16 in a celebration with the community.

Project details and application can also be found at www.savourneyfavor.com.

By Nancy O’Donnell

Downtown Community Forum
On the South Wedge
February 25, 7:00 p.m.
Mayor Robert J. Duffy “One City Series: Then and Now” examines the future of dynamic Rochester neighborhoods. With Community Panelists SWPC Executive Director Robert Boyd and Board member Chris Hartman.
The Dugan Center at St. Mary’s Downtown, 15 St. Mary’s Place, Rochester 14607
Free and Open to the Public.
For information, call 232-7140.

Tango Café
Rochester, New York 14607

Sponsored by the City of Rochester and co-sponsored by Leadership Rochester

Author Abraham Rothberg
Celebrated by Nancy O’Donnell
Abraham Rothberg, writer, journalist, educator and publisher, was honored for his long career on January 12 at an event held at the Jewish Community Center. The event, held days before his 90th birthday, was planned by his wife Esther Cornell, a research professor of chemistry at the University of Rochester and Mary Lynn Broe, an English professor at Rochester Institute of Technology.

Throughout the evening, old and new friends read from his many works and shared stories of his life-long pursuit of truth and beauty in life and literature. Rothberg begins the evening reading from his essay, “Fiction is a Lie that Tells the Truth.” “By unlocking secrets of the human heart and mind, fiction can allow us to know how people different from ourselves think and feel and live… It allows us to know we are not alone,” read Rothberg.

A former St. John Fisher College English professor, Rothberg published 16 novels along with a collection of short stories, children’s books and literary criticism.

His most recent works are published by Edteck Press, a New York publishing house. Published by Edteck Press, a New York publishing house.

The Wedge
February - March 2010

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Sponsored by the City of Rochester and co-sponsored by Leadership Rochester
South Wedge Home Granted Local Landmark Status
By Nancy O'Donnell

Everyone knows Frederick Douglass, one of the most important figures in U.S. history, is buried in Mt. Hope Cemetery. Many know that he once lived on South Avenue until his house burned down in 1872. But who knew that the famous abolitionist, editor, orator and women's suffragist once owned a house in the South Wedge?

On January 11, City Planning Commission granted 271 Hamilton Street local landmark status on a 6-0 vote. The vote was the result of research conducted by two local historians that indicated Douglass’s daughter, her husband and children lived there and that the famous African-American statesman had kept the house as his legal address after moving to Washington, D.C. He owned it until his death in 1895.

Current homeowner Sherri Dukes and her husband Lee suspected something was special about the house when they moved in 1973. Lee often saw the apparition of a tall black man in a top hat, reading and writing at a desk in their bedroom. The couple kept it as their “secret” for many years. A few years ago, a local TV station ran a story about the haunting.

Dukes only learned that her house was a landmark when a local historian Jean Czerkas showed up at her door to tell her that Douglass’s daughter had lived there with her husband and family.

Czerkas joined by historian Tim O’Connell, began researching the house in 2003. “Jean found an order in the Hebard Marble and Monument Company for the tomb stone for the daughter of Rosetta Douglass and her husband Nathan Sprague, Alice Louisa,” writes O’Connell, a trustee of the Friends of the Mt. Hope Cemetery, in a recent email. “At that time Jean was a Trustee of the Friends of Mt Hope Cemetery and the archivist for the organization.”

According to O’Connell, local landmark status gives the property or structure protection from destruction and alteration. All actions resulting in a visible change of the exterior must be approved by the City Preservation Board. In addition O’Connell explains, “State and National Register of Historic Places recognizes the value historically to the people of the state or nation. It has a review process by knowledgeable people at the state Office of Historic Preservation or the National Park Service if any state or federal dollars are used in a project that affects the property. It does not, however, protect the property from changes using private funds.”

“This house now has the same rights of protection as City Hall and the George Eastman House,” O’Connell adds.

Heart of the City
Continued from page 3

Today its services draw people from all over the Rochester area. CSA’s food ministries, in partnership with FOODLINK and the Monks at the Abbey of Genesee, provide fresh vegetables, meats and bread for 40-50 families in the community. Its parishioners work with the poor in the Dominican Republic building sustainable agricultural systems.

As teacher and lecturer, Hayes has served on the faculty of Colgate Rochester Divinity School and served on the Congregational Board of Auburn Theological Seminary in New York City. Recently, she joined the Natural and Congregational Transformation in the Evangelism and Witness Division of the Presbyterian Church USA. She continues to speak around the country on church transformation.

Hay continues to receive accolades for her work. Two years ago, Hay received what amounts to an “Academic Award in the Church” when McCormick Theological Seminary invited her back to receive its “Distinguished Alumni Award.” A year earlier, she was elected to the National Women’s Hall of Fame Book of Lives and Legacies in Seneca Falls, New York.

Rev. Judy Lee Hay’s ministry and social activism continues to provide “visible victories” that spread in ever greater concentric circles outward, benefitting the lives she touches, from the South Wedge to the world entire.

Local Cafes Offer Podiums for Poets
Area poets can find an audience within walking distance from home at two local coffee houses. On the third Wednesday of every month, Equal Grounds on South Avenue offers an open mike for poets and poetry lovers.

“You can read your own or someone else’s,” said cafe owner John White. “The only request I ask is that [the poems] be upbeat, i.e. no mourning opuses about being dumped.”

Colleen Coffey reads sometimes, said White, referring to next door neighbor, licensed massage therapist owner at Re- Newing Massage. “He seems to channel his Irish mother, and his poems are wonderful.” (And funny.)

Rochester Poets also meets in the neighborhood at Tango Café and Dance Studio on Gregory Street and Boulder Coffee House at Brooks Landing. To learn more about Rochester poets, call 260-9005 or visit them on Facebook.

C. H. Morse Stamp Co.
528 South Avenue, Rochester, N.Y. 14602 (716) 454-5186
Visit our web site: www.nymarking.com
The South Wedge Is... Don Alcott, Manager of Brooklyn band, The Hollands

Maria Paris, Academy for Career Development Public Relations Manager

Fred Popkey, retired pizza designer

Joe McLean, owner Tap & Mallet

Dale O’Donnell, “nanny extraordinaire”

Lisa Milne, mom of Brian, Sarah and Holden

Lucas Milne, commercial carpenter

Jean Milne, postal worker

Kathleen Deegan, Onondaga School of Therapeutic Massage valedictorian

Jeana Bonacci, “baroness” and waitress at Tap & Mallet

Terry O’Donnell, musician and postal worker

Harry Bronson, Minority Leader of Monroe County Legislature, District 24

Michele Leach, Rochester Women’s Community Chorus

Jennifer Belardino, owner South Wedge Barber Shop

Bobby Blocker, “a great catch”

Dave Hynes, “a lucky guy”

Jennifer Posey and Zahra Langford, owners Hedonist Artisan Chocolates

Lee Iannone, City Newspaper account executive

Mary Kokinda, school teacher

Kristen Maxfield, vocalist, Kristin Maxfield Band

Frank Logan, SWED board and senior marketing consulting, Stephens Media Group

Philip Duquette, master baker/owner, Premier Pastry

Emilio Rivera, N2M Market

Trevor Sleeman, owner The Lab Bike and Board Shop

David Bass, barber, Glover’s Barber Shop

Janet Moyer, school crossing guard

George McClure, retired military

Janicee Washington, Finger Lakes DDSO treatment specialist

David Bass, barber, Glover’s Barber Shop

Harry Bronson, Minority Leader of Monroe County Legislature, District 24

Dick Bebee, County Legislator, District 6

Randy Torgerson, night manager Equal Grounds

Harry Bronson, Minority Leader of Monroe County Legislature, District 24

Michele Leach, Rochester Women’s Community Chorus

Jennifer Belardino, owner South Wedge Barber Shop

Bobby Blocker, “a great catch”

Dave Hynes, “a lucky guy”

Danielle Ponder, soul musician

(Dr.) Jennifer Posey and Zahra Langford, owners Hedonist Artisan Chocolates, Lee Iannone, City Newspaper account executive, Mary Kokinda, school teacher

Kristen Maxfield, vocalist, Kristin Maxfield Band

Frank Logan, SWED board and senior marketing consulting, Stephens Media Group
The Wedge
February - March 2010

Wedge Is...

Tom Phillips, classical pianist

Donald Robinson, retired Gannett advertising clerk

Phoebe “Butch” Horton, SWPC Facilities Manager

Carlene Woodward, retired antique dealer, NBN6 Chair

Dale O’Donnell, “nanny extraordinaire”

Linda O’Donnell, retired secretary

George Loren, SWPC Real Estate Development Coordinator

Jeanne Ottman, Eco Bella Bakery baker and animal rights activist

Nancy Sawyer-Holtz, owner The Coffee Connection

Dan Vail, owner Val Auto

Andy Neitz, Val Auto

David Freedman, owner Little Venice Pizza

Chris Todd, kitchen manager, Little Venice Pizza

Tim Lockwood, delivery manager, Little Venice Pizza

Colin Coffey, massage therapist, Renewing Massage

Lyn Ottman, owner Eco Bella Bakery

Jim Wolff, photographer, owner Historic Houseparts

Rose O’Keefe, local historian

Joey Campbell, Wegman’s barrista, David Chappius, neighborhood leader and office manager at Crosby-Brownlie, Inc., Matt Walton, Verizon rep, Matt Buckman, RIT grad student, Matt Perdue, Wegman Corporate IT

Rob Kennedy, nursing student, and Tammie Schwitzer, secretary

Christopher Hennelly & Michael Lill, The Christopher Group

Stephen Noyes, nuclear fusion engineer and author

Dan Caverly, pub owner

Asa Markern, assistant manager at Catholic Charities aka Asa Clubs in the Roc City Roller Derby

Tony Sciarabba, SWPC Treasurer

Chris Wagner, S.S.J., executive director, St. Joseph’s Neighborhood Center

Paige Holenbeck, Mise En Place

John White, owner Equal Grounds

Rubin Holley, Health and Safety Coordinator

Ronnie Glover, manager of Glover’s Barber Shop

Christine Caverly, proud mother of Dan

John and Kristin Caverly, Newswatch

Nikki Hofacker, Val Automotive

Tanya Zweifel, SWPC Board Chair and South Wedge Resident

Tony Sciarrabba, SWPC Treasurer

Mahogany Williams, hair stylist, Tonja’s Personal Touch

John and Kristin Chajka, Newlyweds

Nikki DeMocker, Vail Automotive

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Letters to the Editor continued from page 2

the suburban plazas go to great lengths to make sure their parking lots are mostly free and clear of ice and snow, that the sidewalks are walkable in front of their vast plaza storefronts, all to attract customers by conveying ease.

Yet, those of us who are making a residential life in Rochester are rewarded with antagonism at almost every level of our city government. If we want our sidewalks kept clear, let alone have bike lanes installed on our roadways. But sadly as I look around my South Wedge, only a mere fraction of my enlightened and community-developing, peace flag toting neighbors have taken any time to shovel their sidewalks or invest in ten dollars worth of ice melt and then appealed. Many of these neighbors would presume, hope that I will buy a car, drive it every time to shovel their sidewalks or simply shut up. It’s clear: buy a car, drive it everywhere or simply shut up. It’s clear, let alone have bike lanes installed on our roadways.

Community-developing, peace flag toting neighbors have taken.

The message I’m getting is sad but true. (Originally by my neighbors and local businesses; who then, one would presume, hope that I will buy at their establishment.) The message I’m getting is clear: buy a car, drive it everywhere or simply shut up.

By Nancy O’Donnell

Trevor Sleeman’s commitment to his one-of-kind bike and skateboard shop is visible, floor to ceiling, inside the South Avenue shop. The 31-year-old South Wedge resident built the diamond plate counter with its iron angle “coping” like the kind skateboarders “grind on.” On the walls are his handmade handrails, axles, brackets, wall rims (single, double and welded), all the parts that Sleeman will assemble into a bike in his backroom. If all the parts are in, he can put together a bike in one day.

“Most of my business is special order,” said Sleeman. “Customers come in and say, ‘I want this or that, but in a different color.’” Sleeman’s passion for BMX bikes and skateboards started early. “At 13, I started getting bikes and fixing them and then trading them. As I got into BMX bikes, I built jumps of dirt and quarter pipes ramps.” Despite the occasional injuries—losing a tooth and breaking a thumb—Sleeman followed his passion without swerving.

“I’ve done every job out there,” said Sleeman, “What I like to do, I like to learn new.” While working as a mechanic, Sleeman was invited to open a shop in the former X-Dream Skate Park in East Rochester. When that closed, he looked to open another shop close to where he lived. In his new shop, Sleeman stocks bikes and boards for beginners to more seasoned riders, the ones “more serious” who want equipment that will hold up to “abuse.”

Through study and lots of riding, he’s made himself an expert on all the varieties of wheels for bikes and board. He’ll point a customer to “the more aggressive tread” on one, or the exact skateboard for “a shop in the former X-Dream Skate Park or the city street. “Weight is a big issue in BMX bikes. I’ve lightened it by using titanium spokes,” he explained. “I’m here for my customers. I work for my customers,” said Sleeman, who will do unto others only what he does for himself. “I’m technical and mechanical, so I know how.”

To stay cutting edge, Sleeman follows all the trends. “College kids are all riding fixed gear bikes” and more kids are getting interested in “breakless bikes,” which he’ll sell “if the person knows how to ride one, if you know how to stop yourself by shifting your weight.”

Along with the metal parts he’s fabricated, he also carries brand names like Verde. Bikes range from $300 to $2,000. Skateboard prices vary between $30 - $160. The shop also carries skateboard videos filled with “180 Bunny Hops and Bar Spins” performed by national names in the sport and clothing.

Trevor Sleeman, The Lab Bike and Board Shop (Photo by Nancy O’Donnell)

The Wedge Bike & Board Shop Opens for Business on South Ave.

By Nancy O’Donnell

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Trevor Sleeman, The Lab Bike and Board Shop (Photo by Nancy O’Donnell)
South Wedge Social Register

By Nancy O’Donnell

AULT and CHAJKA
Kristin Ault and John Chajka were married on September 23, 2009 at 2:30 p.m. under the Highland Park Arches in the company of 80 friends and family. The couple was married by Frank DeBlase (“He is the music reviewer for City Newspaper, DJ on Sunday night Shakedown on 98.9 and musician in many bands, most notably “Frantic Frank & the Flattops,” reports Ault).

After the wedding ceremony, the couple rode their tandem bicycle to the German House for a family reception followed by a “wedding bash.” “The bash included four bands (The Grinders, John’s Band, The Dudes of Earl, The Way Guns and Milky Way Smith),” said Kristin Chajka. “We got our cake from Cheesy Eddies (Thanks, Colleen and staff) and the German House did an excellent job with food”.

Mother of the bride Laurie Coleman served as the matron of honor while groom’s brother, Kevin Chajka was the best man. Kaya Ault-Chajka, the couple’s canine companion, was “the flower girl.”

Mr. Chajka wore a simple dark suit while Kristin wore a vintage 1950’s dress and bandeau that she “won on ebay!” The couple will reside in the South Wedge where Mrs. Chajka is founder of the South Wedge Dog Walkers Against Crime.

Welcome to the Wedge – Macy Grace Holenbeck

Macy Grace Holenbeck was born December 14, 2009 at 9:34 p.m. She weighed in at 7 lbs. 7 oz. and measured 20 inches long. Parents Paige and Casey and brother Reese welcomed her to the family. Stop in Mise En Place and offer the family congratulations.

Premier Dog Training
Diane J. Gardner, CPDT
Certified Pet Dog Trainer
585-764-8187
Email: PremierPets@rochester.rr.com
Member: Association of Pet Dog Trainers

Macy Grace and Paige Holenbeck
(Photo by Casey Holenbeck)

MJM Mini Market Celebrates First Year on South Ave.

By Nancy O’Donnell

Lakew Delnesaw, owner of MJM Market on South Avenue, recently celebrated his first year anniversary on South Avenue. He opened his first convenience store on East Main Street. After eight years, he followed his brother Takela to the South Wedge. Takela was then owner of Dashen Restaurant on the corner of South Avenue and Alexander. (Today the site is home to South Wedge Colony Bar & Grille.) “The Wedge is nice, quiet, and clean,” said Delnesaw. “I like it here.”

Delnesaw emigrated from war torn Gonder, Ethiopia when he was 26. He married a woman he met here, who he learned had been living only a few streets away from his family in his native country. The couple now have three children: sons Moses and Joseph and daughter Mahlet.

“l used their first initials to name the store,” said Delnesaw. Along with groceries, MJM sells hefty submarine sandwiches and steak subs made by Delnesaw’s “friend Emilio Rivera.”

What MJM doesn’t sell is beer. “It’s just too much of a headache [to sell alcoholic beverages],” said Delnesaw.

When the Webster resident is not at the store, he likes to take his three children bowling.

MJM Mini Market, 439 South Avenue, 288-7360. Hours 9 a.m – 9 p.m. Monday-Sunday.
South Wedge Skater Rocks in Roc City Roller Derby

By Nancy O'Donnell

The names say it all. Roxy D. Sniper, Cuss Muffin, Bomb Voyage, Paraliza Minnelli, Jo Jo Thrasher. Asa Clubs.

Meet the Roc City Roller Derby, a team of the toughest, most talented female skaters around. And the most philanthropic. "We wanted to derby for a cause," said Asa Clubs aka Asa Merkley who lives on Gregory St.

Some of the causes they’ve supported include Golisano Children’s Hospital, Sojourner House, the Heart Association, AIDS Rochester, ChildrenAwaiting Parents and a few no-kill animal shelters. Skaters also volunteer for “Sample Soap,” a nonprofit who sorts and delivers toiletries to homeless shelters and other people in need.

By day Merkley works as an assistant manager in the Catholic Charities Community Support Program for the developmentally disabled. At night, and on weekends, she takes to the rink to whirl and jam her way to being the pack leader of the pack. "You should skate, you should skate," says Merkley. Finally, she turned up at Horizon Fun FX in Greece. Excited by the look of the totally American contact sport, she signed on despite the fact that she got to see a skater suffer three fractures at the event.

“Tough skating, I saw [skating] was full contact. There’s a lot of bashing.” Roller derby has a long history in the U.S. It began in 1922 as more endurance race, multi-day, flat-track roller skating races, similar to the Depression era cash prize dance-a-thons where people danced until they collapsed. Later sportswriter Damon Runyon convinced his foundress/promoter Lee Seltzer that American audiences liked their sports violent and a more aggressive game was born. By the 1970s, the sport had died out for the most part until a Texan as musician, in 2000, recruited women to skate in “a raucous, rockabilly, circus-like roller derby spectacle.” From this women banded together in “Bad Girl Good Woman Productions” and created a new generation of roller derby, open to women only. By 2006, the female roller derby revival spawned more than 135 leagues in the U.S. It’s also the largest growing grass roots sport in the Great Britain. A British article attributed its growth to a “punk third-wave feminist aesthetic.”

Locally, Kate Atronic started Roc City Derby league in 2008, which follows the guidelines set by the Women’s Flat Track Derby Association. Two years later, the team roster has 60 names of women. Each team is composed of 20, but “only the cream of the crop” travels says Merkley. The aim of the game is to earn points by overtaking opponents as they circle an oval rink, the size of tennis court. During two 30-minute periods, “jammers” and “shergifs” work to keep opponents off balance and behind while referees outside and inside the rink count the laps.

“If you dance like animals,” says Merkley, who discovered that her height and weight worked to her advantage as a jammer. “I love blocking. I’m smaller and faster. I have good balance, and I can take a big hit.”

“To be strong, to outsmart an opponent. There’s nothing more satisfying than to duck, or do a hockey stop, and watch a girl, who thinks she’s all that, go off the rink.”

Despite time away from her partner Andy Neitz and their two sons, 6-year-old Dagan, and 4-year-old Cyrus, Merkley is ready to roll whenever she’s called. In anticipation of a game, Merkley lifts weight and sometimes shares a “carb bloating dinner” with her teammates. While Merkley and the rest of her sister skaters are uber competitive, they’re all smiles after, no matter how violent the game.

“We all play like animals. We’re out for blood, but we’re here to support other strong women. Whatever happens on the track, stays on the track,” Merkley adds. “We all party together after. This holds even for “dirty skaters who break rules.”

Try-outs for the Roc City Roller Derby will be held in February. For more information about joining the team, visit rocderby.com. At-home games will begin in April at the Dome Arena in Henrietta. Tickets are $10, $15 for “suicide seats,” i.e. rink side seats where close encounters with hurling skaters are possible.
Dicky’s is Back in Town
By Nancy O’Donnell

Dicky’s Bar, a neighborhood watering ground since 1880, is reopened for business under the new management of Scott Napier, Philip Wehrheim and Daniel Rosato.

Aside from being a former patron of Dicky’s, Napier adds the bar/restaurant to a list of businesses he owns around town including SkyHigh snowboard and smoke shop on Monroe Avenue. He also DJ’d for a number of years in area clubs. Once a Cayuga Street homeowner, he and his wife and two kids now live in Irondequoit.

In the kitchen is oldtimer Kevin Lawson, who worked there when Michael and Judy Salvaggio ran the restaurant.

The current menu includes cheese, chicken or portabella by someone named Ryan in 1871,” said Salvaggio. “It’s been called the Nanny Goat Inn, Bar-ney’s and then Dicky’s.” Napier plans to fill the dining room walls with old photos of any of Dicky’s incarnation as he finds them. In the meantime, locals are happy to see Dicky’s lights back on.

“We had a grand opening [in early January] and the place has been packed pretty much ever since,” said Napier.

Dicky’s, 791 Meigs Street, 730-8316. Monday-Saturday, 5 p.m. – 2 a.m., Sunday 1 p.m. – 2 a.m.(if the place is packed). The kitchen is open until closing. Bar food is available 12 p.m. – 2 a.m. ♦
Thoughts on Surviving the Recession

By Ben White

If you were born in the 1980s, you were born into an economic climate that seems much different today. Reaganomics, cheap oil and Wall Street’s “corporate raiders” characterize our decade of birth, but despite Ronald Reagan’s legacy among some circles as a financial visionary, the 80s are still remembered by many as a time when the recession was not as severe as it would be later in the decade or the early half of the current decade. The stock market plummet of 1987 and the 1982 recession were more than many of us would have imagined. The 1980s were a time of good and bad economic times. People were able to build wealth and invest wisely, but others were left behind in the recession. The loss of jobs and the rise of inflation were a reality for many people during that time. We learned the importance of being responsible consumers in both good and bad economic times.

However, our parents endured a time that was even more difficult. Many of our parents endured the Great Recession of 2008-2009, a time when the economy was in a state of crisis. This recession was more severe than any since the Great Depression of the 1930s, and it had a lasting impact on the economy and the lives of many people. The recession was caused by a combination of factors, including the subprime mortgage crisis, the collapse of the housing market, and the resulting decrease in consumer spending. The recession was widespread and affected many different industries and regions of the country.

So how are we handling it? Not many of us can sit around watching Thundercats, relying on our parents to make all our financial decisions anymore. We are learning that careful financial planning and frugal spending can go a long way. Many of our parents endured similar strains in the 1980s and lived to tell about it. Hopefully in few years down the road, we’ll have similar stories to tell, as well as advice on how to be responsible consumers in both good and bad economic times. Although finances might be strained for many, 20 something kids are learning that careful financial planning and frugal spending can go a long way. In addition to saving money, people are finding the recession to be less difficult to handle than many media outlets are reporting. Simply go to Lux or Cavalry’s on a Saturday night and you’ll see plenty of young people that are still managing to have fun despite the economic turmoil.

Over 100 people at University of Rochester Simon School of Business raised funds, bought and wrapped gifts valued at $75 and delivered them to the South Wedge Planning Office this holiday season. Yvonne Williams and Tim Taggart helped to deliver the gift to 29 children at the Hamilton or throughout the neighborhood.

Simon Volunteers, a club at the school, “aims to enhance the lives of community members through building character in its members” noting “there is more to business than simply profitability….we understand that we can make a difference in the lives of others through social responsibility and involvement in the community.” Along with The Secret Santa Program, the group also volunteers for Rochester City School Literacy and Math Program, Rochester Children’s Scholarship Fund Mentoring Program, Earth Week Clean-up, Breast Cancer Walk, Polar Plunge, Habitat for Humanity, and Food and Clothing Drives.

Simon School grad students Joe Pak and Sean Senhouse (Photo by Eileen White)

Students Play Santa

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