



SWPC is a neighborhood organization funded for and by the South Wedge community

## SWPC Helps Build a Healthy Neighborhood

By Robert Boyd

The South Wedge Planning Committee (SWPC) works in many ways to build a healthy sustainable neighborhood. Earlier this year, SWPC obtained a grant from the Greater Rochester Health Foundation to improve awareness of healthy eating among school age children at School #12.

SWPC partnered with the School #12 PTA, the South Wedge Farmers Market, Foodlink and the Work Experience Program at School #12 to create an opportunity for children in kindergarten through 6th grade to experience healthy local foods, visit a working farm and a neighborhood farmers market.

Every Friday from September 18 to October 30, approximately 400 children sampled different fresh fruits and vegetables from the South Wedge Farmers Market. There were cherry tomatoes, heirloom tomatoes, nectarines, Asian pears, plums, radishes, carrots, sweet peppers, and concord grapes just to name a few. Many of the children tried things they have never eaten before. Initially this was done with reluctance, but after a few weeks with anticipation!

To help children brave new and different foods, Mike Weisenreder of the Work Experience Program from Edison High School worked with his students to create snacks and beyond using the fruit and vegetables. In the School #12 kitchen,

they made pesto, apple sauce, pear sauce, tortilla wraps, greens and beans, squash ravioli, bruschetta, a variety of slaws, frozen fruit and yogurt purees and many other healthy foods for the children to sample.

Foodlink and Freshwise Farms also played a role in

the success of the project. Rachel Staver, a child nutritionist, brought her expertise and energy to the Friday food samplings. Throughout the six week project, children also visited a Freshwise Farm in Penfield owned and operated by Foodlink.

*continued on page 10*



School #12 students discover tasty new treats.

## The Votes are in & The South Wedge Wins...

The South Wedge Area received kudos from both *City Paper* and *The Democrat & Chronicle* Newspapers in their 2009 awards contests. Many were called, but these neighborhood favorites were chosen the best of the best:

**Best Beer List:**  
Tap & Mallet  
381 Gregory Street

**Best Clothing Store:**  
Thread  
654 South Avenue

**Best Straight Bar:**  
Lux Lounge  
666 South Avenue

**Best Happy Hour:**  
Lux Lounge  
666 South Avenue

**Best Bartender:**  
Phillip Rawleigh  
Lux Lounge

**City Critics' Picks "Best Meeting of the Sweets":**  
Open Face Sandwich

Eatery's Cookie Splits  
"More than your typical half moon cookies...they're crumbly and moist...all of the flavors complement one another brilliantly."

**Democrat & Chronicle Rochester Choice Award 2009**

**Best Cajun**  
Beale Street  
Yet more reasons to live, work and play in the South Wedge. ♦

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**Keep your cash in the Wedge!**  
See our holiday guide on pages 6 & 7

# Stars of the Wedge - George Lorson & Tim Sigrest

by Nancy O'Donnell

This month, the Wedge highlights two men—George Lorson and Tim Sigrest. Both have contributed to building the South Wedge's community ethos. Together, they worked to create a new façade for St. Joseph's House of Hospitality that showed sensitivity to its unique 19th century architecture, while supporting its mission of serving those in need.

SWPC Real Estate Development Coordinator George Lorson has only had two jobs in his entire career. In both, he worked to create better homes in the community.

Born in Penfield, Lorson attended McQuaid Jesuit High School before majoring in Business Management at Cornell University's College of Agriculture.

When he graduated, he joined the construction firm he had worked for while a student. He stayed there for 20 years before he was approached by First Federal Savings & Loan to be a project manager for their real estate department.

"I managed residential construction including a 312-unit Planned Unit Development in the suburbs," said Lorson.

In the late 1980s, the Community Reinvestment Act required banks to meet the needs of borrowers in all neighborhoods of their service areas, including low- and moderate-income customers.

"I worked on the First Place Project, a 50-unit affordable housing development near the Old Public Market on Union Street," said Lorson. "It was an important undertaking in maintaining a high quality of building. We also had a mission to employ as many minority contractors as we could and mentor students who had demonstrated an interest in construction in a Youth Building Program."

Over the years, Lorson worked closely with the Fed-



St. Joseph's House of Hospitality before George and Tim.

eral Home Loan Bank of New York and various not-for-profits across the state, assisting them in obtaining grants for over 150 housing projects. This partnership resulted in the creation of 5,000 units of affordable housing statewide.

In March 2006, Lorson retired, briefly.

"I stayed retired for about 12 hours," laughed Lorson.

Former SWPC Executive Director Dan Buyer learned about Lorson's impending retirement and called to ask if he was interested in housing development and real estate.

"I said yes, and we got together that week," said Lorson, who was soon working three days a week for SWPC.

"I liked the neighborhood, the architecture, the people, and their responsiveness," said Lorson. "People take pride in their neighborhood."

At SWPC, his resume includes a long list of successful home rehabilitations and home repairs. One such project was the DHCR-funded rehabilitation (\$304,000) of two units of quality affordable rental housing on Hamilton Street. Another was the \$93,000 Urban Initiatives grant that paid for major exterior repairs to SWPC's offices at 224 Mt. Hope Avenue.

Lorson is very excited about the Community Housing Development (CHDO) program that allows SWPC to rehabilitate houses throughout the Rochester area each year.

"The program breathes new life into city neighborhoods through major home rehabilitation for properties that will be sold to eligible first-time home buyers," he said.

In 2010, Lorson will celebrate 42 years of marriage with wife Lorrie. The couple has two adult daughters, Valarie and Dana, and five grandchildren.

His second grand passion after rebuilding Rochester is bass fishing. He's even taken courses from famous fishermen Kevin Van Dam, Jimmy Houston and others.

"In 1988, I caught a 6-lb large mouth bass in Black Lake," said Lorson, who had it stuffed for posterity. "It's important to understand fish and their habitat including weather conditions. Fishing is a science." St. Joseph's House of Hos-

pitality President Tim Sigrest began his long journey with the city's poor when he came to Rochester to work on a M.A. from St. Louis University.

"I came to interview Father Dan, a priest with the Catholic Workers," said Sigrest, who was soon hooked on the life of helping others. "I worked in the clothing room [donated clothing given to St. Joe's clients] with another person a couple of days a week." Eventually, he joined the board.

"We are involved in running the place," said Sigrest. "There are no cameo appearances. I joined the board determined to stop it from being a board."

Each member "takes the house" and helps to run the shelter and feed the hungry. His position of president at St. Joe's happened because "no one else wanted" it.

"It's not a big deal," said Sigrest. "Kindness is where your authority comes from."

When he's not participating in the life of St. Joe's, Sigrest runs Alex's House, a recovery halfway house in the South Wedge, along with working a night job at the Presbyterian Home. He became a LPN after he retired from many years teaching in the Rochester City School District.

With his wife Debbie, also a nurse, Sigrest raised three sons in their family home in the 19th Ward. His son Pete is 35, Matt is 33, and Adam, 30.

Most days Sigrest walks everywhere and anywhere. "I walk in the woods, all of them. I never know where I am going."

Both Lorson and Sigrest were instrumental in the current rehabilitation of the façade of St. Joseph's House of Hospitality on South Avenue. Stop by and see what two men with a love of service to their community can do to transform a neighborhood. ♦



The nearly completed St. Joseph's House of Hospitality after George and Tim.

# Letter to the Editor

Here's why I love living in the Wedge. I own a house on one of the many little alleys scattered around the South Wedge. I've been there for 30 years. It's close to South Ave., but quiet and secluded at the same time. And the neighbors all know each other, by sight if not by name.

On Wednesday, October 14th, my neighbor Ellie called me at work and said to come home immediately because someone tried to rob my house. When I got there, a police officer was waiting. He told me that they caught the perpetrator, who had tried getting into three houses and failed all three times.

Here's why he failed. When he tried breaking into the last house on my street, another neighbor, Jill, saw him and called the police. When he kicked in a window on the house next to mine, the home owner, my new neighbor Jeff, came outside and called the police. As he tried to kick in my door, yet another neighbor, Robert, saw him and came over to find out what was going on.

Jill and Jeff were on their phones with 911 while Robert kept the guy talking for a few minutes. When he finally decided to get out of there, he didn't even make it to South Avenue before the police picked him up.

In the Wedge, people are there to help if you need them. My neighbors have been surrogate grandparents, pet sitters and providers of food, plants, neighborhood news and card games. This time, they kept one of the bad guys from winning.

Ellie, Jill, Jeff and Robert, — thank you for being there. You're a big reason why this is such a great place to live. ♦

--Eileen Thomas

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OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE SOUTH WEDGE  
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To reach The Wedge,  
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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.

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 sustainable urban village.

## The South Wedge Planning Committee, Inc.

### December 2009 and January 2010 - Community Calendar

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

#### SWPC Board Meeting

kzwahlen@frontiernet.net  
Thurs. December 10 @ 6 p.m.  
Thurs. January 14 @ 6 p.m.

#### SWPC Executive Team

kzwahlen@frontiernet.net  
Thurs. December 3 @ 6 p.m.  
Thurs. January 7 @ 6 p.m.

#### Commercial & Economic Development

chris@historichouseparts.com  
Meeting date and time - TBD

#### Finance Team

tsciarabba@hotmail.com  
Tues. December 8 @ 12:30 p.m.  
Tues. January 12 @ 12:30 p.m.

#### Housing and Structures

mmccullough@dor.org  
1st Wed. of the month @ 5:30 p.m.  
December - No Meeting

#### Marketing & Membership Committee

tsaville@rochester.rr.com  
Tues. January 12 @ 6:00 p.m.

#### Community Engagement

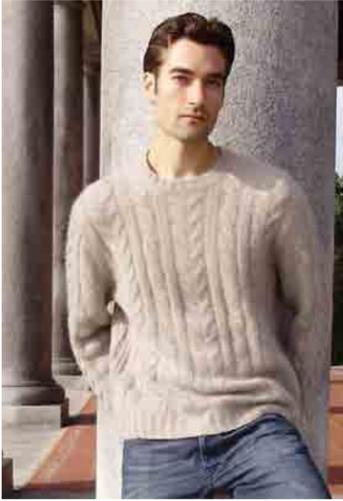
jkvanerk@frontiernet.net  
Wed., December 2 @ 6 p.m.

#### BASWA (Business Association of the South Wedge Area)

chris@historichouseparts.com  
Wed. Dec. 9 @ 6 p.m.  
Wed. Jan. 13 @ 6 p.m.  
Visit baswa.org for locations

## Ad Deadline for Next Issue January 5

by Nancy O'Donnell



Alden Gatt, classical pianist

## South Wedge Welcomes Alden Gatt

When Alden Gatt, 21, discovered the South Wedge neighborhood, he immediately wanted to make it home. The Naples, Florida native moved to Rochester to study classical piano and all things musical—history, theory, musicology, and pedagogy—at the Eastman School of Music.

"Eastman has the most warm atmosphere, welcoming students and teachers," he said. His first apartment, close to school, was not so pleasant. "The roof leaked, and I worried it would ruin my piano."

Gatt began studying the instrument at 8 years old. "It was kind of late, but it balances out. When you're older, it's quicker to pick things up," he said.

Along with piano, Gatt also studied French and Chinese: He spent his senior high school year abroad in Beijing.

His busy schedule at the Eastman School made him realize he "needed a place to call home." When a roommate found an apartment in the South Wedge, "I signed that day."

"I'm loving this area: Equal=Grounds, Tru Yoga. I get my car fixed at Vail's. I love Hedonist Chocolate, Lux, Highland Park," said Gatt.

With a senior recital at Kilbourn Hall scheduled for April, Gatt is spending many hours of practice on his grand piano now set up in his Gregory Street apartment.

"I'm really hoping to start teaching next year," said Gatt.



Mayor Rosa Amelia Valle Vargas, (Photo courtesy of Johanna Connelly)

## Nicaraguan Mayor Visits the Wedge

South Wedge resident Johanna Connelly welcomed Mayor Rosa Amelia Valle Vargas of El Saucé, Nicaragua, in early October to her home in the South Wedge. Valle Vargas traveled to Rochester at the invitation of Connelly's group, the El Saucé/Rochester Ciudad Herma-

na Task Force of Metro Justice of Rochester.

During her visit, Valle Vargas visited School #12 and read to students in addition to speaking at area churches about the current political and economic situation and status of women in Nicaragua.

Connelly and South Wedge resident Susan Ruhlin operate "Amigos for Schoolchildren," an ongoing Ciudad Hermana project that provides clothing, school supplies, backpacks and supplemental vitamins to children in El Saucé's school.

Other South Wedge residents on the project include Pat Corcoran, Lawrence Jones, Vera Versteeg, Kamila Kuykendall-Pakhtukin, and Johanna Cummings.

Connelly began participating in the project in 1995. Over the years, she's obtained sponsors from around the country and Canada who provide the \$70 annual scholarships given to motivated students. The group also funds a project manager in the town who reports on how monies are used.

Connelly has herself traveled to the Central American country.

"[El Saucé] is a small village 3-½ hours on a dirt road from Managua," said Connelly. "It's not a vacation. We go to learn about the people and the village."

"It was so moving to meet one father who came to thank us," continued Connelly. "He took off his baseball hat and said, 'You know just because we can't pay for pencils and papers, it doesn't mean that we do not want an education for our children.'"

To learn more about the project or to sponsor a child, email Johanna at johanna@rochester.rr.com.



Valerie O'Hara illuminates CSA's stained glass windows. (Photo by Nancy O'Donnell)

## South Wedge History Fair Attracts 100

The 2009 Regional History Fair attracted 100 to Calvary St. Andrews (CSA) Church on a balmy November 14. South Wedge author Rose O'Keefe organized "Heretics, History and Hallelujahs" and brought lecturers, vendors and other historical groups together for an afternoon of western New York history. Ruth Rosenberg-Naparsteck, Alan Illig, Marjorie Searl and Valerie O'Hara joined vendors selling antique appraisals and postcards. Michael Tombs represented the Highland Park Neighborhood Association and sold colorful posters that highlight the unique "Arboretum that Be-

came a Neighborhood." Historian filmmaker Michael Keene answered questions about his new film, "Visions: True Stories of Spiritualism, Secret Societies and Murder." Also in attendance were reps from the Susan B. Anthony House, Charlotte Genesee Lighthouse, the Canal Society of NYS, Charlotte Village & Transportation Museum, Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery, Greece Historical Society, Friends of the Market, Rochester Museum & Science Center and Rochester Public Library.

During the afternoon, O'Hara gave a guided tour of the church's stained glass windows. Proceeds from the event benefit CSA's art restoration fund.



Names Project panel. (Photo courtesy of John White)

## Equal=Grounds Marks World AIDS Day

For the past three years, Equal=Grounds owner John White hosted panels from the Memorial AIDS Quilt (aka The Names Project) for World AIDS Day. In previous years, other area venues did the same. This year he will be the only one to host a panel, available for viewing from Dec. 1 through Dec. 7.

"It is a great event for the community," said White. "As the panels are shipped all over the world, it is a particular honor to host them here in our little wedge of the world."

The 12' square panels, 40,000 in total, are archived in Atlanta by the nonprofit Names Project Foundation, and then shipped out upon request. (Displaying three panels will cost White some \$700.)

"It's a very emotional event," said White. "People leave crying, but they always are so grateful [for the viewing]. Most who come aren't even customers; usually they're families [of AIDS victims]."

For more information, call 242-7840 or visit Equal=Grounds at 750 South Avenue.



Jason Olshefsky came down from the Upper Mt. Hope neighborhood to win first prize, with new friend Pirate Queen Sonia Tafoya. (Photo by Christine Jones)



Jennifer Posey and Zahra Langford buy books at the GAGV opening. (Photo by Gerry Szymanski)

## BASWA's Night of the Living Wedge

The Business Association of the South Wedge Area held a Halloween Pub Crawl on October 29 that stretched from Alexander Street to Gregory Street and back again. Participants visited Beale Street, Caverly's, Lux, Solera Wine Bar, the Colony Lounge, the Keg and Tap & Mallet. Best costume prizes went to Guitar Girl and H1N1 Swine. More chilling photos—Bob Boyd as a sumo wrestler—are also available on BASWA's Facebook page.

Become a fan of BASWA on Facebook and learn about future neighborhood events like the next Pub Crawl—the Kris Kringle Krawl in December.

## Gay Alliance of Genesee Valley Opens New Library

Gay Alliance of Genesee Valley (GAGV) Library held a grand opening and book sale on Oct. 21. The library's 30-year collection of books, CDs and periodicals was originally housed on the fifth floor of the Auditorium Center on East Main St. It recently moved to the first floor next to the GAGV Youth Center.

The collection is "the largest gay specific" one in the upstate New York," said Director Scott Fearing.

The David Bohnett Cyber-Center is another addition to the space. The center provides LGBT teens an online support system while helping to make seniors to become more technologically savvy. ♦

## SWPC TOOL LIBRARY WINTER HOURS VISIT US!

⌘ Thursday 3 p.m. - 6 p.m.  
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By Allison Clark

**Newest South Wedge Totem Installed**

BASWA (The Business Association of the South Wedge Area) welcomed the tenth Totem *aka* "artist-designed bicycle rack" at Hamilton Street and South Ave. The Totem was designed by artist John Wilson. Entitled "Blue Circles One," the work is composed of welded and painted steel. John, a founding partner in the law firm of Boylan, Brown, Code, Vigdor & Wilson, lives in the Maplewood neighborhood of Rochester.



John Wilson and "Blue Circles One."  
(Photo by Christine Jones)

**Episcopal SeniorLife Communities Presents Civil War Series**

Episcopal SeniorLife Communities at River Edge Manor is hosting a series of eight presentations entitled "The Uncivil Civil War" on Tuesdays, December 1, 8, 15, 29, at 2:30 p.m. at 535 Mt. Hope Ave. This event is free and open to the public.

Topics include Slavery, Gettysburg, Mid-19th Century Medicine, Women of the Civil War, and the Navies. For a detailed schedule, visit [www.episcopalseniorlife.org](http://www.episcopalseniorlife.org) or contact Ashley Greenman at 546-8439 x 3710.

**German House Hosts Benefit Evening for the American Cancer Society**

An evening of "Art and Inspiration with the Rochester Metropolitan Jazz Orchestra" will be held for the American Cancer Society at the German House on December 3 from 7 to 10 p.m. Hors d'oeuvres, dessert and one drink ticket comes with a \$35 per person ticket. The event also features a Silent Art Auction and 50/50 Raffle. Come out for a great time for a good cause.

**Free Chopin for Cello Concert at U of R**

The University of Rochester, the Skalny Center for Polish and Central European Studies, and the Department of Music along with the Polish Heritage Society of Rochester are presenting a Chopin for Cello Concert on December 13 at 3 p.m. at Strong Auditorium, UR River Campus. Admission and parking are free.

Ignacy Grzelazka is an accomplished cellist currently working on his Graduate Performance Diploma at Boston Conservatory. He will play music Chopin composed for cello. He will be accompanied by Alex Poliykov at the piano.

The concert begins the first part of a celebration of Fryderyk Chopin's 200th birth anniversary.

**NOW Invites Dialogue at Boulder**

The New York State National Organization for Women (NOW) will meet on Thurs. December 3 at 7 p.m. at Boulder Coffee Company at Brooks Landing to discuss social issues affecting women today. 955 Genesee Street. For more information, email [nysnowintern@gmail.com](mailto:nysnowintern@gmail.com).

**NeighborWorks® Rochester Recognizes Realtor Supporting City Living**

NeighborWorks® Rochester, a nonprofit housing organization on South Avenue, awarded three local real estate agents with the 2009 First Time Homebuyers Sales Award on Friday, November 6, at the Greater Rochester Realtors® Association Awards Dinner at the Riverside Convention Center. The awards acknowledge the important role realtors play in promoting city neighborhoods and in helping first-time home buyers purchase houses.

The winners were: Linda J. Wilson of Nothnagle Realtors (1st Place), Samantha Sharkey also Nothnagle Realtors (2nd Place) and Kelly Chapman with North East Area Development (3rd Place).

**BASWA says "Put Your Money Where Your House Is"**

The Business Association of the South Wedge Area (BASWA) campaign "Put Your Money Where Your House Is" is especially important to remember his holiday season. "South Wedge Swag," reasonably priced Nalgene water bottles, 100% recycled dog bowls, pub glasses, bumper stickers and buttons are available at area businesses. Learn more at [www.savorourflavor.com](http://www.savorourflavor.com).

**BASWA Plans Kris Kringle Krawl**

Become a fan of BASWA on Facebook and learn about future neighborhood events like the next Business Association of the South Wedge Area Pub Crawl – the Kris Kringle Krawl in December. Check out photos of their October Night of the Living Wedge to see what fun you can expect, but think red and green and jingle bells!

**Mercy Prayer Center Christmas Concert Benefit**

Fresh from Carnegie Hall, Tim Janis and his nine-piece ensemble join with the Irondequoit Chorale to perform a benefit concert for Mercy Prayer Center, a retreat and spirituality ministry of the Sisters of Mercy on Highland Avenue. The event will be held on Tuesday, December 15 at 7 p.m., at Asbury First United Methodist Church, 1050 East Avenue. General Admission is \$20, the Patron Package is \$100 and includes two reserved seats, reception following the concert and gift package of a DVD and two CD's. Call for tickets at 473-6893 or visit [www.mercyprayercenter.org](http://www.mercyprayercenter.org). ♦

**RPD Winter Safety Bulletin**By Officer Stephen C. Edgett,  
Rochester Police Department

The holiday season is historically the most active time of year for robberies both on the street and in businesses. Here are a few tips from the Rochester Police Department to keep you safe for the holidays:

Keep the inside and outside of your home well-lighted with motion sensors and "dusk to dawn" lights.

Keep doors and windows locked. Criminals take advantage of an unlocked entry at home and garage. Lock doors while driving, too.

Never keep or carry excess cash or property if you don't need to.

Stay alert to your surroundings whether you are walking down the street or operating your business. Be aware of persons and situations. Criminals are less likely to commit a crime when they believe someone can identify them.

Report suspicious activity by calling 911.

Trust your instincts. Whether at home, work or at play, you will usually know what people and actions seem out of place for the situation. If it seems wrong to you, it probably is. Get away from any potential danger and call 911.

If you do become a victim of a robbery, comply with the thief's requests for money or property. Your belongings are not worth the risk of being injured. Don't make any sudden moves or do anything to agitate the criminal. Try to get a good description of the robber's clothing and physical features. A good witness is our best hope for making an arrest.

For more information, call the Southeast Neighborhood Service Center, 846 South Clinton Avenue, 428-7640. ♦

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Are you looking for an opportunity to become involved?**

The South Wedge Planning Committee is looking for individuals to join our teams. This is your opportunity to become involved in making the South Wedge a better place. We need your help on the following SWPC teams:

- **Community Engagement** – help plan community events, deal with community concerns and build block clubs.
- **Marketing and Membership** – help us build the South Wedge "brand", keep residents informed and market the neighborhood to those outside the Wedge.
- **Finance** – help guide the financial affairs of the South Wedge Planning Committee.
- **South Wedge Farmers Market** – provide advice, guidance and volunteer support for the South Wedge Farmers Market.

If you would like more information, please contact Robert Boyd at 585-256-1740, Ext 102.

**The Uncivil Civil War presentation series**hosted by  
Episcopal SeniorLife Communities

**Presentations will take place Tuesdays beginning November 3 at 2:30 p.m. at 535 Mt. Hope Ave. Rochester, 14620**

Visit [www.episcopalseniorlife.org](http://www.episcopalseniorlife.org) for more information

- Slavery □ Nov. 3
- Charleston, Hot Bed of the Republic □ Nov. 10
- Gettysburg, Holy Ground □ Nov. 17
- The Gold Bar Boys □ Nov. 24
- Mid-19th Century Medicine, The Killing Machine □ Dec. 1
- Women of the Civil War □ Dec. 8
- The Navies □ Dec. 15
- Murder of the President, Who dun it...really? □ Dec. 29

## SWPC Welcomes New Board Chair

By Robert Boyd

Tanya Zwahlen has been elected to a two-year term as Board Chair of the South Wedge Planning Committee, Inc. She replaces Lyjha Wilton who completed his term. He will remain on the Board.

John "J.D." Dennis, who served on the Board for many years, has moved to the Honor-

ary Board. J.D. will continue to be involved with SWPC.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Lyjha and J.D. for their advice and counsel over the past few years. I look forward to continue working with Tanya in her new role as SWPC Chair. ♦

## Tell us what you think!

The South Wedge Planning Committee, Inc. and the Business Association of the South Wedge Area are conducting a market survey to update one completed in 2005. It will tell us your thoughts on the changes you've seen happening in the South Wedge over the past few years and help us guide the development of the neighborhood in the future.

We recently mailed a survey to a sampling of area residents. If you did not receive one, go to [www.swpc.org](http://www.swpc.org) and click on "Take the South Wedge Survey". Please enter the Code of WN.

Thank you for making the South Wedge a better place to live, work and play! ♦

## Green Zebra Catering Comes Home

By Nancy O'Donnell

In Lindsay Steinberg's earliest memory she's a three year old, walking the South Wedge with her mother, co-owner of the old café Zeppa del Sud on South Avenue (now Beale Street).

"I remember spending a lot of time there," said Steinberg. "I grew up around food."

Even so, Steinberg's first ambition was to be a psychiatrist.

The Allendale Columbia "lifer" went to Franklin & Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and graduated with a degree in "Scientific and Philosophical Studies of the Mind."

"It's a great degree to drop at a cocktail party," said Steinberg, who translated it as a combination of "psychology and life science."

From there, she went to work in Manhattan at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center where she discovered that she "hated the bureaucracy of hospital, all the red tape they put sick people through."

With a career in medicine now rejected, Steinberg enrolled in the Institute of Culinary Education in New York City.

Soon she was working with New York City caterers and creating dishes for Mayor Bloomberg, Don King, MTV House and the Republican National Convention. She once catered a party for Ruth Reichl, the editor

of the now defunct culinary institution *Gourmet Magazine*. On another occasion, she worked with celebrity Iron Chefs Sarah Moulton and Brad Farmerie.

Eventually Steinberg returned to Rochester to be closer to her mother, and she started to explore the dream of having her own green business.

"I wanted to do my own thing, but it would be too costly in New York City," she said, pointing to green practices like shopping seasonal markets and choosing organically grown items.

Naturally, she set up shop in the South Wedge, named her business after an heirloom tomato and found a place to live "a couple blocks from my kitchen."

During a telephone interview, Steinberg was busy pre-

paring a slew of her specialty fancy hors d'oeuvres—for a catered affair.

"I'm making truffle mushroom beggar purses, miniature blue cheese biscuits with beef tenderloin and micro argula and butternut squash samosas," she said. "I love lots of fusion techniques."

Steinberg buys all the ingredients needed in her catering business: "No distributors or wholesalers. I do all my shopping myself at the Rochester Public Market, Palmer's, and Lori's." For some part time kitchen help, she turns to boyfriend Nick Obecanov.

Not all her cooking is formal. This summer she partnered with the South Wedge Planning Committee to teach healthy recipes to children, ages 5-15, from the Somali Outreach Center.

"I planned a menu with [SWPC Director] Bob Boyd and brought the kids over to my kitchen. I was more than happy to volunteer. I love what's going on [in the Wedge]," said Steinberg. "New businesses, young businesses. More independents in food and clothing."

Right now Steinberg is gearing up for what she hopes is a healthy holiday season of catering.

Green Zebra Catering is available for buffet, sit down dinners and wine pairing events. To learn more, visit [www.greenzebracatering.com](http://www.greenzebracatering.com). ♦



Lindsay Steinberg (Photo courtesy of Green Zebra Catering)

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# South Wedge Holiday

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Give or take a piano lesson at Gatt's Gregory Street studio. For more information, contact [aldenpiano@gmail.com](mailto:aldenpiano@gmail.com).

## BEALE STREET CAFE

Give a gift of the best barbecue and Cajun cuisine around. Blues played throughout the week. 689 South Ave., 271-4650, [bealestreetcafe.com](http://bealestreetcafe.com).

## BOULDER COFFEE CO.

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Body art in both traditional and contemporary designs. Gift certificates, Henna stained drums, and Do it Yourself gifts. 802-4365, [www.hennarisings.com](http://www.hennarisings.com).

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Bring a friend to watch a double feature at Rochester's Oldest Neighborhood Theater. Buy a book of tickets for 2010. 957 South Clinton Ave., [www.cinemarochester.com](http://www.cinemarochester.com).

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## GREEN ZEBRA CATERING

Give the gift of a good meal, appetizer or dessert this holiday season. 758 South Avenue, 474-0958, [greenzebracatering.com](http://greenzebracatering.com).

## THE HISTORIC GERMAN HOUSE

Rent it for a wedding, banquet or concert. Treat a friend to some grub downstairs at The Keg Sports Bar & Grill, 315 Gregory St., 473-5070, [www.thegermanhouse.com](http://www.thegermanhouse.com).

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## LITTLE VENICE

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## LUX LOUNGE

A laid back little neighborhood bar with a funky flair. Gift a friend with a visit or buy long sleeve shirts and children's t-shirts that make everyone feel

warm and look so cool. 666 South Ave, 232-9030, [Lux666.com](http://Lux666.com).

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Recycled high fashion and environmentally sound gently used clothing and footwear. 792 South Ave, 442-6910.

## MISE EN PLACE

Gourmet takeaway prepared meals and lots more consumable groceries and gifts for the holidays. 683 South Ave, 325-4160.

# Day Shopping Guide

Our business owners are also our neighbors. Dollars spent in the Wedge, stay in the Wedge. Our independent consumables always make great gifts. So keep the car in the driveway, rev up your pedestrian power, take shop-



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#### ROCHESTER COMMUNITY ACUPUNCTURE

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#### SOUTH WEDGE "SAVOR OUR FLAVOR" COOKBOOK

Keep your cooking in the Wedge. At \$5 you can buy several cookbooks that celebrate the diversity of the South Wedge, from Saucy Crab Balls to Old Fashioned Peanut Butter Fudge. South Wedge Planning Committee, 224 Mt. Hope Ave, 256-1740.

#### SAVORY THYME CATERING

Look to Savory Thyme for all your catering needs from a company who cares about sustainable agriculture, eating local and eating well. 220 Mt. Hope Ave, 423-0750, www.savorythyme.com.

#### SHELL WE DANCE GIFT SHOP

Find one-of-a-kind gifts, funky & traditional, and help the community too. All proceeds go back to non-profit organizations. Open Tues./Wed. 1- 5 p.m., Sat. 11 - 3 p.m., 720 South Avenue in the South Wedge Barber Shop.

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#### SOUTH WEDGE BARBER SHOP

Gift the whole family with a trim at The South Wedge Barber Shop, Tues.-Fri. 12-6ish. Sat. 10-3ish. 720 South Ave., 473-5570.

#### TANGO CAFÉ DANCE

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#### TAP & MALLETT

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#### THREAD HOME

Brands include Danica Studios, Leitmotiv, Artecnic, Voluspa and EcoJot as well as custom reupholstered vintage furniture, plants and locally made pottery. 650 South Ave, 232-7110, www.shopatthread.com.

#### THE TIP TOP SHOPPE

The Episcopal Church Home Tip Top Shoppe offers handmade knit sweaters, girls' dresses, walker or wheelchair bags, and grocery bag holders. All made by Dorothy Phillips, who is still knitting and sewing in her 80s! All proceeds from sales go directly to support the resident programs and services. 535 Mt. Hope Ave., 232-3130.

#### URBAN VILLAGE SCOOTERS

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#### VINTAGE PHOTO COLLECTIONS

Southeast Rochester in a vintage photo collection of neighborhoods from the Genesee River to Cobbs Hill, available at Historic House Parts, Abundance Co-op Market and Westfall Florist, or by appointment at 244-4558.

## Tango Café adds Coffee to its Gregory Street Studio

By Nancy O'Donnell

Tango Café Dance Studio, a South Wedge Area attraction for several years, has added a sophisticated coffee shop and community-gathering "cool place to hang" at its Gregory Street location. It takes the space formerly held by the Mez.

Co-owners Kerri Vaughn and Ruben Fuentes, whose motto is "learn, dance, have fun" are committed to enlivening the neighborhood one dance step at a time.

The couple bought the studio in April 2008. When the coffee shop downstairs became available this year, they jumped at the offer.

"I love the South Wedge," said Vaughn. "It's a very solid community."

Fuentes said he especially enjoyed the "camaraderie" he felt among businesses.

"We joined BASWA," said Fuentes. "I never felt there was competition. People help each other out. When we opened up and had trouble with our coffee machine, I talked to Lyjha [Wilton] at Boulder. He came over

with a cappuccino machine to use until ours was repaired. That's the kind of community in the Wedge."

Fuentes and Vaughn met through their common passion for dance.

Vaughn had spent her twenties enjoying heavy metal, "Judas Priest, the Scorpions, head banging." At 30, she discovered "sacred circle dances, country line dancing, swing and salsa." When a job in "corporate America" ended, Vaughn sold her 55-acre farm outside of Syracuse and went looking for a new life. Along the way, she met Fuentes, and they joined energy and talent and bought the dance studio.

Fuentes, a Brooklyn native, worked at Kodak until he was injured on the job and his life changed.

"I didn't know what to do," said Fuentes. He had been taking private dance lessons, and his teacher encouraged him to continue.

"The more I danced, the better my posture, and the easier [to bear] the pain in my legs,"

said Fuentes.

The couple has added a new dance classes to their schedule. *Rueda de Casino*, which translates as "wheel of salsa," is a Cuban group folk dance.

"Square dancing meets salsa," said Vaughn. "They make a fabulous mix."

While upstairs dance, zumba and yoga classes are held, downstairs the Café has added a menu that includes Cuban roast pork sandwiches. A new wooden dance floor attracts street traffic on weekends for "a free try it" dance lesson. They've also become home for area groups like "Songwriters in the Round" and "Spoken Word Poets."

The couple also rent out the space for baby showers and other events.

"We plan to offer family dances in the future," said Vaughn.

On Monday, December 21, from 8:30 - 9:30 p.m., Tango Café holds its first Winter Solstice Dance. Admission \$7.

For more information and a list of classes, visit [tangocafe-dance.com](http://tangocafe-dance.com). ♦

## Are you looking to grow your business? Are you looking to open a business?

If you answer yes to either of the above questions, the South Wedge Planning Committee can help you!

Together with the Small Business Development Center at the State University College at Geneseo, SWPC is pleased to help you with our customized business advising. Norm Karsten, a Certified Business Advisor, is in the SWPC office every other Tuesday.

If you have an existing business, he can review current performance with you and identify opportunities for improvement, or help you with expansion

plans.

If you are thinking about opening a business, Norm can help you understand what you need to do and help you determine if entrepreneurship is right for you. Norm can also provide you access and referrals to others who can help you.

Last year, more than 70 clients used the business advising service offered by SWPC and the Small Business Development Center at SUNY Geneseo. Why not join them?

Contact Eileen Thomas to set up your appointment at 585-256-1740 ext 103. ♦

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Ruben Fuentes and Kerri Vaughn (Photo courtesy of Tango Café)



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# New York State Main Street Transforms the South Wedge Area

By Eileen Thomas

The New York Main Street (NYMS) Program is a nationally recognized and award-winning State program that has provided grants to stimulate "main street" revitalization in more than 140 communities statewide since 2004. The South Wedge area has benefited from three \$200,000 NYMS grants during that five-year period.

The South Wedge Planning Committee (SWPC) was one of the first organizations in the State to receive NYMS funding. The initial \$200,000 was invested in ten buildings on South Ave. and Gregory St. and in streetscape work at South Ave. and Alexander St. More than \$660,000 in private funds was provided as a match by the owners of those ten buildings.

Two additional NYMS grants secured by SWPC focused on South Clinton Ave., coordinating with work done by the South East Area Coalition, SWPC and the Evolving South Clinton Avenue Places & Environments (ESCAPE) Committee. NYMS funds were matched by more than \$1.5 million invested by property owners for six significant commercial and mixed-use buildings along the Avenue. Streetscape funds purchased new benches and new planters that will line South Clinton Ave. after the construction of bump-outs and crosswalks is completed in 2010.

What do you see if you walk along the streets where Main Street money was invested? If you stand at the corner of South and Gregory you can see the impact of the program just by looking at the gooseneck lighting fixtures on Beale Street, or the clean bright retail spaces in the Abeles Building and the two vibrant businesses in them. This building sat vacant and shabby for many years. Main Street helped bring it back to life.

The old Princess Theatre at 700 South Ave was losing chunks of its façade – now it is fully repaired, cleaned and painted. Walking up South Ave you see another building at 672-674 South Ave where the transoms were uncovered, cleaned and repaired and the marble tile entryways were restored.

The building housing Historic Houseparts had extensive masonry work done, supported in part by Main Street. This might be unnoticeable to the casual passers-by, but work was crucial to the long-term stability of this important and unique building.

At South and Alexander, you can sit on benches purchased with NYMS funding and look across the street to John's Tex Mex and the Nathaniel Square Corner Store. The new look of the Corner Store, with

its wide-open storefront and awnings, also was supported by Main Street.

Heading down South Clinton, ABVI-Goodwill's new call center near Alexander and South Clinton, has arisen from the warehouse and run-down retail building on the site. Medical Motors significantly improved their facade at 608 South Clinton Ave, adding signage, lighting and permanent planters. Plus, they planted two new street trees in previously empty tree-pits.

Spring Sheet Metal did a full renovation of the interior of their building, retaining unique period details. They are now finishing up work on their facade, which will include new trim and signage.

When you stand at the corner of South Clinton and Gregory and look west, you can see the beautifully restored Weider Hall with its unique half-moon windows and new wooden doors. The lime green paint on 699 South Clinton disappeared, restoring the brick and Medina stone to their original beauty. New awnings and decorative metal handrails add to the attractiveness of the building.

As you walk further south on South Clinton, you come to the Cinema Theatre and its adjacent storefront. The formerly worn and sad retail space was closed up and dark. Now it is bright and alive, with exposed brick, a wood floor and large new windows. Pendant lights and built-in seating make this some of the nicest retail space on the avenue.

Additional interior and exterior renovations to the theater were also completed. The next time you go to the movies, look at the amazing 1940s-era floor-

ing in the concession area and at the expanded concession stand itself. These improvements are among the many that were done to keep the Cinema open and adapting to the changing times.

What's next for the New York Main Street Program? Recent changes make the program

more user-friendly for property owners who seek to improve their commercial and mixed-use properties along a "main street".

New York State encourages communities to revitalize their "main streets" for commercial and residential use. We hope

to continue our long-standing partnership with them and to continue seeing the benefits of this award-winning program in the South Wedge area. ♦



Weider Hall on Gregory St. after NYMS renovations. (photo by Eileen Thomas)



The Abeles building on South Ave. after NYMS renovations. (photo by Eileen Thomas)

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# Thank You Chris and Vicki Hartman!

By Robert Boyd

Neighborhood residents Chris and Vicki Hartman had a dream a number of years ago to have a Farmers Market in the South Wedge that would connect local growers with local consumers in a sustainable way. They are both very passionate and caring individuals who see healthy eating as critical to the future of our world. They brought together a number of growers and concerned residents and formed the South Wedge Farmers Market Advisory Board and proceeded to establish the South Wedge Farmers Market.

The dream has become a reality and for the past three

years, Chris and Vicki have spent countless hours volunteering to make the market not only a place for fresh fruits and vegetables but a place for the community to gather and grow.

Chris and Vicki have given so much to the market, and we as a community wish to express our heartfelt appreciation for a job well done these past few years!

The Hartmans also have a number of other healthy food-related ventures that they want to focus on in the future. We'll keep you posted.

The South Wedge Planning Committee, Inc. has provided administrative support for the past few years. Earlier in the year discussion began between

the Hartmans and SWPC about SWPC taking a more active role in the market. After much study by both parties, the SWPC Board voted on November 12, 2009 to make the market a SWPC program. SWPC will establish a new Board Committee to oversee the market, and it will include the Hartmans and those on the current advisory board. Chris Jones headed the SWPC committee that spent substantial time studying the proposal and identifying opportunities to make the South Wedge Market even better.

So congratulations to Chris and Vicki for such an amazing job over the past few years in helping to create an incredible neighborhood resource. ♦

## Healthy Neighborhood

*continued from page 1*

Approximately 250 students and teachers made the trek to see the traditional soil fields and hydroponic operation. This helped the children see where food comes from.

The final activity was the School #12 Night at the South Wedge Farmers Market. On October 8, 2009 over 40 families came to learn about healthy eating and enjoy healthy snacks (also prepared by the Work Experience program under Mike Weidsenreder's guidance). For many families this was their inaugural trip to the neighborhood market where they discovered they could obtain fresh fruits and vegetables right in

the South Wedge. The kids had now experienced local food from field to market to plate!

Very special thanks goes to Lori Bryce and all the other volunteers from School #12 PTA; Rachel Staver and the team at Foodlink and Freshwise Farms; Chris Hartman from the South Wedge Farmers Market; Mike Weisenreder and Rhonda Harris from the Edison High School's Work Experience Program; Michele Liguori-Alampi and the entire staff at School #12; and finally the Greater Rochester Health Foundation for providing the funding for this project. ♦

## JP Morgan Chase Community Giving Campaign on Facebook

JP Morgan Chase is providing contributions to community groups based on responses to their invitation on Facebook. Please vote and invite your friends to do the same. We could earn between \$25,000 to \$1,000,000!

On Facebook, go to:

<http://apps.facebook.com/chasecommunitygiving/>  
or find the link on our website at [swpc.org](http://swpc.org).

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# South Wedge Artist Unveils Main Street Mural

By Nancy O'Donnell

Artist Jill Gussow's Main Street mosaic mural was unveiled at a ribbon cutting ceremony on Friday, November 13. The work was part of a competition to bring public art to downtown Rochester. The sixty feet long and eight feet high mural covers the street level façade of the East End Garage with approximately 70,000 ceramic tiles. It was constructed in Gussow's South Wedge studio and then transported to the wall.

The mural, entitled *Life Patterns*, was commissioned by the Grove Place Association and funded by the City of Rochester Cultural Commission, Corn Hill Neighbors and anonymous donors.

The project took three years to complete. "Good art takes time," said Gussow.

Gussow's website explains her rationale for creating the piece that she did. "The project called for creating a relationship between the sculpture by Arch Miller, which is sited on the northeast corner of the garage, and the Eastman Theatre, which is next to the garage on the west. The architecture of the garage is unadorned, a sharp contrast to the more ornate Eastman Theatre. The designs in the mural create a bridge between the two buildings referencing some of the details of the theater and putting them in a more contemporary context."

The colorful mural installs a natural world on the garage's façade. Maple, oak, cypress and locust leaves are joined by a frog and bat and other creatures.

Gussow was joined at the ceremony by her sculptor father Roy Gussow and daughter Zora, who cut the ribbon on the project, and a crowd of well-wishers.

The artist described her own long creative journey.

"Years ago I worked in a photo lab, and everyday I'd take a bus past the Xerox Square where my father's installed sculpture was," said Gussow. "It was a beacon of hope that, yes, you can earn your living as an artist."

"More or less," joked her father.

Gussow's tile work also appears at Highland Hospital and the Wilson Center at the University of Rochester.

During the ceremony, Gussow thanked all those who helped her during the process: from art appraiser Roslyn Bakst Goldman of Grove Park Association to filmmaker and University of Brockport professor Virginia Bachelor, who chronicled the entire process, to the parking garage attendant who let Gussow use the garage's rest room.

A champagne reception followed at Max of Eastman Place on Gibbs Street. ♦



Jill Gussow and Life Patterns (Photo by Nancy O'Donnell)

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# A Life in the South Wedge: Mary Sloan Williams

As told to Nancy O'Donnell

Mary Sloan Williams, 86, lived on Rising Place, off Richards Street, for most of her childhood. Her parents, Mary Moore and Thomas Sloan, were children of immigrants from County Cork, Ireland. They married late in life and were surprised to become parents at 41 and 43 years of age.

My dad was in Rochester. My mother was in Lowell, MA. She came to Rochester looking for work. She boarded at a house on Beacon Street off University.

When I was growing up my uncles would say, 'Boy, were you a surprise.'

People would ask me if I minded being an only child and I'd say 'why miss something I never had?'

When we were little we'd ride our bikes up to Highland Park and look at the water in the big fountain.

There was a scarlet fever [outbreak] in 1929 or 1930. Whoever had it put a red sign on the door. I was sick. I would be taken to the window, so I could look out at my friends waving across the street. My best friend was Doris Peet.

Sometimes my family would take the streetcar to Charlotte Beach. We'd get on at Monroe Avenue.

My mother, Mrs. Peet, Doris' mother, Doris and I would take a train to a big boat that would go to Canada. It had a wonderful dining room with nice tablecloths and chairs. I would say 'Oh, I'd love

to eat in the dining room' and my mother would say, 'We can't afford it. You're lucky you're on the boat.' She'd pack a basket with peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, fruit and cookies instead.

I went to Blessed Sacrament School for eight years. My uncle Bill Sloan was Acting Battalion Chief at Engine House #15 on Monroe Avenue. He'd take me across the street to school.

Once when I was 12, I built a big bonfire in the backyard to make toast; we didn't have marshmallows. Someone called the police, and everyone ran. The cop chewed me out. My uncle appeared and said "I'll take care of this". He told me it was a wonder I didn't set the house on fire.

Then I went four years to Nazareth Academy. I went to dances at Immaculate Conception. I went to Edgerton Park and danced the jitterbug.

We'd go to the movies at the Palace and Loews and the Roxie. I'd come home at 11 or 12 o'clock at night and never be afraid to walk home from Monroe at Goodman.

[After graduation, Mary got a job at Bausch & Lomb] I hated that job! I inspected lens, and I got all kinds of slivers in my hands. After that, I went to Delco.

I've been a member of [The Ancient Order of the] Hibernians for 68 years. (The Ancient Order of Hibernians, Monroe County, NY Division 7, was organized in 1896. Its purpose was "to assemble Irish Catholic men of the

area in a spirit of Brotherhood and to foster a spirit of Friendship, Unity and Christian Charity."

My aunt Mary was the recording secretary for the Hibernians. We'd watch Irish dancers. We'd have big picnics where everyone would get drunk, and there'd always be a big fight.

I got married on Dec. 21, 1943. My husband went into the army. He was stationed in England, Germany and France. In three years, I saw him twice. [While he was



Mary Sloan Williams at her home in the South Wedge (Photo by Nancy O'Donnell)

overseas], I lived with my parents on South Goodman Street.

When Mr. Williams returned, the couple moved to Ohio so he could study to be a welder. She gave birth to her first son, Tom, in December 1946.

We moved to Averill Avenue on February 1, 1952. My parents

lived in the front of the house and we lived in the back. My second son Gary was born in March 1955 [Gary is now a music teacher in Milwaukee while Tom is a phys ed teacher in Odessa, NY.]

Down the street was a retired policeman. His wife's brother was one of the Wallenda [famous Circus performing family]. When he would come to visit his sister, he would string up a wire in the backyard and practice. It was quite a few feet above the ground.

When my mother died, the neighborhood took up a collection and brought food over.

One day Mary decided she wanted "to do something" so without telling her husband, she drove to Buffalo with her mother to take a Civil Service test for prison guards. She passed the test, but she couldn't get the job.

I was too short. My husband said I was nuts. I watch TV programs about American jails. It was a good thing I didn't get the job. I worked at Genesee Hospital for 26 years. I loved that job. If a doctor needed to be set straight, they'd send for me.

Over 100 people attended

her retirement party at the Spring House.

I got up to make a speech and I thanked everyone for coming. I said, 'I'm very touched. I know you're all tired. If it had been me, I wouldn't have gone if the Pope were coming.'

Mary still attends RPO performances and the yearly Hibernian Club dinner. Once a month she lunches with her Delta Epsilon sorority sisters whom she first met when she was 16 years old in Nazareth Academy.

Mary continues to have adventures.

I was in the airport waiting for the plane and I saw the co-pilot. I asked him, 'are you well rested? He said, 'yes.' We got shooting the bull and when I got on [the plane], he said, 'you're flying first class.'

My friend said 'would you stop talking to everyone.' I said 'what are you complaining about? We're in first class, and we got a bottle of wine.'

Look for Mary around St. Patrick's Day 2010. She's been invited to ride in the annual city parade. ♦



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