

**NEWS**  
Celebrate Marie Daley Park on June 14

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City Welcomes Nathaniel Rochester Back

# THE WEDGE

OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE SOUTH WEDGE

**NEWS**  
We Need You! Comment on River Park Commons

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Work Starts on Hospital Garage

▲ PUBLISHED BY THE SOUTH WEDGE PLANNING COMMITTEE, A GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATION SERVING THE SOUTH WEDGE ▲

## THE REPLACEMENT OF RIVER PARK COMMONS IS MOVING AHEAD!

By Bob Boyd

The River Park Commons renovation is an exciting opportunity to create a unique development that integrates a people-centric design with the river and the South Wedge neighborhood. The current buildings have outlived their usefulness and have become a liability to the neighborhood. The exciting changes will help continue the development of the South Wedge urban village.

The project proposed by Conifer Realty is to renovate the 200 units in the tower and to demolish the "low rise" complex and build 100 new units. The tower would continue to be income qualified with mixed ages. The new units would be 80 higher end market rate and 20 income qualified.

The first step in making the project real is for the developer to evaluate the impact of their project on the "environment". This is called a "Preliminary En-



### Coming Down...

vironmental Impact Statement". (A copy is available at the SWPC office or online at <http://www.cityofrochester.gov/dcd/index.cfm>).

The public has an opportunity to provide input and comment on what is being proposed. Written comments are due by June 6, 2008 at 5 p.m. We encourage ev-

eryone to look at the proposal and the issues and then express your views. Information is available at SouthWedge.org or by calling the SWPC office at 585-256-1740, Ext. 102.

The South Wedge Planning Committee, Inc. wants this to be a "GREAT" project. We have identified a number of concerns that

need to be addressed. The key concerns are:

- The proposed plan for the relocation of the residents is not sufficient. The residents have been there between 4 and 30 years. Many of them have become part of the neighborhood—the plan should specifically address how to keep them in the neighborhood if they desire. The plan does not provide a process to give existing residents priority to return to the new income qualified units. A large number of Somali families live there. Provisions need to be made to keep them together as much as possible and to provide translation services.
- The number of buildings on the site has been increased from five to twelve. This does break up the

site providing more vistas. All twelve buildings have the same architecture and height with variation in color only. They are not of "people scale" nor do they blend with the architecture of the community. The current proposal simple updates what is there today.

- The proposed number of parking spots is inadequate for the number and type of housing units being proposed.
- The current site plan does not provide easy access to the river from Mt. Hope Avenue. The configuration of the sidewalks is confusing and unwelcoming.
- The vistas are perpendicular to Mt. Hope. There is a more limited vista from the diagonal streets further separating the new units from the neighborhood.
- The South Wedge neighborhood is a mix of residential and commercial. A Central City Zoning designation also envisions a mix of business, commercial and residential. There is no commercial included nor is there any discussion as to why there is none.

So, please, get involved with your community and contribute to this project! ▲

## Somali Community Spirit Grows at River Commons

By Nancy O'Donnell

Seven days a week Abdirashid "Abdi" Mohamad and other committed volunteers at the Somali Community Outreach and Education Center educate and entertain some 50 Somali children who live in the soon-to-be demolished River Commons apartments on Mt. Hope Avenue.

The Somali community first began settling at River



Somali Community Outreach volunteers (l-r) Mohamed Omar, Ahmed Betula, Dada Haji, Mohamed Mohamed and Abdi Muhamud (kneeling). Photo: Nancy O'Donnell

Commons in 1999 said Abdi. Currently, 34 families live in the complex's top two floors. (The first floor apartments are now vacant.) While the planned Conifer development allows for some income-qualified apartments, the community will definitely be impacted by the renovations and Abdi is worried.

Today the Center provides support for residents of all ages without benefit of public funding. "We have to help our community," said Abdi. Volunteers buy the sports equipment the children use and the snacks they get each day they attend.

Weekdays kids, ages 3-12 years old, come to the center after school to do homework, sometimes staying until 7 p.m.

"Education is most important to Somalis," said Abdi. "It is too difficult [in Somalia]; I had to walk 3-5 kilometers to walk to school from my village of Kismayo."

On weekends, the center en-

*continued on page 9*

## Going Up...



12 Identical buildings with minor variations will be erected on the space.

## Remembering the West Side of Mt. Hope as it was in the early 1970's

By Tom Cantin and Bob Schnacky as told to Bob Boyd

Tom Cantin was an Urban Planner for the City of Rochester and in the nice weather walked down Mt. Hope on the way to work. Bob Schnacky ran Trott Monument Company on Mt. Hope.

The South Wedge neighborhood had declined by the early 1970s, and there were many boarded up houses. It took Tom two years to rent an apartment on Hickory Street. The neighborhood's reputation was tarnished and was perceived as unsafe. The only community group was Marie Daley's South Side Seniors.

The west side of Mt. Hope had also seen better days. The changing nature of the upstate economy had taken its toll. The Lehigh

Valley Railroad started pulling back operations in the 1960's and completely abandoned the site in 1972. The railroad yards were abandoned and overgrown with weeds. There also was an abandoned coal trestle. A road ran through the site. Much of the parcel was owned by the state with a few remaining businesses. There was no housing on the site at all.

Next to the Stone Warehouse was Reiter Steak House – a Rochester destination. It burned down in the 1970's. Then there was Whitmore, Rauber & Vicinus – a street contractor who stored sand and gravel on the site. Behind that was an old gantry crane which was used to unload barges from the feeder canal. A coal trestle

used by the railroad and adjacent building for coal sales was also located there.

A brick company and scrap yard were still operating at this time in the middle of the site. Outside the junkyard was an "old" Mack chain drive fire truck with hard tires. On the Gregory Street side was Santo's who sold roasted peanuts alongside a bait shop.

This entire site, including the buildings and businesses, were leveled to create River Park Commons. The State Urban Development Corporation moved quickly with no community input. There was no consideration of how the project would interact with the neighborhood and the river. ▲

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**DO YOU CARE WHAT THE NEW DEVELOPMENT LOOKS LIKE?**  
(See page 2)

## Redefining Healthy Choices: A Farmers' Market Manifesto –Part Two

By Chris Hartman

A public marketplace creates a space where farmers and consumers come together, where neighbors gather and talk, and where excitement and merriment fill the air. This type of place-making brings communities together, fosters a feeling of belonging, builds networks and develops the social capital necessary for sustained community revitalization and health. The relationship between urban areas and their surrounding agricultural communities that must exist to sustain a localized food system is developed and strengthened.

Dollars that are spent at locally-owned businesses are reinvested in the local economy and have the multiplying effect of enhancing the vitality of our economy

and retaining our community's wealth as opposed to typical, box stores which pull money out of our community. Shopping within a network of locally-owned businesses builds a stable, local economy and real community prosperity and health.

An aesthetic and biological fact, fresh food is glorious. The flavors of such foods are rich and unique, and their abundant varieties tell the story of the land and the farmer. There is an unbelievable difference between fresh, naturally grown produce and the industrial food that is bred to be grown in monoculture, harvested unripe, and shipped across the country (if not around the world). The small farm taste, the flavor of unspoiled nutrients, and the experience of food integrity from

local farms brings the finest cuisine back to people and greatly enhances the social experience of eating. Such food fosters the individual and social value of eating with an artistic desire, a need for nourishment, and an expectation of adventure. Enacting such a value is at the root of the social and nutritional health of our communities.

The South Wedge Farmer's Market is open Thursdays 4 p.m. – 8 p.m. at the corner of South Clinton Avenue and Alexander Street (behind Boulder Coffee Company).

Chris Hartman, Social and Environmental Integrity and Community Service Coordinator at Harley School, is co-founder with Vicki Hartman of the South Wedge Farmers Market and the soon to be opened 19th Ward Westside Farmers Market. Genesee St every Tues. through October. ▲



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The Wedge Newspaper, a not-for-profit newspaper, is published by the South Wedge Planning Committee (SWPC), a grassroots organization serving the South Wedge Urban Village. Its mission is to provide accurate coverage of neighborhood news as well as local, state and national news that affect the area. It was first published in 1982 as The S.O.S. News.

Today, the Wedge is printed bimonthly (February, April, June, August, October and December) with a circulation of 7300. The newspaper is mailed to homes in the South Wedge and distributed to area businesses and retail shops and other drop points in the Greater Rochester area.

Articles in this paper do not necessarily reflect the view and/or opinions of SWPC.

Please send any story suggestions or news releases to Wedge Newspaper Editor Nancy O'Donnell, 224 Mt. Hope Avenue, Rochester, New York 14620 or nodonnell@swpc.org.

Please see our complete Advertising Deadlines and Rates online at www.swpc.org.

Before recycling this printed newspaper, why not pass it on to a friend or co-worker.

### Our Mission Statement

SWPC builds community in the South Wedge, encourages a full range of housing opportunities, and promotes a diverse, historically significant, and commercially viable urban village.

Ad Deadline  
for Next Issue  
June 25!

THINK GLOBAL

Shop Local!

By Nancy O'Donnell

## Welcome Liam Christopher Reader to the South Wedge



Zoe and Liam Reader.  
Photo: Chris Reader

Highland Park Neighborhood residents Chris and Kirsten Reader welcomed son Liam Christopher on May 3. Liam weighed in at 8 lbs. 2 oz. Big sister Zoe, 5, welcomed him home. Papa Chris is an ER nurse at Rochester General Hospital; Mama Kirsten is an English teacher at Harley School.

## Granny's Ice Cream Opens for the Season

The lawn chairs and tables are out, a huge painted ice cream cone glistens in the window, and the screen door is open for the season at Granny's Ice Cream Shop at South Goodman Avenue



Patrick Belle-Isle. Photo: Mike Fleche and Caroline Street.

Owner Patrick Belle-Isle has added something more to a delectable menu of 22 ice cream flavors, three scoop sundaes and the "ultimate banana split."

"We now have fresh made-to-order ice cream pies," said Belle-Isle. Already on hand are "creamy caramel swirl" and "mocha madness," perfect for summer dinners or potlucks.

Spring hours are 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. Belle-Isle said summer hours will be extended.

## Farm Market Founders Spread the Bounty to the 19th Ward

South Wedge Farmers Market founders Chris and Vicki Hartman are launching a new market in the 19th Ward.

The Westside Farmers Market will focus on affordable produce. "It will be all-producer-only, and though we will have some organic food, not all vendors will be organic and/or sustainable," said Vicki.

The market will be located on Genesee Street in the St. Monica

Church parking lot on Tuesdays, 4-8 p.m. beginning June 17. It will run through October.

For more information e-mail Chris or Vicki at swfarmersmarket@gmail.com or call 546.7507.

## Neighbors Council Plans for Marie Daley Park Picnic

The Neighbors Council met at Equal Grounds on May 7 to discuss upcoming South Wedge events and examine urban forest crafts—"a fairy house" composed of moss, twigs, pine cones and grape vines—that can be created during the Marie Daley Park Picnic



South Wedge Neighbors Council. Photo: Nancy O'Donnell

on June 14, 1-4 p.m. Neighbors Linda Coleman, Ginny Cassetta, Lisa Lodder, Gayle Lynch, Allison Clark and Anne Weisbeck joined to see the miniature model home and to discuss future community events.. The next Council meeting will be held at Muddy Waters Café, June 4, 6 p.m.

## Mayor Attends Ribbon Cutting at Mise En Place

Mise En Place owner Ken Hollenbeck and family held a ribbon cutting on Friday, May the 9th. In attendance were Mayor Bob Duffy, Carol Stevens, a Monroe County Executive representative, SWPC Director Bob Boyd and BASWA chair Chris Jones and 100 other neighborhood wellwishers.

"We served Hedonist choco-



Mise En Place Ribbon Cutting (l-r) Dan Cannan, Ed Hollenbeck, Pat Hollenbeck, Paige Hollenbeck with baby Reece, Casey Hollenbeck, Debb Cannan and Mayor Bob Duffy.

lates, pasta, pastries from Little Bakery and our subs," said Hollenbeck, who reports that business is good.

## South Wedge History Club Explores City's Hoo Doo History

Writer Rose O'Keefe welcomed historian Mike Keene to the Highland Library for a lecture and video presentation entitled "Vision: True Stories of Spiritualism, Secret Societies and Murder."

Keene's video documents the 19th century stories of the Fox Sisters, the mothers of American spiritualism, "the disappearance



Mike Keene. Photo: Taylor Whitney

of Captain William Morgan and shocking murder of William Lyman," assorted executions, and "Hoo Doo corner" (Main and Elm Streets).

"The street corner was described as 'cursed,'" said McCurdy. "It was 'doomed to fall upon the shoals of destruction.'"

To learn more about the History Club lectures throughout the year, contact Rose O'Keefe at 244.4558.

## South Wedge Pastor Fights Anti-Snitch Culture

Rev. Marlowe Washington of Baber A.M.E. Church on Meigs Street has been in the news recently for his efforts to fight the "No Snitching" attitude one billboard at a time.

Rev. Washington's church launched the "You Bet I Told" project in response to the difficulty police face in solving crimes because witnesses won't come forward.

Pastor Washington is also working with police on improving the city's witness protection program.

Rev. Washington appeared on a panel, "Where Do We Go From Here" at the George Eastman House in February with Mayor Bob Duffy, Rochester School District Superintendent Jean-Claude

Brizard, DA Mike Green, county officials and D&C Editorial Page Editor James Lawrence to discuss urban crime and the "stop snitching" culture in our city. ▲



Rev. Marlowe Washington and Mayor Bob Duffy. Photo: Taylor Whitney

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# Community Builders

By Allison Clark

## South Wedge Garden Contest

Get your gardens ready for the 2008 South Wedge Garden contest. Local garden experts will judge, and you'll have a chance to win some great prizes and show off your garden. The contest is open to all South Wedge residents. Judges will stop by your house on July 19th between 10:00 am and 1:00 pm to see your garden. Registration is required along with a \$5 registration fee. To register, call Allison Clark at 256-1740, ext. 106 or email [aclark@swpc.org](mailto:aclark@swpc.org). Don't miss this opportunity to let your hard work and horticultural skills pay off!

## Neighbor Council Meetings

The South Wedge Neighbors Council meets on the first Wednesday evening of each month

around the neighborhood. Neighbors Council is a group of South Wedge residents committed to improving neighborhood safety and quality of life, and organizing neighborhood activities. Consider joining; it is a terrific way to get involved. The next meeting is June 4th from 6:00 - 7:00 pm at Muddy Waters Coffee House behind The Cinema on South Clinton. For more information, contact Gale Lynch at 454-3295.

## PAC-TAC

The Police and Citizens Together Against Crime (PAC-TAC) helps residents to patrol neighborhood streets on foot, to keep watch for potential criminal ac-

tivity and interact with residents and merchants. PAC-TAC meets on the third Thursday of every month from 6:00 to 8:00 pm. Walks begin at the NET Office on South Clinton. For more information, contact Robert Lauterbach at [rblauterbach@gmail.com](mailto:rblauterbach@gmail.com).

## Wedgestock is Coming!

It may seem early but planning is underway for this year's Wedgestock. Wedgestock 2008 will be even bigger and better than last year. We anticipate more food, more games and more fun for the whole family. This is not your average annual meeting, so mark your calendars and save the date, August 24th at the Highland Bowl.

## Dog Walkers Against Crime

A new group "Dog-Walkers against Crime" is looking for anyone who likes to walk their dog, meet new neighbors and help deter crime in the neighborhood. The group meets at Marie Daley Park (between Gregory and Hickory) on Tuesdays at 6:00 p.m. So bring your animal companion and walk the neighborhood! ▲

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# Building on the Nature of the Neighborhood

## Marie Daley Park first year Anniversary Celebration

Bring your family, bring a picnic and join us as we celebrate the first year anniversary of the new playground at Marie Daley Park!

June 14th from 1 - 4 pm  
at the playground between Gregory and Ashlands Streets

- Live local music
- Children can build their own Nature House
- Free snacks and refreshments for everyone

Brought to you by SWPC Neighbors Council




Left to Right: Betsey with Chloe, John & Kristin with Kaya, Doug with Joey and Ben & Kristin with Veruca. Photo Credit: Joanne Scott

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## South Clinton Site Turns Platinum

by Nancy O'Donnell

Tom Taliento got the Manhattan-style bar he always wanted when he opened Platinum Lounge on the corner of South Clinton and Gregory Street. A sinuous oak bar winds around the room in a space once filled by Kim's Asia Restaurant. Heavy slabs of salmon and grey granite were fitted as a counter on the bar. Two comfy couches hug the windows nearby and wallpaper in muted blues, greens and yellows cover the walls. A second room houses a stage and more couches for a "VIP lounge."

Renovations to the brick exterior now in process is erasing the previous lime green exterior.

"I've always wanted to own a bar," said Taliento, who did the substantial renovations to the before he opened the Lounge in March. Along with Platinum, the 26-year-old owns Property Pro, a custom carpentry and floor refinishing and remodeling company.

During one Friday Happy Hour, the lounge buzzed with the kind of crowd Taliento said he wanted to attract—well dressed, diverse, professionals. "We thrive on the diversity of the crowd," said Taliento. "They're all different—race, creeds, sexual orientations."

Bartender Lara Grassi, a



Tom Taliento and Lara Grassi. Photo: Nancy O'Donnell

Brockport University student studying social work, builds a premium martini from a list of some 19 cocktails alongside Platinum's full wine and beer list.

The lounge is already helping to promote other businesses in the Wedge (he uses Georgie's Bakery to supply snacks for Happy Hours). Grassi even did her part in promoting Urban Village Scooters.

"I told [a customer] I wanted to go for a ride on a scooter," said Grassi. "He said, 'I'll be right back' and left. When he came back, he slapped a receipt on the bar. He had bought a scooter."

"I haven't gotten a ride yet," laughed Grassi. "He hasn't picked up the scooter yet."

Since the kitchen needs a total rehab, Taliento said, Platinum's menu will be simple bar food until a full kitchen launches later in the year. Taliento envisions Sunday Italian afternoon brunches featuring a crooner ala Frank Sinatra and pasta sauce that comes courtesy of a recipe perfected by his Sicilian grandmother.

Platinum Bar and Lounge, 699 South Clinton Avenue. 536-7516. Tues.-Thurs. 4 p.m. - closing. Mon.-Wed. 9 p.m. - closing. ▲

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# Nathaniel Rochester Unveiled

City and state officials, community activists and neighbors gathered together to see the final transformation of Nathaniel Square Park.

May 17, 2008



Photos by: Dave Halter



State Senator Joseph E. Robach, Assistant to Mayor Darryl Porter, Sculptor Pepsy Kettavong, SWPC Executive Director Bob Boyd.



Kids get a different view from atop Nathaniel Rochester.

SWPC Boardmember Dave Halter, model for Col. Rochester, and Pepsy Kettavong enjoy the finished sculpture.



Lijha Wilton, Elliot Landsman and Cheryl Stevens



Mayor Bob Duffy



Pepsy Kettavong and NY State Assemblywoman Susan John (131st Dist.) join in celebration.



Joe Robach admires Nathaniel



Former SWPC Director Dan Buyer and son.



**THIRD THURSDAYS ART & MUSIC in the SOUTH WEDGE**

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**Schedule for Star Alley Shows:**

- May 15:** 8:00: Roadward Howland-Bolton Acoustic Ragtime & Blues; 9:00: The Lucky Cats Rock & Roll
- June 19:** 7:00: Parking Meter Totem Unveiling; 8:00: Jen Graney Acoustic Rock; 9:00: The Jive Mamas Rockabilly
- July 17:** 8:00: Ian Downey Is Famous Acoustic Grindhouse; 9:00: The Varnish Cooks Roots/Bluegrass
- August 21:** 8:00: Josh Kramer Acoustic Rock & Blues; 9:00: Stone Spoon Baboon Groovy Jam Band
- September 18:** 8:00: Oliver Brown Ukelele; 9:00: TBA
- October 16:** 8:00: The Dudes of Earl Rock & Roll; 9:00: Roots Collider Drum & Bass



Jillian Wilton, Lennon Wilton, and Councilmember Elaine Spauli



Alma Balanon-Rosen



Former Rochester Mayor addresses the gathering while City Councilmember Elaine Spauli (in red) waits her turn behind.



Elliot Landsman and Wedge neighbors.

# Clean Sweep

May 10, 2008



Weeding



Sweeping



Mulching



Taking a break

## New talent agency opens in the Historic German House

by Nancy O'Donnell

Rochestertalent.com, a talent management company, recently opened its new headquarters in the Historic German House on



Eric Cubitt in his new Historic German House Suite. Photo: Nancy O'Donnell.

Gregory Street in the "very attractive" South Wedge.

Brighton resident Eric Cubitt created Rochestertalent.com eight years ago, but practical matters (he's married to wife Daryl and has an eight-year-old son Colin) kept it as a part-time endeavor. By day,

Cubitt worked as an IT manager with Preferred Care. On the side Cubitt performed as an actor in a variety of indie films.

"I help to develop careers," said Cubitt, who gets "commercial work for clients that include video and voiceovers." In addition, Rochstertalent.com is "the only certified child-performer employer" in the area Cubitt says.

Clients have included local businesses and filmmakers who come to Cubitt for help.

Among his business clients are Raymond & Flanigan Furniture store. Cubitt recently provided actors for filmmaker Matt Ehlers whose feature film, *Smoking Laws*, was part of the 2008 High Falls Film Festival. In 2007 Cubitt's company provided 16 actors in supporting roles along with four young girls for the soon-to-be-released, *The Alphabet Murders*, a film that examines a tragic series of child murders in Rochester in

the 1970s.

Like many in Rochester's film and acting community, Cubitt would like to see the city do more to promote a film industry.

"Our primary goal is to find qualified actors for clients," said Cubitt. "We'd like to see more film work. Rochester is a beautiful location. There are so many faces to the area. We have four seasons, gorges, and cityscapes. Twenty minutes from downtown, you're in cow pastures."

As the film industry is today, "It's almost easier to go to Toronto," Cubitt added. "We're three hours from Toronto, a huge film center," noting that it developed through offers of "huge incentives to make a film" from Canada's film office.

While many in his current stable of actors, both male and female, come to him "through word of mouth," Cubitt now plans to hold acting auditions in the coming months.

"It [will be] an open door audition," said Cubitt. "We cast a wide net in the ocean."

Rochestertalent.com is located at 315 Gregory Street, Suite 300 (Nicholson Street entrance). 271.4327. Website: rochestertalent.com. ▲



Eric Cubitt held an open house on May 4 at his new office to celebrate Matt Ehlers' film, *Smoking Laws*. Some 200 attended the event.

## South Wedge Colony Bar & Grille Opens on South Avenue



Southwedge Colony Bar & Grille door welcomes. Photo: Eileen Thomas.

By Nancy O'Donnell

The new statue of Nathaniel Rochester contemplating a rejuvenated corner in National Square Park might just do a double take if he gets a look inside the new South Wedge Colony Bar and Grille.

The soon-to-be hot spot at the corner of South Avenue and Alexander Street is a joint project of brothers Chris and Greg Joy (managing owners) and Lyjha Wilton, of Boulder Coffee Company.

"I keep calling it a 'classy dive,'" said Wilton. "I wanted to be part of a business that offers a very clean and comfortable place with moderately-priced beverages and food--an extension of your living room."

Greg Joy agreed, "You don't have to spend \$100 to have a good time. The way the economy is, we wanted [to create] a place where you would have a great time for \$30."

Refinished hardwood floors and a historic tin ceiling were retained. A flat screen TV hangs above a concrete bar with rounded edges and comfy leather couches and a pool table beckon nearby.

"We needed another Gregory Street intersection, said Wilton. "A

*continued on page 10*



Greg Joy, Lyjha Wilton and Chris Joy celebrate the opening of their new business. Photo: Eileen Thomas

## Ninth Annual South Wedge Streets of Sales Set for Aug. 9-10

Plan ahead for this fabulous day of yard sales in our South Wedge urban village. Start collecting items for your own sale or share with your neighbors. The South Wedge Streets of Sales runs from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Averill Avenue and Gregory, Hamilton, Ash-

land, Bond and Whalen Streets. Participants are asked to share in the cost of an ad in local papers. For more information about the day or to add your street to community event, call Judith Van Ness 271.4457. ▲

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**Somali Community Spirit***continued from page 1*

tertain the children from noon - 2 p.m. On one May Sunday afternoon, Abdi shouted directions and warnings as 20 or more young boys kicked one tattered soccer ball around the grass mound behind the River Commons at the Genesee River's edge.

"I love kids," said Abdi. "I remember growing up watching [my] father who loved kids."

Adult immigrants also benefit from the center said Abdi. Along with learning English, residents born in the U.S. can learn more about the Somalian culture.

Abdi said he couldn't do what he does without a dedicated team of volunteers and he includes Amal Aweis, Ahmed Betula, Fatima

Abdi, Mohamed Omar, Mohamed Mohamed, and community elders like Dada and SWPC Director Bob Boyd.

"He is wonderful," said Abdi. "He is our only support in Rochester."

While hours will be extended during the summer to 10-1 p.m. and 4-7 p.m.; the center will be closed midday because the volunteers are unable to provide lunches for the children.

"We hope to be able to take a few field trips to Sea Breeze," said Abdi. But, Abdi is not sure that they will be able to pay for it.

Somali Community Outreach and Education Center, River Commons, Mt. Hope Avenue. ▲



Abdi Muhamud educates and entertains the boys and girls at River Park Commons. Photo: Nancy O'Donnell.

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# COMMUNITY SPEAK OUT

## Making a Great Neighborhood Even Better

By Dr. David Topa

This neighborhood's great! From "Taste of the Neighborhood," and the well-attended Halloween children's parade to continued rave reviews of neighborhood stores and restaurants (including a large number of City Newspaper's "Best of" awards), the Highland Park Neighborhood continues to

impress me. However, like many excellent corporations and organizations, we can't rest on our laurels and must strive to continue to improve our neighborhood.

### How to make our neighborhood better:

Be an ambassador for the neighborhood. Invite friends from the suburbs and other parts of the

city to hang out here. Whether it's having food and drinks at a local establishment or planning a playdate at the Meigs and Linden playground, expose others to all the great things this area has to offer. At work and with friends, talk about how much you enjoy the neighborhood and encourage those looking for housing to check it out. Word of mouth is a great marketing tool.

Shop locally. The neighborhood is home to a number of great shops and restaurants that need

our support. By keeping your money local, you're keeping storefronts full and sidewalks thriving, thus maintaining the safety and appearance of the neighborhood.

Maintain the neighborhood. If you go out for a walk, take a small plastic shopping bag to pick up errant pieces of trash. While not glamorous, it sets a good example for others and keeps the neighborhood looking great.

Don't be afraid to over-invest. While making improvements to our home, our mortgage banker

second-guessed us, saying, "You know, you're really over-improving for you neighborhood." Well, if neighborhoods are to improve and thrive, we all need to over-invest. Whether it's time, money, or effort, give a little more of yourself to keep this neighborhood great - I'll bet you get a great long-term return on your investment in the form of great neighbors, ease of living, and being a part of a wonderful community.

The article first appeared in The Buzz, Highland Park Neighborhood Association's newsletter. ▲

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## Highland Hands Massage Center Opens in Historic German House

Debra Eileen Lewis opened her new massage clinic, Highland Hands Massage Center in the Historic German House in May. Her practice offers "therapeutic massage and bodywork for the whole family," said Lewis.

Lewis studied at the Finger Lakes School of Massage in Ithaca and graduated as a licensed massage therapist in 2002. She has also continued her studies in CranioSacral Therapy at the Upledger Institute in Florida and holds a BA

(Arts and Education) from Hobart and William Smith Colleges.

Highland Hands, German House. 315 Gregory Street, Suite 301, (Nicholson Street Entrance). 585-319-7076. www.highlandhands.com. ▲

### Southwedge Colony Bar & Grille

continued from page 8  
business to balance out this end of South Avenue, to bring more people to this end of the Wedge," said Wilton.

A grand opening will be held sometime in June.

503 South Avenue. Hours: Mon-Sat. 3 p.m. - closing, Sunday 3 p.m. - closing. In late summer, a Football NFL Package extends hours to 12 p.m. - 2 a.m. ▲

### Your Ad Could Be Here... Reaching 7000 Interested Readers

The WEDGE, a not-for-profit newspaper, is published by the South Wedge Planning Committee, a grassroots organization serving the South Wedge Urban Village. The Wedge first appeared in 1982 when it was called The S.O.S. News. It now boasts a circulation of 7000.

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## SWPC Community Calendar

### Finance Committee

Monday, June 9  
Monday, July 7  
Noon @ 224 Mt. Hope Ave.

### Housing & Overlay Committee

Wednesday, June 18  
Wednesday, July 16  
Noon @ 224 Mt. Hope Ave.

### NBN Sector 6

Monday, June 9  
Monday, July 14  
5:30 pm @ Monroe Co. Parks Dept.

### Neighbors Council

Wednesday, June 4  
Wednesday, July 2  
6:00 pm @ TBA

### PAC-TAC

Thursday, June 19  
Thursday, July 17  
6:00 pm @ 846 S Clinton Ave.

### Real Estate Team

Wednesday, June 25  
Wednesday, July 30  
6:00 pm @ 224 Mt. Hope Ave.

### Resource & Marketing Team

Wednesday, June 25  
Wednesday, July 30  
7:30 pm @ TBA

### SWPC Board of Directors

Thursday, June 12  
Thursday, July 10  
6:00 pm @ 224 Mt. Hope Ave.



## "Tool Tips"

By Ed Meyers,  
SWPC Tool Librarian

Standard library hours are 4 to 6 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays. We are also open early on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

## SWPC Tool Library and Spring Clean Up Go Hand in Hand

A good spring cleaning always makes the house and yard look fresh and inviting. Your tool library has the needed equipment to loan its members for this worthwhile activity. Our location is the red brick building at the corner of 224 Mt. Hope and Hamilton Street. Look for the white panel sign and red arrow placed at the side of the building on the Hamilton St.

If you're not a tool library member, there couldn't be a better time to join than now. Our fiscal year runs from July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009. Join now and get full coverage from sign on date through June 30, 2009. All this at the same price.

Our short step ladders help with washing the outside windows while the taller ladders help with cleaning the gutters. Lightweight Mathis Tillers do a bang up job on flower beds and those vegetable

gardens. Use our roller to flatten those bumps in your lawn. Afterwards use our hand push or gas engine mowers to give that grass a neat trim.

Gotsomebushandtreebranches that need trimming but are too high to reach? Our long handle pole saw/branch lopper will make short work of that task. How about those walks and garage floors, do they need a good vacuum? Several shop vacs are at your disposal for fast efficient clean up.

Stop in and see our large selection of garden tools for all kinds of weeding, edging, and digging. Shovels, picks, rakes and spades are available for turning over soil for planting trees and shrubs.

Been thinking about that new fence but put it off because of digging the post holes? We have post hole diggers on our list of available tools. Cast iron ground tampers

also available to finish the post installation.

Sanding is sometimes needed to obtain the best finished paint surface. We have half sheet and palm sanders to help with this work.

Stop by for a tour of our two floors of tools. We have too many tools to mention in this short article.

To sign on as a member, bring check or cash plus photo identification. Fill out some easy paperwork and you're on your way with the needed tools.

Got questions? Call 256-1740, ext 107 and ask for Ed.

Got tools no longer need? Donations to the tool library are always welcome.

**A special note of thanks--We especially appreciate the recent tools donated by Mr. J. Edward Jackson. ▲**

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## Construction Begins on Highland Hospital Parking Lot!

By Bob Boyd

The former Family Medicine site at 885 South Avenue has been cleared and construction has begun on the new parking ramp. The ramp will be used by employees of the hospital; it will not be for public use. This is the culmination of over a year of community involvement in this project. Neighbors fought hard against the ramp as it did

not complement the residential character of the neighborhood. In the end after countless meetings, letters and an unsuccessful court case the construction is about to begin. The public input resulted in the ramp being reduced from 5 levels and 410 cars to 3 ½ levels with 349 spaces. This reduced the massing and shadow effect significantly. A community design team was assembled and assisted

in the development of an appropriate façade.

The original design tried to capture the essence of every building on South Avenue. The revised design is a consistent style and reflects its purpose as a garage. The key features are the use of a brick façade; pilasters to create depth and a cornice. The window frames have lintels and sills, archways and awnings. There are slight variations in height on the South Avenue façade.

Construction schedule is as follows:

- Begin concrete foundations – early June – completed by November
- Asphalt binder for surface lot – late October
- Masonry work begins early November
- Interior MEP and finishing work late November
- Employees begin parking in ramp – January 2009
- Compete MEP and finishing work – late March 2009
- Landscaping and final paving – early April 2009
- Project completed hospital hosts opening event for neighbors – April/May 2009



## A Mexican Rainbow for Cinco de Mayo

Coqui's Journeys: Cultural Gifts, Novelties & Collectibles held a day long Cinco De Mayo celebration at the shop that included Group Arco Iris Mexicano, (The Mexican Rainbow) dance troupe. Colorful dancers performed (standing) Zulet Ramos, 17 and Stephanie Hoppe, 16; Marissa Gingello, 12; and Natalie Hoppe, 12 while teacher Adriana Hoppe looked on. Local artist Shelley Saffer created small ceramic animals. Saffer travels to Peru to work with El Refugio, a mission youth camp.



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