

## MUCCC Promotes the Arts on Atlantic Ave.

Nancy O'Donnell

Maybe it's his irreverent take on life that keeps Doug Rice out of the news. As a vital part in the revitalization of the Neighborhood of the Arts (NOTA), art patron and founder of MUCCC (Multi Use Community Cultural Center), Rice could be front and center in local news, except that he doesn't suffer fools gladly. He says things like, "I thought of calling MUCCC the Flexible-Use Community Cultural Center..." and he waits for that to sink in before he starts laughing.

Joined by John Borek, theater impresario, rapper and aide to City Council member Adam McFad-

den, Rice has created a venue for all the arts no matter how experimental (more about Borek later).

Rice grew up in the Highland Park Neighborhood, Brighton and Penfield. He was the first full-time employee at Record Archive on Mt. Hope Avenue, helping with concerts and integrating sound for bands. In 1984 Rice moved to NYC to study sound engineering at the Institute of Audio Research. He worked with NYC bands and bought an apartment building in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn when it was anything but fashionable. "I was very young, and I



MUCCC is as sedate as a Lutheran church on the outside and anything but on the inside. (Photo by Annette Dragon)

could run very fast," said Rice.

He fell in love, and with his partner Richard, travelled between NYC and Rochester and turned his love for creating beauty into buying up run-down houses in NOTA and "hanging out with people in the arts in both cities." In NYC he free-lanced for the Museum of Modern Art.

"I worked on AIDS Day there," said Rice. "It was a day when they covered 10% of the art with black cloths to represent artists lost to AIDS." It was also a time when Rice would be thrown out of the hospital because he wasn't a legal relative of his partner of 12 years who was hospitalized.

Back in Rochester, Rice concentrated on rehabbing property and in one case rehabbing a NOTA street as well.

"I wish I'd been an architect. I still had a NYC income, and it was a good time to be buying in the late 80s. When I started there

were no trees on my block. The ice storm took them down and the City never replaced them."

He started a petition and when the City cited the problem of overhead wires as the reason not to get trees replaced, he decided to do it himself. He went door to door and collected donations from neighbors, and they paid for installing underground wires. The street is tree-lined today.

Later when the City proposed to add two more traffic lanes to University Avenue, Rice was at the front of the fight against the proposed "speedway," and he won. Today there are flower strewn traffic bump-outs in the shop and restaurant district.

Next up on his community action agenda was "unlocking the art in jail at MAG and bring it out to the streets." In 2002 Rice organized with others to create ARTWalk, a day when performances by musicians and dancers and artists spilled

out onto University Avenue. Five years later the group secured \$2 million in funding, with the help of Congresswoman Louise Slaughter, to add even more art to the streets. Later the project became politicized said Rice. "We lost the battle with city engineers and when [the final plan] wasn't consistent with ARTWalk's mission I walked away." The fact that someone in the City thought the sculptures of astrological symbols for men and women in front of Bachelor's Forum was pornographic also helped to end his participation in ARTWalk planning.

Rice turned his attention to an old church built in 1887 on Atlantic Avenue.

"I was licking my wounds, and I was looking for a project," said Rice. "At first I thought I'd move into it as a house. I wanted a fun project, and it turned

*continued on pg. 11*



Three Heads Brewery new facility in the NOTA neighborhood thrills followers county wide (Photo courtesy of Three Heads Brewery)

## Three Heads Brewery Opens in May

Nancy O'Donnell

Cofounders owners Dan Nothnagle, Todd Dirrigi, Geoff Davis and Brian "Skip" Johnson are getting ready to open the doors to their 20,000-square foot brewery in the Neighborhood of the Art, and fervent followers are waiting for the taps to open on their favorite 3HB brews.

The beer makers and best friends started home brewing in their basements a decade ago. By 2011 they were providing recipes to CB Craft Brewers in Honeoye

Falls who produced and packaged their brews. Now five years later, when HB3 move into the newly built Atlantic Avenue space they will be the second largest brewery in Monroe County containing eight tanks with a 30 barrel system.

Four flagship beers available on draft and in six packs will include The Kind India Pale Ale and Too Kind Double India Pale Ale, the Rochestafaria, described by Dan Nothnagle as "a sweet and malty scotch ale," and a lager Freddy D, in honor of Frederick Douglas.

The brewery will also contain a tasting room and a large patio. Food will be provided by a variety of food trucks.

### WHAT'S INSIDE...

- Ape + Canary Blow Dry Bar, Loupe app, Louelle Designs, South Wedge Barbershop Celebrates 30th Anniversary
- Voula's on Monroe
- Remembering Tim O'Connell
- Comic Translates into Russian
- South Wedge Victory Garden!

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## South Wedge Farmers Market Gearing up for its 10th Season

Jesse Knoth, Market Manager

Can you believe the South Wedge Market is about to start its 10th season? That's ten years of bringing fresh local produce to our neighborhood. Ten years of seeing your friends and neighbors each week at the market. Ten years of introducing your children to new foods. Ten years of wonderful memories and many more to come. And we have some great things planned for this season.

The Market will be returning to Genesee Gateway Park (Mt. Hope Avenue and Alexander Street). As we adopt the park as the market home, we continue to make improvements. You may remember UR freshmen coming on Wilson Day and replanting the front flower bed with the help of SWPC volunteers. Look forward to a planting day in May to aid in our ongoing efforts to beautify the park. We also are working with the City on a fun project that whole family can help with, but we can't announce just yet (hint: it involves veggies and paint).

This spring I will be among the inaugural cohort to complete the Farmers Market Manager Professional Certification that SUNY

Cobleskill is offering in partnership with the NY Market Federation. You may remember reading about how SUNY and the Federation teamed up to create the first in the nation certification for market managers in our December/January issue. The certification covers the full range of topics for all different size markets need to know about, from social media, insurance, token programs, crisis management,



kids programs, and much more.

Opening day is June 9th and we're opened every Thursday 4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. through October 13th at Genesee Gateway Park!

Northfield Designer Goldsmiths, Good Food Collective CSA, Little Button Craft & Press, Peppa Pot, Black Button Distilling, 810 Meadworks, Swiftwater Brewing, Hedonist Artisan Chocolates, Embark

Craft Cider, The Beale, Liberty Tax Service, South Wedge Farmers Market, Normandy Corp., VTS, Ravines Wine Cellar, Fuego Coffee Roasters and many, many more!



**Introducing the New Wedge Card**

Join SWPC today and you get a Wedge Card to show your neighborhood pride and get discounts when you shop local! You can use the card at your favorite local business, and the list of participating businesses keeps growing!

Using the card is simple, and you can check the inside cover of *The Wedge* for up-to-date listings of local business participating and the discounts they offer.

In addition, Wedge Card

members receive the *Wedge Newspaper* delivered to their door. The Wedge Card also gives you voting rights at our Annual Meeting. To sign up, simply complete the SWPC card below, visit swpc at 224 Mt. Hope Avenue or contact Jesse Knoth, jknoth@swpc.com, 256-1740 x 104 with any questions. Are you a business owner interested in participating in the Wedge Card discount program? Let us know!

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650 South Avenue
- Stuart's Spices**  
10% off \$10 or more  
754 S. Clinton Avenue,
- Swiftwater Brewing Company**  
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- thread, 10% off**  
654 South Avenue
- Zak's Avenue, 10% off**  
661 South Avenue

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For over 30 years, *The Wedge Newspaper* has chronicled the lives and times of our vibrant South Wedge neighborhood and beyond.

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**Photography**  
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**The Wedge Newspaper**  
 585.256-1740, ext. 105 or 978.9638.  
 Fax 585.256.1497  
 E-mail staff, type first initial last  
 name@swpc.org

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

The *Wedge Newspaper*, a not-for-profit newspaper, is published by the South Wedge Planning Committee, a community development organization. Its mission is to provide accurate coverage of community news as well as local, state and national news that affect the area.

The *Wedge* is printed bimonthly (February, April, June, August, October and December) with a circulation of 5300. The newspaper is distributed to area businesses, retail shops and other drop off points in the Greater Rochester area.

Please send story suggestions or news to *Wedge Newspaper* Editor Nancy O'Donnell, 224 Mt. Hope Avenue, Rochester, New York 14620 or e-mail nodonnell@swpc.org. Advertising deadlines and rates are available online at www.swpc.org or call Nancy O'Donnell at 978-9638.

Articles in this paper do not necessarily reflect the view and/or opinions of the South Wedge Planning Committee.

South Wedge Planning Committee, 224 Mt. Hope Avenue, Rochester, New York 14620, (585) 256-1740  
 Before recycling the *Wedge*, please share with others.



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**The South East Area Coalition Needs You!**

We are looking for new Board members and want to know, are you interested? SEAC serves Rochester's southeast quadrant. Our main purpose is to participate in the City's Owner-Occupant Rehabilitation Program. Through this program, SEAC works with income-qualified home owners to address major repair needs. We find financial assistance to help pay for the repairs, and we act as project managers to ensure that the repairs are completed properly. We also sponsor and support programs and events such as City Love, Clean Sweep, Day of Caring and the Street Manager Programs on South Clinton and Monroe Avenues. We do all of this and much more with the goal of sustaining and improving the quality of our neighborhoods. Please join us in our efforts! If you would like to be considered for a Board position, please contact coconnor@hselaw.com.

**Join us in Community Building**

The South Wedge Planning Committee (SWPC) invites you to join with our dynamic non-profit organization in making a difference in southeast Rochester. Join our board of directors or serve on a committee. We have a variety of ways you can help.

Founded in 1978, SWPC acts as a conduit for federal or state repair grants that help keep people in their aging

homes. It aided in the development of the very vibrant South Avenue business corridor. SWPC works in myriad ways to build community through its South Wedge Farmers Market, Victory Gardens and *The Wedge Newspaper*.

Your time, talent and passion can help us in continuing SWPC's work. If interested, please call 256-1740 or e-mail jpage@swpc.org.



**The South Wedge Planning Committee, Inc. South East Area Coalition Calendar February/March 2016**

Meetings are held at 224 Mt. Hope Ave.

The community is invited to attend all meetings.

**SWPC Board Meeting**  
 nathaniel.mich@gmail  
 Tues. 4/19 & 5/17, 6 p.m.

**SEAC Board Meeting**  
 coconnor@hselaw.com  
 Thurs. 4/14 & 5/12, 6:30 pm

**Community Engagement (Neighbors & Block Clubs)**  
 jknoth@swpc.org  
 Wed. 4/20 & 5/18, 5:30 pm

**Housing & Structures Meets bimonthly**  
 Wed. 4/6 & 6/1, 5:30 pm  
 ethomas@swpc.org

**Finance Team**  
 tsciarabba@hotmail.com  
 Wed., 4/13 & 5/11, 12:30 p.m.

**SW Victory Garden**  
 felann@frontiernet.net  
 E-mail for dates and times.

Call 256-1740, ext. 105 or 978-9638 for rates.



## Swillburg Shout Outs

Mike Henry

Well, Happy Spring! No doubt many of you are planning your gardens and may have already been out weeding and raking. Here in Swillburg, our neighbor Marsden has been seen working on the Labyrinth Flower Garden across from Rooney's Restaurant. The Swillburg Neighborhood Association is preparing for Clean Sweep on April 30th. This is one of the more festive events (especially if the weather is good) of the season. Shoulder to shoulder, volunteers from the neighborhood as well as young folk from all over the city tidying things up. This year's Swillburg coordinator will be Sarah Guadisa. You can contact her on Nextdoor for more information. In addition, we have a couple of other community cleaning events: the United Way Day of Caring to be held on May 12th. Neighbor JoAnn O'Neal will be coordinating this and no doubt will welcome assistance. Finally, the other "mini-sweep" will include SUNY Brockport students doing a social action

project on April 2nd. Feel free to contact me for more information. Let's celebrate Spring and spruce up Swillburg!

While enjoying the mild winter we in the 'burg managed to make it a night at Zemeta's on South Clinton Avenue. I think 20 plus neighbors came out to enjoy the warm community spirit with lots of good laughs, food and interesting conversation. I'm always impressed with the experiences and talent neighbors have to offer! A few of us retired folks are enjoying lunches at neighborhood venues. In February four of us had a Friday luncheon at the India House, great buffet and always a warm atmosphere. Coming up, on April 1st we're planning a luncheon at Taste of Asia. On top of these events the Swillburg Steering Committee met at Georgie's on South Clinton and began plans for our Spring / Summer newsletter. On top of these things many of us will be getting together on Tuesday evenings to undertake yet more gardening on a weekly basis. All these beautiful flowers add so much charm to the city's communities. Did I mention that Swillburg will soon have its own bumper sticker?

Well, as you can see, Swillburg continues to progress, our houses may be small but the cooperative spirit is mansion-size. Together we continue to make life here caring and beautiful.

## Meet SWPC Board member Mark Greisberger

Nancy O'Donnell

Mark Greisberger was following in his father's footsteps when he agreed to serve on the South Wedge Planning Committee.

"I wanted the opportunity to give back," said Greisberger. "It was something my father did throughout his life. He'd say 'as long as you have the time you should give your time' to help others."

Greisberger grew up in a Rochester neighborhood off Winton Road and attended McQuaid Jesuit High School. He went on to study accounting at John Carroll University in Cleveland, OH, earning both an undergraduate degree and an MBA there.

"My dad is an attorney, my mother a nurse, and I'm a numbers guy," said Greisberger. "That's how my mind works."

He returned to his hometown after graduation and in 2010 first took a job as staff accountant at the University of Rochester's School of Medicine and Dentistry and is now Financial Analyst in the School of Medicine there.

In 2011 he was invited to sit in on a few SWPC board meetings by former chair Monica McCullough, and he liked what he saw.

"I wanted to be involved in the community," said Greisberger. "I was living at the time in the former school on Averill Avenue and Bond Street. I was able to leverage what I'm comfortable with [numbers] and volunteer."

"I didn't really know what SWPC did when I joined, but then I saw how it was involved intimately with this community and business, and it's much more involved with helping people who live beyond the



Nicole Inzana and Mark Greisberger plan to marry in May.

South Wedge," Greisberger said.

He joined the board as SWPC began evolving its operations in response to cuts in grants and a South Wedge neighborhood with fewer houses in need of major rehabilitation.

"We've definitely been having a hard time [financially]," said Greisberger. "SWPC in 2016 isn't where it was 10-20 years ago. The health of the South Wedge today is directly connected to SWPC's work. The fact that it's the hottest neighborhood for young adults has much to do with what SWPC did."

Moving forward, Greisberger points to Executive Director John Page and Assistant Director Eilleen Thomas for keeping the organization viable.

"We have John and Eilleen to thank for their work in finding projects around Rochester. SWPC is now impacting neighborhoods city wide."

Along with being SWPC co-treasurer with long-time member Tony Sciarabba, Greisberger has added treasury duties for the SEAC (Southeast Area Coalition) recently.

"SEAC is more comprehensive and takes in the whole southeast," said Greisberger. "Both have to work in tandem. They're separate organizations but both will thrive when they're working together."

He points to their collaboration in organizing the City Love fundraiser on April 1st. Funds from that event will promote projects and programs for not only SWPC and SEAC but also NCS Community Development.

"Both SWPC and SEAC are all about the community, finding out what the community wants, what businesses want. I just want to support John's vision of where [SWPC] is going. Our partnership with Rochester Housing Authority, being adaptable, the next few years will be very interesting in the ways SWPC will continue its mission to support affordable housing."

Even though SWPC will tackle projects beyond the South Wedge, Greisberger emphasizes that "it continues to work on behalf of the neighborhood, representing the South Wedge will never go away."

Greisberger's volunteering might have to be suspended a bit in coming months. He and fiancée Nicole Inzana are getting married in May and taking a honeymoon in the Greek Isles.

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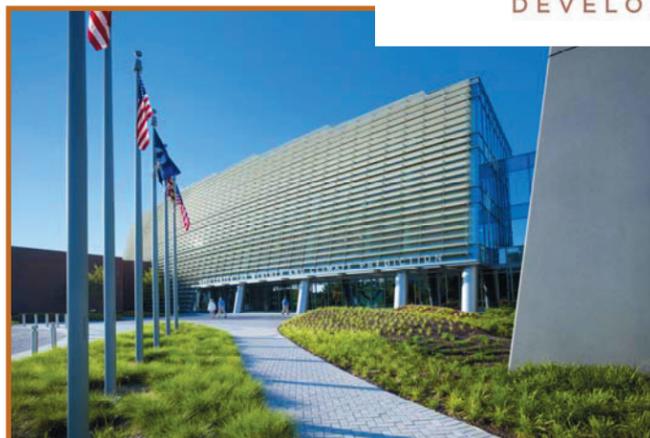


## Lilac Festival 2016

The 118th anniversary of the Lilac Festival is scheduled May 6-15, 10:30 a.m. - 8:30 p.m. Musical guests scheduled at the time of publication include: *Gaelic Storm*, *Ellen Jewel*, *Lost Straight Jackets*, *Matisyuhu*, *NRBQ*, *Rusted Root*, *The SheepDogs*.

Enjoy the beautiful gardens exhibits, musical concerts, children's rides and more. A Home Garden Show will be held Saturday, May 7 and Sunday, May 8, 10:30 a.m. - 6 p.m. in the Lilac Special Events Tent. Celebrity Guest - Stars of TV's *Tanked* - Wayde King & Brett Raymer—will appear both days. \$8 per person. Children and under free. You can buy your tickets online.

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## Abundance FLOWER Program Makes Good Food Accessible

Christopher Whitbell

Early this year, Constantino's Market announced that it would close after just ten months of operation as part of the recent College Town development in the Mount Hope Avenue and University of Rochester area. Following the unexpected closing, a question was raised: What real role can a grocery store play in connecting Rochester's low-income communities with healthy but affordable food options?

It's a question that has shaped and continues to shape Abundance Food Co-op.

The people who started what would evolve into Abundance back in 1969 asked this question, the people who opened our doors at 62 Marshall Street in 2001 asked it, and I, my co-workers, and the co-op's owners ask it today. As a food co-op, we're supposed to ask this question. It's part of the co-op mission that's outlined in "The Seven Cooperative Principles": the seventh principle is "Concern for Community."

But, despite all of this asking, we still don't have the answer.

That's OK, though. Some questions are good to keep unanswered, or, to put it another way, sometimes

it's worthwhile to keep asking a question even when you think it's been answered. There's something very powerful about an unanswered question—it creates a space for open conversation and maybe even for imagining new solutions.

A gap exists (and seems to be growing) between who can afford the healthy, organic, or local food available in our region and who can't. We believe that, as a food co-op, Abundance can help make wholesome food more accessible to people who are on limited or fixed incomes.

By working alongside small businesses, co-ops, CSAs, and other community organizations, we can take steps together towards finding a solution.

Last year we launched the FLOWER Program. FLOWER stands for Fresh, Local, Organic & Within Everyone's Reach. It's an everyday discount program that lowers the cost of most of the food and eco-friendly products in our store for people with limited or fixed incomes.

Shoppers who currently receive financial assistance from SNAP (Food Stamps), TANF Cash As-

sistance, WIC, Free School Lunch Program, and Medicaid are eligible to apply to FLOWER. Once accepted onto the discount program, FLOWER participants will receive an everyday discount of 10% off of all regularly priced items. FLOWER participation runs on an annual basis and participants are welcome to reapply if they are still receiving the financial support outlined above.

Abundance is a consumer co-operative and that means owner-shoppers can take part in a democratic form of business. If a FLOWER participant is not already a shareholder, they receive a scholarship share. The share is awarded on an annual basis and allows FLOWER participants to explore the many benefits of co-op ownership.

FLOWER was originally developed by GreenStar Natural Foods Market, a food co-op in Ithaca, New York. We are grateful to them and for another cooperative principle: "Cooperation Among Cooperatives."

If you or someone you know is interested in learning more about FLOWER or applying, applications and brochures are available at our Customer Service Desk, which include details of what documentation is required to show eligibility for the program. An FAQ about FLOWER can be found on our website (<http://abundance.coop>). The FLOWER discount can be used by individual participants and any dependents they may have under the age of 18 years old.

FLOWER is one way we're working to make healthy, wholesome food more affordable and accessible ahead of our move to the South Wedge later this year. We also offer three sales programs, Co+op Deals, Co+op Basics, and Abundance Sails, that all offer reasonable prices on delicious, nutritious food every day.

To see where we are in our move, you can visit <http://move.abundance.coop> for updates.



## Ape + Canary Brings "Blow Dry Bar" Rage to the Roc

Rebecca Fitzgerald

It's all the rage in major cities, so why not try it in Rochester? That's what Benn Lobol and his team are attempting at Ape & Canary, a premier hair salon at the corner of University and Elton.

A blow dry bar. A quick shampoo, a blow-dry, and some styling for \$35.

Want to go with "the Ironworks," a straight iron or curling iron? Add \$10. It's perfect for a weekend getaway, night out, wedding, or even a girls' day in-

stead of the typical mani-pedi. The hairstyle can last one day or even up to five days depending on the hair type and texture.

When Lobol opened the hair salon in August, he brought more than his decade's worth of experience; he brought his passion for this luxury and a mission to share it with his culturally-diverse hometown.

"We're OK with spending money on a good service," Lobol said, while adding that Ape & Canary follows a mantra as an apothecary of style: "Modern, Androgynous, Non-pretentious, Timeless, Respect, and Attention" to detail.

Ape & Canary also offers more traditional hair services, such as color and cuts, but the focus is on the blow dry bar. In fact, on Friday and Saturday evenings, you can only select the blow dry bar. For regular colors and cuts, those are for the weekdays and daytime.

Ape & Canary is located at 840 University Avenue. It is open Tuesdays through Saturdays from 11 AM-8 PM. Friday and Saturday evenings are for the blow dry bar only. To book an appointment, call 490-9401. For more information, visit <http://www.apeandcanary.com> or find Ape & Canary on Facebook.

## Business Buzz

### Loupe App Offers Discounts on Local Restaurants

Loupe, a free dining app, delivers bargains to local, national and Canadian restaurants. Peter Tagliente introduced the concept to the South Wedge under the name of "City Dining" in December. With a change of name, Loupe also added Android access along with iPhone. "It's basically a social network for restaurants. We have about 60 restaurants in Rochester and others in Syracuse, Buffalo, Baltimore, New Orleans, Pittsburg, and Hamilton and Toronto, Canada, and we're adding them every day. We trying to create an unbiased list of the best local restaurants," said Tagliente. In the South Wedge,

Tap & Mallet, Peppapot, Open Face Sandwiches, Harry G's NY Deli, LaCasa, Napa Wood Fired Pizza and The Cub Room have signed on. In Swillburg, The Angry Goat Pub, Highland Park Diner, India House, Rooney's and Shiki have joined loupe. Discounts range from \$5 off on a \$20 tab to \$10 on \$40.

Restaurants especially appreciate a "Yelp-like" feature that allows customers to comment or critique a meal and the comments go to the restaurants instead of the public in general.

To start eating, download the app via the Google PlayStore.

### South Wedge Business to Close

Joel Cera, owner of South Wedge Spirits & Wine, received an architecture job offer he "couldn't refuse" and will be closing shop on May 31.

"I can't do both [jobs]," said Cera who moved into the newly built Konar Development at 661 South Avenue in 2011. "I feel very lucky we had five productive years in the Wedge. I wouldn't trade it for anything. I feel grateful that I had it as long as I did. I thank everyone in the Wedge who supported me."

Whatever stock is not depleted by the closing, Cera said he'll take home to stock his own wine cellar.

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## Louelle Design Studio Opens in South Wedge

Nancy O'Donnell

A gorgeous space on South Avenue once fragrant with the Little Bleu Cheese shop is now home to a "big beauty" of a Chandler & Price printer, digitally printed and hand dyed scarves, custom stationery, gift tags, cards and calendar all from the creative designs of sisters-in-law Andrea and Ashley Durfee. Their themes are floral, or feathery and alive with greenery.

"What sets us apart is that we're coming from a fine arts perspective," said Andrea. "I get some of the designs from my sketchbook."

The two like-minded women, related by marriage, opened Louelle Designs in February of this year after "dancing around" part-time for years making wedding invitations and stationery for family and friends.

Andrea earned an undergraduate degree in Studio Art at Nazareth and went to complete an M.A. in Creative Art Therapy. She worked



*Beautiful feathers by Andrea Durfee* with teenagers at Hillside and with youth in autism spectrum while at the same time using her studio art in printmaking. Andrea was a licensed CPA at Constellation Brands. In her free time she designed wedding invitations. When the two collaborated to create Andrea's own "wedding suite," the invitation, day-of papers, napkins, guest towels--they discovered that they could work together smoothly on projects they both felt passionately about. They decided on a name--a combination of their own middle names--and opened their business.

"We were looking for a storefront and when the space opened,

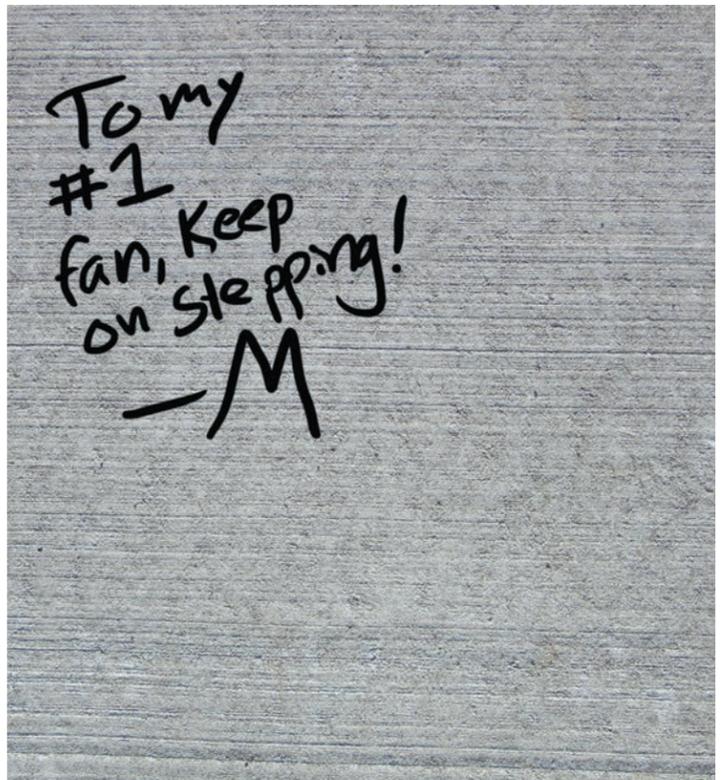
and it's gorgeous, we jumped on it. We loved the creative, independent vibe of the street," said Andrea. "We started with a Kelsey 5x7 hand press," said Andrea. "By trial and error we taught ourselves. Then we discovered we needed a bigger machine. It was big investment. We tried to operate as lean as possible until the job warranted something larger."

Now on South Avenue, Andrea gets to walk to work from her home on Linden Street while Ashley, now a mother of twins, commutes from Fairport. Ashley creates the layout text while Andrea illustrates and adds watercolors or other mediums.

Along with weddings, Louelle works with local business who need gift packaging customized for the business. Up next is an appearance at the Buffalo and Rochester Indie Wedding expo and a Mother's Day event the day before on May 7th, 11 - 5 p.m. "We'll bring in local friends and creators for a little pop up shop where they can sell their wares. We're really excited to be in collaboration with our neighbors."

684 South Ave., (585) 445-8922.  
Hours: Sunday- Tuesday: Closed, Wednesday - Friday: Noon - 6 p.m. and Saturday: 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.

## The North Wedge by Justin Hubbell



YOU'RE NOT FROM THE NORTH WEDGE UNLESS YOU HAVE A SIGNED PHOTO OF YOUR FAVORITE SIDEWALK



Jennifer and Gina Belardino make a mother and daughter workplace fun (Photo by Nancy O'Donnell)

## South Wedge Business Pioneers Share the Joy

Nancy O'Donnell

Long before the South Avenue business corridor was hopping with shops and shoppers, Gina Belardino opened up the South Wedge Barbershop in a small storefront on the avenue. Houses and business storefronts were boarded, and homeless men chatted with Gina outside her shop. A couple years later her hair stylist daughter Jennifer joined her, and later they moved into a big house at 720 South Avenue and built a business.

On April 1, the hairdo duo will celebrate their 30-year anniversary with old and new friends, cocktails and snacks. Friends now travel from Naples, NY and Colorado to show their love. "Earth" and "Jose," the shop's resident turtles for 25 years will also be in attendance.

"I'm just happy I'm in the Wedge," said Gina, remembering the early years. "Most of the homeless never bothered me. They'd even check up on me when I was working."



Gerik Rynski gets a South Wedge cut from Jennifer Belardino (Photo by Nancy O'Donnell)

## Celebrate Gina's 30th year of barbering in the South Wedge on April 1

"One of my first customers, Steve, started giving me frogs. I don't know where he got the idea that I like them. I finally said to him, 'Stop giving me frogs,'" Gina added.

Joel Cera, owner of South Wedge Spirits & Wine, noted how generous the Belardinos are in offering refreshments while you get a haircut.

"There's no asking. They just hand [a beer] to you. There's no saying no," laughed Cera. 720 South Ave, Rochester, 473-5570. Hours: Tues.-Fri. 12 p.m. - 6ish p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. - 3ish p.m.

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## Talking with My Mouth Full - Voula's Greek Sweets

Nathaniel Mich

No matter the time of year, stepping into Voula's Greek Sweets feels like stepping into springtime. It's always bright and light there, and the mismatched, well, everything, is cheerful without being kitschy. The service is friendly and familiar, and Voula herself is usually there to wave to you from the kitchen. There just aren't a lot of restaurants that make you feel like you're on a picnic, even if it's 45 degrees outside, and Voula's does that – without you necessarily even noticing – is a real gift.

Voula's Greek Sweets offers traditional Greek food, made from Voula's family recipes. Everything is vegetarian, and most of the items are vegan or vegan adaptable. As the name suggests, pastries and confections play a starring role, presented in abundance in a display case that greets incoming diners. With the exception of dinner on Thursdays, Voula's is only open mid-morning to late afternoon, so I met two friends there for a Sunday brunch a few weeks ago. I came hungry and left the least hungry I have been in quite some time.

Voula's offers a traditional



Skordalia, melitzanosalata, tzatzik (Photo by Nathaniel Mich)

Greek coffee – dark, intense and spiced, and packed into a delicate demitasse – but I wanted something lighter, so I opted for the frappe. Served in a mason jar, the frappe is iced coffee blended with almond milk and rosewater syrup, under a generous bed of thick foam. The coffee flavor was mild, but the texture rich, and the nuttiness of the almond milk was clear and balancing. While the sweetness of the rosewater syrup was apparent, the rose itself eluded me, but only just.

We started with a trio of spreads, which arrived arranged on a platter with cucumber, tomato and Kalamata olives, and a basket of pillowy, but satisfyingly chewy pita.

Each of these homemade spreads was bursting with flavor and while they all shared common ingredients, had a character of its own. The tzatziki is thicker and richer than what most Greek joints offer, made with strained (i.e., Greek) yogurt, diced cucumbers, garlic and dill. One of my companions enjoyed that it seemed to be less sweet than other versions. Melitzanosalata brought the tang of eggplant, red pepper, garlic and onion, pureed together with a generous hand on the olive oil; it contrasted nicely with its creamier neighbors. Finally, the skordalia – a coarse puree of potatoes, garlic and blanched almonds.

On paper it's an unusual-sounding combo, but in person I could eat it for a week. We agreed that it would be especially good as the mortar for a roasted turkey sandwich. The only problem with Voula's spreads is when you have to share them – there's always a bit of spoon-fencing at the end for the last morsels.

I had the monemvassia plate for my entrée: a cheese-filled phyllo pastry topped with a fried egg, all settled in a pool of lentil stew. Overall, it is a tremendous dish. The pastry balances chewy and flaky, with a deliciously seasoned filling, though it loses its shatter and crack quickly while sitting in the lentils. The lentils themselves were hearty but not heavy, redolent with onions and garlic, and largely kept their shape in a rich broth/sauce. (Here it's worth commenting that I am deeply appreciative of Voula's generous approach to garlic across the menu.) The egg is a nice touch, though I wish I'd had the forethought to request a runny yolk. The plate is garnished with several tomato wedges, which being what tomatoes are in Rochester in March, didn't add much to the flavor of the dish, but added

good color to the presentation. Fair warning: this is a lot of food! I only made it about halfway through the lentils before I had to make a strategic withdrawal in order to manage dessert. (The next day, I found my leftovers thoughtfully garnished with a sprig of fresh dill.)

What else would I have for dessert here but baklava? And, dear reader, if nothing else that I have written here has inspired you to hightail it to Voula's, let it be this: Voula's makes the best baklava in Rochester. It is a fearless baklava: it is not afraid of syrup, not afraid of nuts, not afraid of cinnamon. And when I say it is the "best" baklava, I mean that it is the least restrained, messiest, fastest disappearing and most joyful baklava I've ever had the pleasure of putting in my mouth. Man oh man, did I not save enough room for that baklava, and man oh man, do I regret nothing. Voula's Greek Sweets, 439 Monroe Ave, Rochester, NY 14607, (585) 242-0935. Open seven days a week: 10-4 and 10-8 on Thursdays <https://www.facebook.com/voulas-greeksweets>

## Wedge Cartoonist Goes International

The South Wedge already knew comic Justin Hubbell was the real deal. Now Hubbell's getting international attention after acquiring a spot as contributing comic artist at Everyday Feminism magazine.

"I had been wanting to make comics for Everyday Feminism since its inception, but for whatever reason it seemed like they weren't interested in my work," said Hubbell. "In hindsight it probably had more to do with the fact that I was an unknown cartoonist with no references or following at the time. Any big public publication like that typically gets hundreds of emails from aspiring writers and artists. It wasn't until I unintentionally made friends with one of their editing staff that, to my astonishment, they were indeed familiar with the recent success of 'It's Not a Race' and 'Let's Be Clear' [both are avail-

able online] and asked to interview me. I'm embarrassed to admit that the thought of actually working for them was so far removed from what I thought was possible that I assumed interview meant a question and answer session for some kind of article," said Hubbell.

Everyday Feminism had other plans. Since joining the magazine Hubbell's readership has increased dramatically.

"I've had requests to publish my work in Portuguese and Russian which is thrilling for me, but also because in both countries queer communities (particularly queer youth) simply do not have the same protections and liberties we do here, which is saying a lot considering how far America has to go before queer folk feel safe, included and celebrated in our society."

To see more of Hubbell's work visit [justinhubbell.com](http://justinhubbell.com).



Equal=Grounds in 2006

## Equal=Grounds Celebrates 10th Anniversary

Nancy O'Donnell

John White and Harry Bronson invite the community to stop by on May 5 as they celebrate the 10th anniversary of Equal=Grounds Coffee Shop with song, dance, daily specials and cake.

"I thought [opening a coffee shop] would be the greatest adventure I've ever been on," said White. "The highlight is meeting all the people."

Over the years his adventures have included waving down then

Senator Hillary Clinton's motorcade as it visited local businesses.

"I heard that Clinton was making a tour of Rochester small business districts. I knew she was close when traffic stopped on South and a caravan of black SUVs started going by," said White. "I and my father acted like fools. My father, [Jim White], held a big sign that read 'Senator I'd like to buy

*continued on pg. 8*

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Clients, families and friends join in walking to support NAMI Walks

## NAMI Walks Raises Needed Funds for Those living with Mental Illnesses

Kristina Mossgraber

Now in its fourth year, the NAMI Walks Rochester is the largest fundraiser for the local chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness. Through the overwhelming generosity of our community, nearly \$350,000 has been raised over the past three years to directly support NAMI Rochester's efforts, including programs for those living with mental illness and their families, support groups, and presentations in schools and the community at large.

NAMI Walks is a family- and dog-friendly event, held at Village Gate Square, and travels 1.5 miles around the Neighborhood of the Arts before returning to the starting point for a post-walk celebration. The after-walk party includes balloon art by Airigami, music, entertainment, food, community vendors, a kid's area and raffles. There'll be something for everyone to enjoy for this very worthy cause.

NAMI Rochester, renowned as one of the most active and robust chapters in New York State, has hundreds of affiliates around the country. Support groups both for peers and family members are

offered in Monroe, Wayne, Ontario and Genesee counties. Additionally, signature programs such as Peer to Peer, a 10-week course for individuals living in recovery, and Family to Family, a 12-week course for family members, are offered at the Rochester location at no charge to participants.

Out in the community, individuals from NAMI Rochester present In Our Own Voice, an opportunity for any group or organization to hear first-hand accounts of experiences in the mental health system and life in recovery from persons living with a mental illness. In schools, NAMI's program, Ending the Silence, is offered to middle and high schools to start the conversation about mental health and suicide prevention in the setting of a health class. Parents and Teachers as Allies allows teachers, administrators and support staff to hear from a teacher, parent and an individual living with a mental illness who became ill in high school, which provides an education tool for working with their own students.

The need and demand for these programs is growing expo-

entially, with the funding for them being reduced. In order to continue offering these programs to the community at no charge, support for the NAMI Walks is needed more than ever to ensure the successful continuation of these offerings.

The success stories of families that have been touched by NAMI Rochester are large in number, as reflected in the words of one parent, "The education we received at NAMI Rochester saved our lives and our son's life because we have not given up on him." One individual living with a mental illness recently shared, "NAMI has been the main force in my getting to the place I am now in life. I am not only grateful for NAMI, but I simply do not know where my family or I would be today without them." These inspiring stories and countless others have been heard since NAMI Rochester was founded in 1982 by a group of "NAMI mommies" seeking help for their family members. The theme of "by families for families" still rings true almost 35 years later as the facilitators, instructors, and volunteers are all either someone living with a mental illness, or a family member.

You can help support the efforts of NAMI Rochester by joining the NAMI Walks movement. This year's event is May 7, 2016 with registration starting at 8:30 am and the walk at 10:30. Forming a team is easy with the new online system found at [www.namiwalks.org/rochester](http://www.namiwalks.org/rochester), and registration is free. Sponsorships are still available beginning at \$250. To learn more about the NAMI Walks Rochester, contact Walk Manager Kristina Mossgraber at 585.520.8380 or [kristina.mossgraber@namirochester.org](mailto:kristina.mossgraber@namirochester.org). For additional information on the programs mentioned in this article, or other NAMI Rochester offerings please visit [www.namiroc.org](http://www.namiroc.org) or call 585.423.1593.



## Library Renamed for Local Hero

The former Highland Branch Library at 971 South Avenue was renamed the Frederick B. Douglass Community Library on March 21.

The library was built on the former site of Douglass's family home which destroyed by an arsonist while he was in Washington, D.C. The famous abolitionist used his house as a stop on the Underground Railroad.

Other notables of the time who visited the statesman, publisher of the Evening Star and speaker included Harriet Tubman and John Brown.

First named the South Avenue Branch Library in 1927, next to

## South Wedge Victory Garden Update

Felton Culbreath

With spring approaching, it's time for gardeners to start thinking about cleaning up their gardens. Whether or not you're joining us at the South Wedge Victory Garden, all gardeners can benefit from early planning. Getting things ready will help put you on the right path. Planning is the key to success. Gardeners should set out a vision for the growing season. What do you want to plant and where? Do you want flowers, herbs or veggies? Will you harvest at one time or throughout the season?

It's important to prep the soil by pulling up those winter weeds, turning over the soil and adding a safe soil nutrient of your choice (for example, compost). Spring crops can go in the ground in April after the frost is done. Good starter crops



are spinach, swiss chard, lettuce, onions and peas. Now is a good time to start seeds indoors for tomatoes.

The Monroe Coop Extension has a great seed starting/planting guide for our area. It gives specifics on planting that can help the novice and experienced gardener. The Extension offers a wealth of information and services, from soil testing to a helpline staffed by Master Gardeners. Contact them at [monroe.cce.cornell.edu](http://monroe.cce.cornell.edu), 2449 St. Paul Blvd., 585-753-2550. For more information about the South Wedge Victory Garden, email: [felann@frontiernet.net](mailto:felann@frontiernet.net).

## Peacework CSA Invites New Members

Elizabeth Henderson

Even though we haven't had a proper winter yet, the moment has arrived to sign up for a spring-summer-fall's worth of fresh, local organic vegetables!

Peacework Organic CSA, a 27-year-old partnership of consumers and farmers, provides member shareholders with fresh, high quality, certified organically grown vegetables throughout the 26-week growing season and for storage through the winter. The member shareholders provide the farmers with a source of steady support from the community with a reliable income and some of the tasks associated harvesting and distributing the food during the growing season.

Exciting news this April is the addition of a team of draft horses. The horses helps us to work the land and decrease our dependence on fossil fuels. The horses are joined by two younger farmers, Eli Rubin and Jonathan Henrichs, and longtime Peacework farmers Ammie Chickering and Greg Palmer.

Every week for the 26-week season, the farm provides members with an exciting diversity of freshly picked vegetables less early in the season and more as the season peaks. Additional quantities can be purchased separately for those interested in canning, freezing, and other storage. Special orders take place during the season to purchase fruits or other items produced by other small local farms.

Pickup takes place at Abundance Natural Foods Coop on Marshall Street in Rochester on Thursday or Sunday evening. Abundance market will be moving to the Wedge at 571 South Avenue in the very near future and our Rochester distribu-



tion site will be moving with it.

Joining Peacework provides the opportunity to take part in the farmwork! Since it is a co-op, everyone contributes something; a few members are part of the "Core" group, taking care of the nonfarm administrative jobs. Others help harvest at the farm at least once a season, and take turns serving at distribution at Abundance.

During the winter of 1989, when this CSA started, hardly an one in the Rochester area, or anywhere else in the country for that matter, had heard of a CSA. Yet a small group of brave souls signed up for this experiment in local eating. They could see that

Supporting an organic farm nearby made ecological and economic sense. Today, there are over 30 CSAs in and around Rochester and over 400 in NYS! There are also local food services that provide weekly packets, farmers markets with organic produce, and supermarkets are carrying more and more organic foods. So getting organic food has become way easier. But making the commitment to a CSA is as important as ever. We invite anyone interested to visit the farm on May day for our annual celebration. Check out our website for details.

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National Alliance on Mental Illness

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Come join us as we raise awareness and much needed funds for mental health!

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To Donate Or Register Please Visit: [www.namiwalks.org/rochester](http://www.namiwalks.org/rochester)  
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## Life Together - Everyday Politics

Rev. Matthew Martin Nickoloff

The increasingly likely choices of candidates in this year's presidential election are enough to make me long for the good old days when I could use the excuse, "don't blame me, I'm voting for Nader!"

The original Bernie Sanders, perennial Green Party presidential candidate and consumer activist Ralph Nader never stood a legitimate chance. Yet, it was his commitment to and his challenge to embrace grassroots political action that always inspired me. "There can be no daily democracy without daily citizenship," he once wrote. Regardless of the outcomes of his or any elections, I think Nader provides invaluable leadership in this regard.

The best defense against fascism and folly are strong local person-centered communities built on a deep respect and commitment to our neighbors. No matter how many times we "feel the burn" or stump to "make American great again," no candidate is capable of doing the hard work of politics in the place where we're rooted. Nor should we ask or expect them to. That power is ours. So is the responsibility.

That's what I really struggle with during national election season. It feels like such a distraction from the real work of politics, which is, in its most primal sense, is the work of being neighbors. Especially in a state like New York, we have very little ultimate impact on these contests. Yet, distracted by the social media clown show spectacle that passes for national debate in this country, we too quickly seem to forget the arenas where we do have power - our city, our schools, our neighborhoods, our blocks.

Which makes sense. Growing up with white privilege, I was often encouraged to aspire to the office of the presidency so I could "make a real difference." Very rarely was



Rev. Matthew Martin Nickoloff

the position of, say, neighborhood association secretary, or PTA attendee or block club organizer, held in as high esteem. We Americans love the big ideas, the grand visions, the impossible dreams. Even when we know they are lies told by self-interested career politicians, we are hard-wired spiritually and politically to believe in the promise of something more.

And yet, I wonder if in our passion for the big things, we're actually disempowering ourselves to do big things in the places we're rooted. As I watch grassroots support swell on both sides of the political spectrum, I often wonder: what would it look like to channel that energy into projects closer to home? What if some of those thirsting for change left their respective rallies, went door-to-door on their block, and said, "Let's start a block club! Let's discover who we are together, what we deeply care about, what we can agree on and where we disagree, and then, let's start building that country we long to see, together, relationship by relationship, block by block, neighborhood by neighborhood?"

If such a notion inspires discomfort, it's not only because making strangers into neighbors can be intimidating. It's also because it's hard. Being truly political - which means, in the end, simply living deeply the public dimension of our life together - is hard work. And it's not work we can ask public officials to do for us. It's the work we're electing them to support.

In my work as a neighborhood pastor, which often doubles as community organizing, I hear again and again the longing expressed for beautiful things like "social justice," "better schools," and "stronger community." What I wish people would accept is that these things are ours for the making. We just have to believe that, in fact, it's not the politicians' job. It's not a grand vision or an inspiring spectacle. It's the hard work of politics practiced in the every day.

Another quote of Nader's that continues to inspire me reads thus: "when strangers start acting like neighbors, communities are reinvigorated." I wonder if so many of us turn our hopes from the strangers next door to the strangers running for office because, caught up in the hope of something bigger, we forget how beautiful, how political, and how powerful we can become when we simply live as if our communities really do matter.

If we as a neighborhood decided that refugees and the homeless were truly welcome here, and made commitments together to create structures of hospitality and practices of generosity, and if we began to practice them instead of waiting for the government to give us permission, then regardless of who is elected president, justice would be happening here. And should the government change its mind, we can resolve that we will not, no matter the cost.



rp00689.jpg Rochester Public Library Local History Division

Pedestrian bridge at Genesee Valley Park, circa 1920

## Birthday Bash on the Bridges

JoAnn Beck

Join us as we celebrate the birthday of Frederick Law Olmsted on Sunday, April 24th from 2-4 o'clock in the afternoon at the Roundhouse Shelter in Genesee Valley Park. There will be refreshments, music, an exhibition of historic park photos and guided walks. It's free and open to all. Come meet your friends and enjoy an old fashioned Sunday afternoon in the Park. Genesee Valley Park is one of the three parks in the original Olmsted-designed Rochester Park System and remains a major urban park. The event will feature three bow bridges, designed by the Olmsted Brothers to reconnect park

areas severed by the construction of the Erie Canal. Now in need of preservation, the bridges were listed on both the Landmark Society's Five to Revive and the Preservation League's Seven to Save last year.

The event is sponsored by: Landmark Society of Western New York and its Olmsted Parks Subcommittee, Friends and Neighbors of Seneca Park, New York Upstate Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects and Highland Park Conservancy. JoAnn Beck is Chair of the Olmsted Parks Subcommittee at the Landmark Society of Western New York.

## Equal=Grounds

continued from pg. 6

you a cup of coffee." How many bodyguards had their scopes on me, thinking I was crazy?"

"When I saw them slow down I ran in and screamed at Randy, 'She's stopping! Make some coffee!'"

After her security team checked out the inside of Equal Ground, Clinton took him up on the offer. "She loved the shop. She loved my spicy chai," White said. "But, I didn't make any sudden movements or eye contact with the big dark suited men talking into their wrists."

There were a few tense moments when Jeff White from Little Venice, started knocking on another locked entrance. "The bodyguards all turned their heads. I wanted to say 'Stand down. He's o.k.'"

Other celebrities have found their way into Equal=Grounds—comedian Kate Clinton, national activist Dan Cho, then Mayor Bob Duffy and "Mark something, a really hot actor," said John.

Over the years, White added salads and wraps and most recently breakfast sandwiches. Neighbors come in on their way to work, college students work on assignments and others come from farther away for special events. The place is rarely empty.

White is still firming up the exact program for the big day. He expressed interest in "a parade, confetti, champagne," and he's hoping some of his customers will join together to bring all three.

**Bauman's Barbershop**



**Mike Bauman**  
Barber

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## Kid's Corner - Enjoying Your Terrific Toddler

Drew Beeman

In my work with toddlers I find that the three "R's" of early care and learning are very important. They are relationship, responsibility, and redirection. I also find that it is very important to understand their needs, desires, and challenges. I love my job and chosen career, and I delight in watching these little ones explore their world, and discover the inherent magic in it. Well, not magic really, but to them it may seem like it. We adults must remember and never forget what it was like when everything was brand new to us.

Young children need secure relationships with the adults in their lives. They need to form attachments with their caregivers. It can be difficult to hand your baby over to others, knowing they must form an attachment to their caregivers in order to feel secure in the learning environment. The studies have shown that children need this, most of all, in order to learn and thrive.

Children need to learn to be responsible as well. I only have three rules or guidelines when working with children. They are "be as safe as necessary, people are not for hurting, and things are not for breaking." We teach children responsibility and independence as we guide them through self-help skills, and teach them that people are not for hurting, and to take care of their things. I like to use the words "responsible choices" and "irresponsible choices" when it comes to discipline. I make no moral judgments with terms like "good" and "bad



choices," knowing that these little ones are not bad when they hit, they are just doing what toddlers do. Remember Bam Bam from the Flintstones? He is the perfect depiction of your typical young toddler. That brings us to our next point.

Redirection is the name of the game when it comes to discipline. Discipline is really teaching. "I cannot let you hit your friends, but you may hit the pillows." "You

may not pound with our chalk and crayons because they will break, but you may go pound with the hammer and hammer bench." "You may not throw blocks it could hurt someone, but you may throw the balls." Do you see how this redirects them to make responsible choices while passing no moral judgments? I know toddlers need to pound, and hit, and throw, and run, and climb, etc. that is devel-

opmentally appropriate behavior for toddlers. I need to provide a safe environment for them to be toddlers and do what toddlers do.

I love to provide toddlers with developmentally appropriate experiences that are diverse, meaningful, and relevant, but also just plain fun! I love creating environments where they can explore, and experiment and discover as much as possible what the world has to offer. The three "R's" set the stage for this exploration, and the freedom to play and explore sets the stage for a lifelong love of learning and success.

The stage is set, lights, camera, action! These rich experiences must become attached to words in order to foster the development of language in toddlers. Every parent will be delighted to know that tantrum reduce as language is learned and used. As the adults around them narrate their experiences, the children begin to associate words with their contextual meanings. We know that their receptive language, comes before their expressive language. They understand us even if they cannot yet speak. They usually begin to speak, as we encourage them and use language in fun and meaningful ways.

I have had the pleasure of hearing many of the toddlers in my care begin to speak and sing. It usually starts when we have our gathering time and sing their favorite songs and perform finger plays. We actually do pretty much the same songs and finger plays every day, repetition is the key. Then it progresses to random expressions during play. Helping them "use their words" usually solves conflicts, helps them self-regulate their emotions, and thus contributes to their social and emotional development. Social and emotional development is the most important focus for school readiness and lifelong success.

Being a male caregiver and educator has its challenges as I am sure you can imagine, but I know that I play a necessary role in the lives of these children.

Some of the leaders in the field of child development and early care and learning are men. Jean Piaget laid the foundation for our field; Dr. Brazelton has taught us so much about infants and toddlers; Harvey Karp taught (at least me) how to have the "Happiest Toddler on the Block" and that Bam Bam was the archetype for toddlers; and Dan Hodgins teaches us more appropriate discipline techniques, especially with boys. Finally, there's "Teacher Tom" Hobson great blog about discovery and progressive education. I have plenty of female influences as well, my friend and mentor Lisa Murphy, Galinsky, Skenazy, and Hirsh-Pasek to name a few.

I chose this career because of the wonderful childhood I had, knowing that many others suffer in childhood. I chose this because I love watching children grow and learn. I chose this because it is one of the things I am really good at. I chose this career because I want a better future for humanity. *Drew Beeman is founder and director of Progressive Early Learning. For more information about learning through play and about Progressive Early Learning, visit [www.ProgressiveEarlyLearning.com](http://www.ProgressiveEarlyLearning.com).*

### Best Busker 2016

On May 5, the South Wedge will be filled with music from great musicians. Special offers at local shops. Stop by the City Newspaper tent (at the corner of South and Gregory) to learn how to vote for your favorite busker. 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.



## Feral Cats Get Help from TNR Program

Perhaps you've seen them wandering through your backyard or crossing the street, and maybe you've even tried to feed them before, only to be met with a fearful glance and scampering paws. Chances are you've encountered a feral cat. Rochester has an abundance of feral cats that wander around neighborhoods, searching for food and shelter. Some residents see them as a nuisance due to behaviors such as spraying and fighting, while others pity them as they suffer through the rough winters. An excess of feral cats can also have a negative effect on the local wildlife that they prey on although experts disagree on just how much feral cats impact the populations of small birds and rodents. Either way the overpopulation of feral cats in the community is a problem that deserves to be addressed.

Feral cats are unique from other cats because they are essentially wild animals. Unlike strays, feral cats have had no contact with humans and, as a result, are very difficult to get close to and can rapidly become overpopulated. In fact, one female cat on average will have three litters of kittens per year. However, that doesn't mean that nothing can be done to help them!

The Trap-Neuter-Return program, or TNR, offers a straightforward solution to the issue. By connecting with a local shelter, anyone can participate. TNR involves trapping feral cats, getting them fixed and vaccinated, and then returning them to a safe place the very next day. Traps can typically be rented for a low price, and the cost of getting the cat fixed is greatly discounted through the TNR program. These cats also get one of their ears tipped so that they can be easily identified as fixed.

Once feral cats are returned to their previous environment, there are many ways to help keep them safe, especially during the harsh winter. Shelter can easily be made for them by cutting a hole into a Styrofoam box and stuffing it with straw. Both of those materials serve as extremely effective insulators. By joining the effort to decrease the feral cat population, anyone can help curb this problem and make a difference in the community.

If you are interested in getting a feral cat fixed for a discounted price, you can visit [rochestercommunityanimalclinic.com](http://rochestercommunityanimalclinic.com) or [habitatforcats.com](http://habitatforcats.com) for more information.

**Young Urban Preservationists are working on a "coaster" project for local restaurants that highlights their building's history (even some of its ghosts!). Look for news of the South Wedge Pub Crawl they'll be holding on May 21s. For more info visit, <http://landmarksociety.org/yup/>**



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## Lifestyle - Let's Hear it for Sass

Michelle Martell

As I was commenting on my daughter's sassy response recently, I couldn't help but notice that part of my reaction was one of admiration. It got me thinking...what would our lives be without some sass, wittiness with a good-natured sprinkle of lively attitude? When it's done in fun, with respect and playfulness, sass does indeed spark up our lives and relationships. And when done just right, perhaps with a quick flip of the hair and a twinkle in the eye, throwing in a unique mannerism of our personality, sass can become like an art form.

I've then noticed how much sass is part of my life, which made me realize that I'm pretty sassy myself. Upon reflection, it makes sense that one of my favorite places to visit is Sweet and Sassy, and my favorite Mary Kay lip color to wear is Sassy Fuschia. Without some sass, how dull life could be! I think back to sassy encounters I've had in my life, and those were some of the funnest, most playful moments in my relationships.

And sass isn't just for girls. I observe it in all genders, age-



Michelle Martell

groups, and life forms, enjoying the jovial energy of those sassy incidents. Sass indicates there is spunk, and we all need spunk!

Look at how the birds fly about with each other, the outdoor wildlife, playfully scurrying and sparring about -- we see sass in them, as well. There was a sassy incident with one of my dogs, however, that was not so amusing, when she took off into the woods after the scent of

an animal. As I called her name, she stopped to look at me, and with a sassy spin of her furry body, took off running in the opposite direction. Perhaps there can sometimes be a fine line between sass and all-out disregard, but not always. Of course, I doubt I will tell my children about my subtle enjoyment of their sass, as that could become a potential hazard with a little one.

Sass keeps us young, keeps us on our toes when we are both the sasser and the sassee on the receiving end of sass. When my dear Grandmother Lillian would spout off a sassy remark in her old age at an opportune moment, how delightful it was to see that she still had that sparkle inside. There is a sense of appreciation that even as the body ages, if the spirit still has some sass, there remains a vivacious life-force to be reckoned with.

Think about it -- sass keeps our wits about us, as we recognize the clever sense of humor that having sass requires. Sass can turn a humdrum event or task into something a little less boring, adding some light-heartedness. A conversation that is lackluster, even when we talk to ourselves-- zip it up with some sass! In those scenarios where a sassy response would not be appropriate to actually verbalize, we can simply keep our sass to ourselves and still enjoy it. And even during those inevitable distressing life events that we all experience as human beings, a little sass can help us to deflect and survive.

When someone calls me sassy, I take it as a compliment. Sass require wit, creativity, an appreciation for playfulness and a zest for life, especially when done right. Gotta love that kind of sass.

Michelle Martell has a M.A. in Business Administration, loves being a mm and an independent consultant for Mary Kay Cosmetics.

## MUCCC *continued from pg. 1*



MUCCC founder Doug Rice (Photo by Annette Dragon)

into a hell project. I felt if I built a theater they will come."

He bought it, rehabbed with a crew of four working 29 days, and invited small pop up theater groups like David Henderson's Method Machine to perform.

Today the black box theater has air conditioning, handicap accessibility, and "enough electricity to run a hair dryer while the stage lights are on."

"It's a very good place to encourage local and original talent and allow people to grow and explore," Rice said. "We just want to do cool stuff and help the talent in Rochester to do better. I provide the theater and stay out of the way of the creatives to allow them to grow and achieve their vision."

With that intention, Rice has given the job of cultivating artists to John Borek, MUCCC's director of artistic development. Along with city council work and an appointment at the University of Rochester as a residential life community advisor, Borek writes and performs himself.

"I talk to amazingly talented performers, directors," said Borek. "I uncover gems in this community, artists who really get recognition on the national stage but who choose to live in Rochester. We all benefit from their talent."

Borek said he's aware of the "certain prejudices about community theater," but "it frees you from the commercial aspect of theater." In other words, at MUCCC Borek could produce a two-four hour performance where eight friends "picked for their wit" ate an eight course dinner and drank eight flights of wine while an audience watched them talk and "get sloshed" without worrying about box office returns.

"They hated it," laughed Borek, who prides himself on having "a total lack of ego" when it comes to his creations.

Along with Borek MUCCC runs on the energy of a core group of volunteers including Kevin Indovino who curates the theater's art gallery.

There are no paid administrators.

"We have never turned [artists] away up to this day," said Borek. "We tell them what our expenses are and they can rent for \$750 a week or even less than a week. We have weeks where we can accommodate workshops in an afternoon."

The Fringe Festival has been an enormous boon to MUCCC, which brings a broader audience to the Atlantic Avenue theater.

The idea is that these same audiences might now be inclined to return to see the work of the African-American or Latino Theater Companies, both of which regularly use the theater. Add to that MUCCC's Bronze Collective week which highlights different "minority voice theater."

"We also see part of our mission is to use theater to provide provocative thoughtful theater of social justice." Borek points to June California, a performer who brought a one woman show about the horrors of solitary confinement in the U.S prison system to MUCCC.

Borek's most popular production so far was staging the 1983 play, Moose Murders, which carries the dubious claim to fame of being named by the New York Times as the "worst play in the history of Broadway." Borek directed the film for its 25th anniversary, and the author of the



John Borek, MUCCC's director of artistic development (Photo by Annette Dragon)

play flew in for the production.

Right now Borek is so busy finding what he calls "legitimate" artists that he hasn't put on any of his own shows. He also invites anyone interested in sharing a MUCCC adventure to consider volunteer some time to promote the arts.

"On the last Saturday of every month except November and December from 10:30-11:30 p.m. we hold an Open Door volunteers meeting," said Borek. "We're non-competitive. Our goal is to advance the artist rather than the theater."

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# Remembering Timothy O'Connell

Katherine Denison

Tim O'Connell has died. His laugh, bursting from that barrel-chested body, was always a little lighter and cheerier than expected – coming more from his bouncing shoulders and twinkling eyes than his core. The silver hair and beard might have seemed burly if his voice were heavier or his eyes less amused. Only when we pleaded for him to call a group to attention with that "sergeant's voice," left from his youthful military service, did we hear the full thunder that big man contained.

The rest of the time, his rich dedication to regional history, his excitement for maintaining and celebrating Highland Park and the other Olmsted masterpieces of Rochester, his thrill at tracking an important bit of Frederick Douglass's legacy (a house he researched in the South Wedge), his support for others' work in housing justice, ecology, homelessness, police accountability, literary causes, his passion for peaceful expression, always emerged with enthusiasm and lightness. He spoke fluidly, clearly, but his pauses had a rhythm, marked with a trademark

phrase, "...and things like that." It was almost a song. His hero was the current Dali Lama, and he often quoted his exhortations to inventive and persistent kindness. And there was never a Facebook post or an email about Dick Cheney that Tim didn't answer with the two encompassing words, "War Criminal!" He was more temperate replying to injustice than I, but equally intense. I loved waiting for just the two, three, seconds it took for him to type that fierce reply to any news about warmongering evil.

As to passion: was there ever a sweeter love, a stronger bond, than his relationship with James? Than his friendships, dating back to earliest school days? Than his love for his expanding family? He had such deep affection for those in his life, from those he knew from shared interests and action to those long-time friends who gathered in his home over loving food and beloved wines. Too, his cats, his dogs; everyone so loved, loved so well.

How will we fill this huge Tim-shaped void? Who will maintain the memory and work for the future of the Children's Pavilion? Who will host the gatherings at the

Conservatory and see that the park proponents get the minutes and understand the context and the urgencies? Who will travel to the Library of Congress to confirm inklings about local connections to national events? And those gatherings, meetings. Who will love us like he did?

For those who dream of heaven, perhaps there's some comfort. For the rest, we will breathe his memory, curse his loss, remember his grace, and hold that marvelous laugh in our weeping hearts. It is a lovely turn of fate that the very week, as Tim spun away from us, science proved a 100-year old speculation of Einstein to be true: he saw what no one else could. I like to picture Tim, in whatever form our lost ones take, surfing those gravitational waves, free of all hurt.



Timothy O'Connell, who died on February 13, 2016, was described by the Highland Park Conservancy as president, spokesperson, host, tour leader, event and party planner, wise counsel, and remarkable and patient leader. To say that we will miss him is a profound understatement.



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# Rochester River School Sounds Call for Action

Joel Helfrich

For the last two years, I have been working with Jericsson Pichardo (a 2015 graduate of Hobart College) and a number of local residents and teachers, including three board members who live in the South Wedge, to establish the Rochester River School. We see this urban school as a solution to the myriad problems that Rochester children face.

The Rochester River School is based on the principles of human education and modeled after successful schools elsewhere. It will include a healthy plant-based school lunch program and will be the first vegan public school in the country. The Rochester River School will offer alternative approaches to discipline (restorative justice, including talking circles, mindfulness, and radical inclusivity). Most significantly, the school will emphasize teaching for the 21st century that focuses on solving the real problems of our time: racism, violence, war, abuse of all kinds, inequality and inequity, and the global climate crisis, among many other social justice issues.

The Rochester River School will be a humane, solutions-oriented laboratory for environmental and food justice, critical animal studies, school-to-prison abolition and other important educational work. It is our deep-seated belief that such a school will be a model, not only within the school district but globally.

We are working to create the best placed-based, ecosystem-centered school in the country through the establishment of a rigorous, solutions-inducing curriculum that teaches on-water job skills, environmental stewardship, and community action (“doing” and finding solutions) by utilizing

Rochester’s natural features, especially its waterways, as our students’ classroom for much of each week. Each student will receive a refillable water bottle and a bicycle. Our school will offer weekly mindfulness and breathing activities, as well as monthly community service expectations. Students will eventually grow food at the school and initiate conservation projects.

Community engagement will be significant. Students will learn to take an active role in the community through participation in community-driven projects. In addition to a solid curriculum in sustainability education, students will participate in community art projects, receive instruction in music, and take part in physical education which includes rock climbing, ropes courses, swimming, hiking, rowing, bicycling, scuba diving, sailing and other activities. Students will learn from a curriculum steeped in civics, citizenship and public ethics, writing, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math), and critical thinking, especially taking informed action (“do something”).

At the core of the curriculum for the Rochester River School are principles of humane education, which stress the teaching of compassion and respect of other humans, animals, and Earth. Humane education teaches the skills of commitment to live ethically, sustainably, justly, and peacefully, and includes four elements:

1. Providing accurate information about the pressing challenges of our time so that students have the knowledge to face obstacles head-on;
2. Fostering the 3C’s: Curiosity, Creativity, and Critical thinking so that students have the tools to meet challenges and take informed action;
3. Instilling the 4R’s: Reverence, Respect, Responsibility, and Resourcefulness so that students



Joel Helfrich and Jericsson Pichardo

have the motivation and confidence to confront challenges;

4. Offering positive choices and tools for problem solving so students will be able to solve challenges.

Our teachers will practice and model the 3 I’s—Inquiry, Introspection, and Integrity—and have students do the same. Such a framework will inform curriculum development and school projects—indeed, the entire mission and framework for the school.

Project-based learning will make the Rochester River School unique. By the time the school opens, we will launch the Billion Bugs Project in order to reintroduce the endangered nine-spotted ladybug (the New York State insect) to Upstate New York and elsewhere. This is a conservation project on which all students can work and that will engage students in community gardens and on farms across Rochester, restoring a species and its ecosystem.

In alignment with and inspired by critical educator Paulo Freire, we have it as a goal to

get all students to practice and implement critical thinking skills not only within the classroom but also in the broader world around them. In describing his philosophy, Freire writes, “I can’t respect the teacher who doesn’t dream of a certain kind of society that he would like to live in, and would like the new generation to live in. [Educators should pursue] a dream of a society less ugly than those we have today.”

Indeed, we all must begin to imagine and work toward alternative, just, and sustainable futures. By striking at the roots of problems, innovative urban education—in fact, hu-

mane education—has the power to bring about the most change within our world. As Henry David Thoreau writes in Walden, “There are a thousand hacking at the branches of evil to one who is striking at the root.”

Our proposal is to open our school in the Fall of 2017. We constantly stress cooperation and collaboration over competition. You can learn about the school here: [www.rochesteriverschool.org](http://www.rochesteriverschool.org)

Call us to learn more about our ad rates at 256-1740, ext. 105 or 978-9638 or visit us online at [www.swpc.org](http://www.swpc.org).

## Business Superstars

Allison Nichols



Allison Nichols holding a framing job she did for South Wedge artist Bill Klingensmith. The poster is currently on display at Harts Grocery store.

If my 23-year-old self could sit down and have a cup of joe with my 41-year-old self, I'm pretty sure she wouldn't have seen it coming. I would talk to her about marriage and kids, being a stay-at-home mom for eight years and what it's like to go through a divorce. But the biggest shocker of them all would be the business owner thing. She definitely wouldn't expect that one. Because at 23, I always wanted to be an artist, but it felt so far away and I had just fallen into framing. I never thought I'd own my own shop.

As a college graduate, with a Bachelor of Science in Studio Art/Graphic Design, I did the most logical thing and applied for a job at a local craft store. It made sense, and I could start working right away. As time went on, there was an opening as temporary manager in the frame shop and "the powers that be" figured I knew art and would probably be a good candidate. The first question I asked, "Is there a pay increase?" The answer was "Yes." My response, "Great! I'm in!" Little did I know this decision would end up changing my life.

From that point on, I worked at several frame shops, managing, learning technical skills and

developing my sales approach. I absolutely fell in love with custom picture framing and did this for about 6 years. This is the point I realized I'd either have to continue working for other people the rest of my life or go into business for myself. Since owning my own business sounded way too scary to me, I decided to try something new altogether. I became a teaching assistant at a new charter school. It only took me a month, into my new job, to realize how much I missed working with my hands and creating. So I bought a used mat cutter, found an online framing supplier and started working from my small apartment. About 7 months later I went to the county clerk's office, got my DBA, opened a business checking account and got a tax ID. Creativ Framing and Design was born in February 2004.

For 10 years, I slowly grew my framing business from home while raising two very active and curious little girls. I kept things at a very manageable pace and didn't really need help business wise. After some pretty big life changes personally and professionally, I decided it was time to bump it up a notch and relocate the frame shop.

It was a very easy decision, along with my fellow studio mates, to move our collective businesses into the historic Hungerford Building, a building filled with other small businesses and many talented artisans.

It didn't take too long for sales to increase and common business growth issues to arise. I needed to be more organized with my business finances, learn about marketing and promotional strategies, find out about any available grants, overhaul my website, network like crazy and try to stay focused! It was a bit overwhelming and I needed help. I'm not talking about asking a couple of random people or reading pamphlets kind of help. I mean real assistance and guidance from a person who knows business, what to avoid and where to focus your energy. This is where Norm Karsten comes in.

Norm and the South Wedge Planning Committee are business heroes to someone like me. I had no idea that they offered free business counseling services until my good friend, Jesse Knoth, SWPC's South Wedge Farmers Market management and community engagement guy, mentioned it to me. And I'm so glad he did. As a small business owner anything of value that's free, is a godsend and graciously accepted.

Norm is part of the Small Business Development Center of SUNY Geneseo and worked at Kodak for a number of years. He drives to the SWPC twice a month, from Geneseo to volunteer as a business advisor to folks like me. He listens to my ideas, has grant applications available for me, works with me to set goals for my business year, provides paperwork to forecast financial projections, and the list goes on. Did I mention he does this as a volunteer, and the SWPC offers this for free? That's where the hero part comes in, for me at least. I'm excited about the upcoming year and some of the business ventures I will be embarking upon. I know that Norm and the SWPC will be there for me every step of the way. That peace of mind is gold.

To learn more about Creativ Framing and Design visit [www.creativframinganddesign.com](http://www.creativframinganddesign.com) or call 530.9049.



Warner Castle on Mount Hope Avenue is home to Rochester Civic Garden Center

## Warner Castle Spring Open House Set for April 25

Judy Hubbard

Come tour historic Warner Castle and enjoy light refreshments the Warner Castle Spring Open House, April 25, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Visit our Horticultural Library, learn about the Rochester Civic Garden Center's gardening classes

and events, attend a quick garden mini-class. RCGC, your source for horticulture education for 75 years. Rochester Civic Garden Center, 5 Castle Park, Rochester 14620. (585) 473-5130, [garden-center@frontiernet.net](mailto:garden-center@frontiernet.net), [rcgc.org](http://rcgc.org)

## Rochester Civic Garden Workshops

**Native Bees and How to Attract Them to Your Yard, Tuesday, April 19: 6:30-8 p.m.** New York is rich in native bees but most are little-noticed because most species are small and do not make colonies as do the more-familiar honey bees and bumble bees. Despite their inconspicuousness, solitary bee species are the primary pollinators of most native and cultivated flowering plants. Robert L. Minckley, Assistant Professor in the University of Rochester Department of Biology, will first provide an overview of the diverse biologies of solitary bees, and then discuss some easy and inexpensive ways to attract them to your yard, garden, or property **The Latest on Rose Rosette Disease, Tuesday, May 3, 7 p.m.**: Dr. Mark Windham, Distinguished Professor in Ornamental Plant Pathology at the University of Tennessee/Knoxville, will update us on his research into rose rosette disease, a fast-spreading and de-

structive virus that is infecting roses in many parts of the US, including our area. Come learn how to spot this disease, what you need to do if you see it, and what is being done to help stop it.

**Proud Market Plant Sale, Saturday, May 28: 8 a.** until the plants run out. Meet us on the front lawn of Warner Castle for our 31th annual plant sale – one of the best places to find all types of perennials, trees and shrubs, native plants, summer bulbs, annuals, vegetables and much more! Our vendors include garden clubs, small independent plant specialists, and, of course, the RCGC table. Open to the public. Rochester Civic Garden Center, 5 Castle Park, Rochester NY 14620; (585) 473-5130; [rcgc.org](http://rcgc.org)

All events are free and open to the public; preregistration is highly recommended to ensure a seat. Rochester Civic Garden Center, 5 Castle Park, Rochester NY 14620; (585) 473-5130; [rcgc.org](http://rcgc.org)

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## Bridge Your Gap

Nicole deViere

A bridge is a time, place, or means of transition as defined by the Meriam-Webster dictionary. My teacher would always start yoga class off with a story. You would be engaged in her “everyday” talk as if you were listening to a close friend telling life changing news. You were interested because you could relate. Mid, to late section of the story, the not as familiar concept of a yogic term or philosophy would be introduced, and it entered almost seamlessly in our minds.

The philosophy was another language, literally and figuratively, but the gap was bridged and there was an understanding through transition. You were never left feeling lost between an unknown language and concept, but instead you felt everything belonged and you could now see a bigger picture. The bridge provided support and a gateway for movement, rather than stagnation.

Setu Bandha Sarvangasana, or bridge pose in our Hatha Yoga practice, elevates and connects gaps. “Setu” is defined as bridge, “sarva” as all or everything, “anga” as part, fact, or limb, and “bandha” as lock. According to B.K.S. Iyengar, “backbends give energy and courage and combat depression. They open the chest and make the spine flexible. The arms and shoulders become strong. The mind and body become alert.”

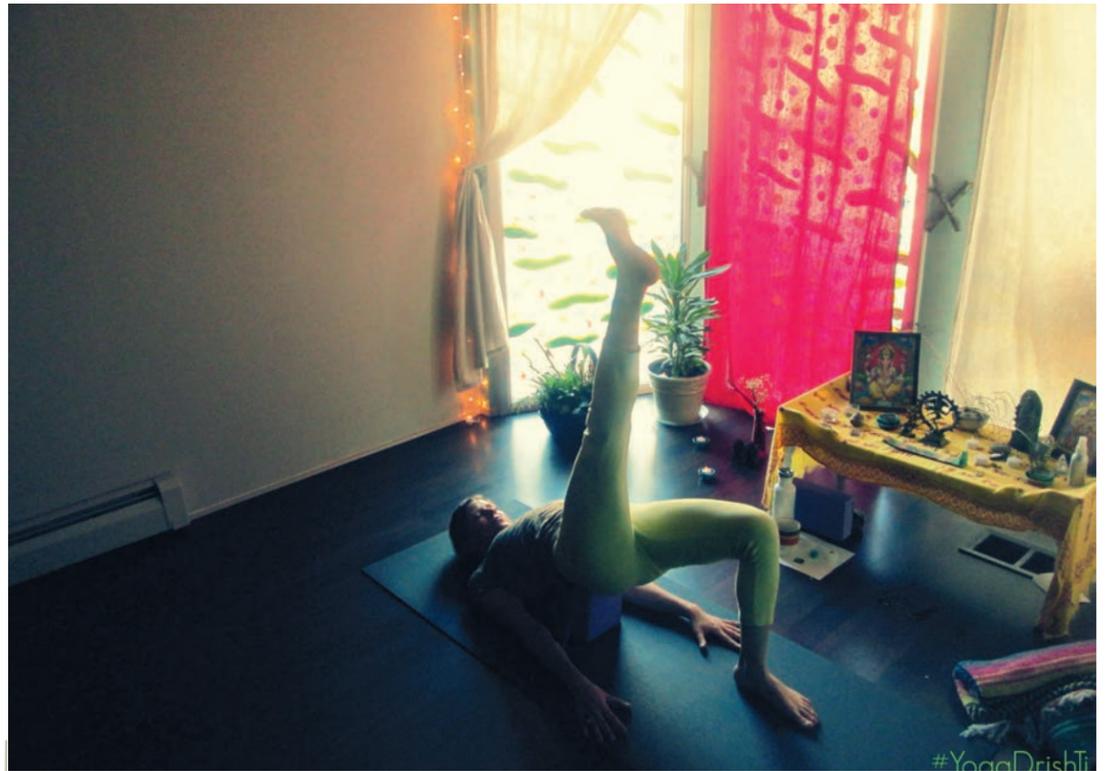
The more we can span, the more we bridge a gap. Backbends, like Setu Bandha, are good at moving blood from internal organs and

improving your lymphatic drainage, which helps your body fight infection and dispose of waste products. With the increased movement and quality of the blood, more oxygen is delivered to your cells and tissue. Communication in the body is enlivened through circulation.

The combination of strength and flexibility used in Bridge pose leads to an improvement in your posture and strength in your muscles. Joint pain and other general aches that you suffer from as a result of poor posture in your everyday life are alleviated. Your body starts aligning back as a system when the gaps are bridged.

Furthermore, Setu Bandha uses a full range of motion of your joints, which can help prevent degenerative arthritis and improve movement. The cartilage in your joints and spinal disks are shock absorbers that act like a sponge – only taking in fresh nutrients after fluid is forced or “squeezed” out. If you neglect certain areas, your cartilage can start to become less supple and eventually wear out.

The Bridge pose becomes a metaphor for life. All of your limbs, not just physical, are connected to form a transition. What was inaccessible before dissolves as your gaps are connected providing an open flow of communication, rather than isolated points that stand alone and talk to no one. Not only Setu Bandha pose, but yoga as a whole, has been found by numerous studies and practitioners to provide



Setu Bandha Variation (Eka Pada Setu Bandha) or one legged bridge pose (Photo courtesy of Yoga DrishTi)

relief from anxiety and may help regulate fluctuating mood patterns and anxiety attacks. A complete yoga practice can be particularly helpful, as it works to remind you to release emotions and feelings that have a negative effect on our mental health. Yoga is your bridge.

Additionally, the practice of pranayama encourages you to actively focus on your breathing, which can help you relax, meditate and connect with your respiratory system as you restore the natural flow. Yoga has been proven to im-

prove the symptoms of depression and provide a significant increase in your serotonin levels while decreasing your stress hormone, cortisol.

According to Yoga Journal, practicing yoga can also help you focus, solve problems and remember information, while also improving your coordination and reaction times. This is thought to be because yoga helps you regain control of your thoughts, preventing negative or anxious thoughts from dominating your thought process and allowing you to concentrate better.

Through the essence of Bridge pose, we learn to connect points and act as a complex equation rather than a linear or one dimensional being. All of the points are still there, but now sutured, acting as a functioning whole and relating to one another.

Nicole deViere is Owner/RYT/Holistic Wellness Lifestyle Coach at Yoga DrishTi Community Wellness Center located at 159 Caroline Street. [www.YogaDrishTi.com](http://www.YogaDrishTi.com)

## Highland Park Conservancy Annual Meeting

Diane Hampton

The Highland Park Conservancy will be holding its Annual Meeting on Wednesday, April 20 at 7:00 p.m. in the Olmsted Lodge at 171 Reservoir Drive, in the park. The meeting is free and open to the public, and will be an inspiring look at the creation and conservation of Olmsted Parks.

The featured guest speakers are Stephanie Crockatt, Executive Director and Brian Dold, Director of Planning and Advocacy of the Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy, “...the first nonprofit organization in the nation to manage and operate an entire historic urban park system...whose mission is to promote, preserve, restore, enhance, and maintain the Frederick Law Olmsted-designed parks and parkways in the Greater Buffalo area for current and future generations.”

Ms. Crockatt and Mr. Dold



will discuss what the Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy has accomplished and its plans for the park system's future. They will also comment on Rochester's Olmsted Parks and their potential for preservation and development. *Diane Hampton is a board member of the Highland Park Conservancy.*



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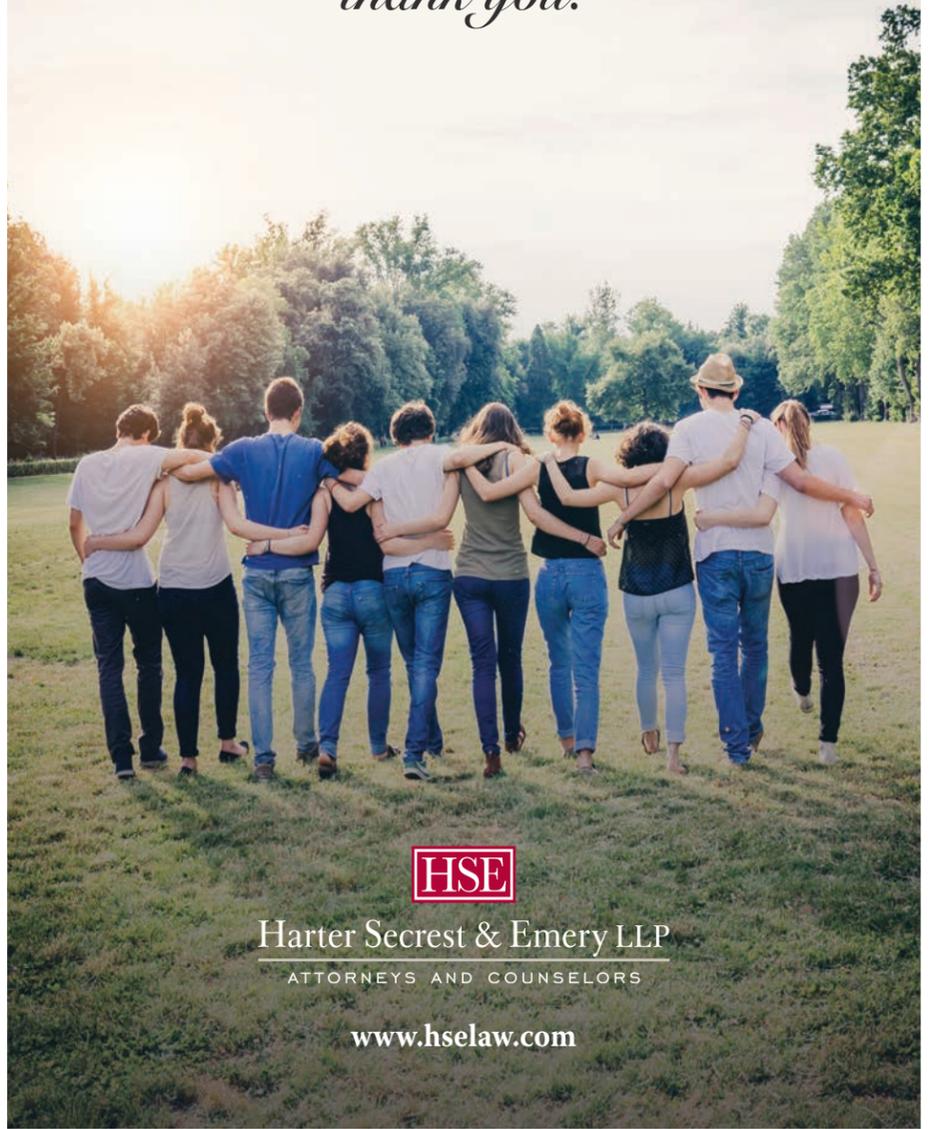
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