

The WEDGE

June/July 2019 Vol. 41 No. 3

The Official Newspaper of the South Wedge Since 1982

FREE

Inside

- Swillburg in the Summer -3
- Misfit Doughnuts -4
- Good Smoke Snack Shack -4
- City Love Redux -6-7
- The Moon as Messenger -8
- Activist Jeiri Flores -10
- WOKEPac Women -11
- Positive Force Movement -12



The South Wedge Farmers Markets offers fruit and flowers, pastries and wine tastings, mini music concerts, free outdoor yoga and so much more every Thursday at Genesee Gateway Park

South Wedge Farmers Market Opens June 20

Shop local and support local growers at the South Wedge Farmers Market on opening day June 20. Every Thursday, 4-7 p.m. through September, Genesee Gateway Park on Mt. Hope Avenue will be buzzing with community spirit. Musician Brett Lighthouse will be performing on opening day.

Stop by each Thursday and grab some great produce, learn about all of the amazing services and organizations in our community, visit with local artists and artisans and shop for some unique personal gifts created locally. Additionally, the Market offers you a chance to visit

with neighbors and make new friends.

Popular vendors return including Cooking and Eating Healthy with Phil, Saratoga Spirits and Potted Gold. Stout Sprouts, Monroe Micro Greens and Smoke Jack Jerky are new to the Market this year. The Market welcomes new vendors every month from farmers, artisans, musicians, buskers to community organizations. Tru Yoga is back with free riverside yoga classes at 5:30 p.m. Take a class and get a Yoga \$\$ Buck to use at any of our market vendors. The Market has rapidly become a true community destination for Wedge families. The EBT

token program is back with an added bonus of \$2 for every \$5 spent. For those watching their bottom-line purchasing power, the ability to buy more with less is tremendously helpful.

Buying at the Market is more than just a monetary transaction, it's an opportunity to learn more about the person growing your food. Take a little extra time when shopping to ask your questions about diet, food and what you can do to embrace a healthy lifestyle.

Your support is key to keeping and expanding this great community asset. The South Wedge Farmers Market continues

to provide quality service each and every week. Like us on Facebook, bring your friends and neighbors to the Market and visit our website www.swfm.org often for announcements, recipes and more.

The South Wedge Farmers Market is a community development and outreach program of the South Wedge Planning Committee. To get more information, contact Glynis Valenti, Executive Director at 585.257.1740 or e-mail: info@swpc.org. Vendor applications are available at 585.256.1740 or e-mail info@swpc.org. Special thanks to Market Sponsor Highland Hospital.

Joan Brandenburg

The WEDGE Newspaper Celebrates 37th Year

Nancy O'Donnell

In the early 1980s a group of South Wedge activists were determined to resurrect their neighborhood. They looked beyond the boarded-up South Avenue businesses and run-down houses and envisioned a vibrant urban neighborhood. The first "official newspaper of the South Wedge" was four pages and published eleven times a year. Called the S.O.S. News, it was published by the South Wedge Planning Committee, Oakland Park Neighborhood Association (OPNA) and South Wedge Acting Together (SWAT). Its front page chronicled



the rehab of 288 Sanford Street where the SWPC Tool Library, the South Wedge Historical Office, SWAT and OPNA would be housed. Other stories covered Sentry Color Labs' grand opening ribbon cutting courtesy of Mayor Thomas Ryan. Captain Gordon Urlacher was replacing Captain Robert Tacito in the Highland Section of the RPD. A year later S.O.S. would be renamed The WEDGE. By 1992 it distributed 1910 copies to area businesses including Pickle's Pharmacy, He-Ro Sewing Center, Metzger Liquor and the infamous Downtown Motor Lodge. The WEDGE chugs along thirty-seven years later in a time when many newspapers are declining. With advertisers' support the WEDGE will continue to share the stories that make the Greater South Wedge area one of a kind.



Focus Theater's house team "The Urge" (back row, l-r) Ty Gagnon, Jeri Dubi, Devin Hott, Sara Shipley (front row, l-r) Joanne Brokaw, Kate Armstrong, Pat Best, Cody Jones and John Vadas

Focus Theater Brings Improv to the Wedge

Nancy O'Donnell

South Wedge's Focus Theater might not have a blazing marquee above its modest entrance on Bryon Street, but step inside and the lights are bright, the pace is fast, and laughs are front and center.

The performance and teaching comedy cooperative was founded by local comics Keith Gomez, Roger Sutphen, Tim Shea and John Thompson. It opened in the Wedgepoint Apartment complex three years ago come July.

"People need to let their hair down,"

said Sutphen who performs in "Left for Dead," a 50+ improv troupe. "The key to improv is that you're not out there alone. If a scene starts to flop, someone else picks it up. No matter what, there's always camaraderie."

If it seems that comics and improv artists are multiplying like rabid rabbits, you're right. Firehouse Salon and Boulder Café both offer evenings of improv and stand-up comedy. Area colleges are teaching improv. And it's not all about

continued on pg. 11

South Wedge Planning Committee
224 Mt. Hope Avenue
Rochester, New York 14620

The Wedge Gets Read!

SOUTH WEDGE PLANNING COMMITTEE

SWPC Board Notepad

Glynis Valenti



Glynis Valenti

The only constant is change. Our lives, our workplaces, neighborhoods, cities, and world shift in the daily ebb and flow, cause and effect, that is life.

For example, a few years ago I never would have guessed that I would return to Rochester from my life as a photographer, writer, and wine rep on the Oregon coast. Nor did I anticipate the detour to Ohio where I cared for my elderly parents. Even more unexpected was working in community development again, as I had before leaving Rochester in 2003.

Hired at SWPC at the end of 2016, I found myself in a new (to me) neighborhood with different issues than northeast Rochester, where I worked and lived for the 20 years prior to moving to Oregon. In my time away, organizations that I knew had combined or dissolved. Gone were City home repair and beautification programs that benefited so many residents. The economic climate had small agencies struggling with fewer staff and diminished services.

I realize, however, lamenting successful programs and funding streams of the past isn't helpful because they are not applicable to this time and place. To that effect, dwelling on things past—negative or positive—that are no longer relevant to the organization and neighborhood is not productive. I, the board members, and SWPC are moving forward.

In my new role as SWPC's executive director, I am eager for positive change. There is much potential in the South Wedge, and I am getting to know its residents and businesses better. Community-friendly collaborations are on-tap, and we are beginning programming based

on resident requests. Now is a great time to tell us what YOU want to see in YOUR neighborhood. What are your priorities? What are the biggest issues you see in the South Wedge? Feel free to email me, or we can meet for coffee at one of our local spots and discuss your ideas and concerns. I do miss the days before social media when people actually talked to each other face to face.

Even better, become involved and really invested in what happens here. Meet your neighbors at our Community Engagement Committee. Attend a SWPC board meeting to find out what we're doing and where we're going. All of life is in flux. Connect or reconnect with us, and be the change you want to see.

Interested in learning more about SWPC, call 256-1740, ext. 2 or e-mail gvalenti@swpc.org.

Errata

An article in the WEDGE April/May issue about Rochester ChiroTherapy's new partnership with the Veterans Outreach Center (VOC) of Rochester was printed with an incorrect date. VOC has served area veterans since 1973. We apologize for the error.



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Before recycling the Wedge, please share with others.

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. Printed bimonthly (February, April, June, August, October and December), The WEDGE has a circulation of 5300. It is distributed to area businesses, retail shops and other drop-off points in the Southeast and Greater Rochester area and suburbs.

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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.

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

Please send story suggestions or news to Wedge Newspaper Editor Nancy O'Donnell, 224 Mt. Hope Avenue, Rochester, New York 14620 email nodonnell@swpc.org. Advertising deadlines and rates are available online at www.swpc.org or call 585.256.1740, ext. 4 or 585.978.9638.

Buy a Wedge Card and get discounts when you shop local businesses. A list appears here every month of participating businesses. You'll also get the WEDGE newspaper mailed to your home. To sign up: complete the card below, visit the SWPC office at 224 Mt. Hope Avenue or the South Wedge Farmers Market (in season) or contact Glynis Valenti, gvalenti@swpc.com, 256-1740, ext. 2. Are you a business owner interested in participating in the Wedge Card discount program? Let us know!



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2019 Candidates Forum
SWPC partners with League of Women Voters to host a forum for candidates running for the Rochester City Council-South District.
Thursday, June 20, 7-8 p.m.
The Hamilton Community Rm., 185 Mt. Hope Avenue

Get the Wedge!

For 36 years, *The Wedge Newspaper* has chronicled the lives and times of the vibrant South Wedge neighborhood and beyond. Please consider subscribing. You'll get the newspaper delivered to your home & a Wedge card, too. Fill out the form and send a check or money order to the address below.

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Join SWPC in Community Building

The South Wedge Planning Committee (SWPC) invites you to join us in making a difference in southeast Rochester. Join our board of directors or serve on a committee.

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

SWPC works in a myriad of ways to build community through the annual South Wedge Farmers Market (June-

October), South Wedge Victory Gardens on Hamilton and Cypress Streets and The WEDGE Newspaper that publishes six issues each year.

Your time, talent and passion can help us in continuing SWPC's work. If interested, please call 256-1740 or e-mail gvalenti@swpc.org or board chair Frank Logan at flogan@rochester.rr.com.

South Wedge Planning Committee

Meetings are held at 224 Mount Hope Avenue,
The community is invited to attend all meetings.

SWPC Board Tues. 6/18, 7/16, 6 p.m.

contact: flogan@rochester.rr.com

Community Engagement (Neighbors & Block Clubs)

gvalenti@swpc.org

Wed 6/TBD & 7/24, 5:30 p.m.

SW Victory Gardens

Mon. 6/24, 7/22 6 p.m.

felann@frontiernet.net

Housing & Structures Meets bimonthly

Wed. TBD, 5:30 p.m.

gvalenti@swpc.org

Swillburg in the Summer

Mike Henry

Cycling home along Pembroke Street recently I was taking in Swillburg's art panels. Maybe it was the angle of the sunlight or just my own frame of mind, but these most colorful art works created by artist Maria Friske, commissioned by the Swillburg Neighborhood Association (SNA) in 2006, seemed extra beautiful and filled me with joy. Besides their visual appeal heightened by a border of daffodils and tulips, they made me feel lucky to live in an urban neighborhood that collaborates to dig public art and green city living.

Since 2006 many other SNA projects have been realized. One of the more visible projects is the gazebo at Otto Henderberg Park which was constructed on the annual Day of Caring in 2007. The Day was organized by the United Way of Greater Rochester and with funding specifically from the Bank of America.

Our gazebo has been the site of many neat neighborhood events, picnics and concerts, organized clean-ups, and for summer loungers simply a place to escape the scorching sun.

Thirteen years have passed, and our gazebo need of some TLC. On June 1st our community will gather, under the leadership of neighbor David Ferguson, to re-stain the wood and preserve this gem for another decade or so. Funding for this comes from the Community Foundation of Greater Rochester. If you wish to join in, please watch for announcements on Nextdoor Social Media. We plan also to do some tidying up around the park as well. Food and refreshments will be provided.

Speaking of picnics and gazebos,

the annual Swillburg Potluck Picnic will be held on Saturday, June 29, from 1-3 p.m., right there. Last year we had over eighty neighbors join in to make a very festive day! No doubt we'll have lots of vegan, vegetarian and barbeque offerings. In previous years, we've covered a few tables with sumptuous repasts. Please watch on the Swillburg Facebook page, WEDGE Newspaper website and Nextdoor as well as on sandwich boards throughout Swillburg for announcements.

Besides these community building events we'll be participating in the annual Wilson Day of Engagement in late August. University of Rochester incoming freshman engage in community service. They'll tidy up parts of the neighborhood, rake, shovel, and prune, while we introduce them to Rochester and the Swillburg neighborhood. Neighbor Sharon Price is our coordinator for this event. As always, we hope neighbors will join in. Please watch for more information on Nextdoor and the Swillburg Facebook page.

Swillburg neighbors continue to gather for monthly luncheons and dinners in the local restaurants. Please join us; the more the merrier! You can find announcements of days, times and places for these community get together on Nextdoor.

Also, as I mentioned in the last issue's column, Swillburg swag is available online. You'll find it at <https://swillburg-neighborhood-association.square.site/>

Well, I'm wishing you a fun and safe summer. Hope to see you around the community!

CSA Garden Stocks Food Pantry

Judy Bennett



All the vegetables grown are harvested early in the morning and go right on the shelves at the South Wedge Food Pantry.

The garden is located on Hickory Street and is part of the ROCSALT campus, which includes the Historic Calvary

St. Andrew's sanctuary.

The garden is named in honor of Alison Clarke, a pioneer and promoter of urban gardening in Rochester.

Volunteers are always welcome. Contact Judy - judybennett@frontier.com.



Flowers of summer (Photo by Glynis Valenti)

Be Alert to Noise Levels In Summer Months

Ah, Summer! Picnics. Parties. Windows wide open. Lawns mowers rev up.

Being a good neighbor means being mindful of neighbors whose idea of bliss include listening to the summer wind. Blaring music or mowing your lawn at dawn does not a good neighbor make.

The City of Rochester brochure "How to be a good neighbor" offers guidance to help keep our neighborhoods harmonious with info about noise ordinances.

"Noise should not be audible beyond 50 feet from your property line between 10 p.m. and 8 a.m." That means lower the volume after 10 p.m.

"Noise should not be audible beyond 50 feet of your property line between 8 a.m. and 10 p.m." That means no mowing your lawn at 6 a.m.

Breaking the noise ordinance makes a lot of your neighbors very unhappy and being cited may result in fines.

So, be a good neighbor, and we can all enjoy a summer of fun without ear plugs.

Humans of the South Wedge
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Business Buzz

Nancy O'Donnell

Misfit Doughnuts Opens in the South Wedge



Misfit Doughnuts is celebrated for their wonderfully original vegan treats.

Monroe Avenue's loss is the South Wedge's gain when Jenny Johnson's Misfit Doughnuts reopens on Gregory Street in the old location of Peppa Pot Café sometime in July. The Jamaican café has relocated to a new space on East Main Street. A huge fire, attributed to arson, forced Johnson to move and after some tweaks inside her new location, she'll be moving in. While insurance is paying for equipment, Johnson held a fundraiser in early June to help with additional costs.

"I love the South Wedge, and I wanted a presence here, but nothing was available that met my needs," said Johnson. "Rebecca from South Wedge Properties reached out to me. She told me she loves my doughnuts." Johnson enjoys baking from an early age in her hometown of Auburn, NY. Eventually, she said goodbye to pastries and studied photography at RIT. After graduating, she worked freelance and returned to dessert making and began to sell to local restaurants.

"My first foray [in baking] was in 2013 when I started Pudgie Girl with a partner. I sold vegan doughnuts at the South Wedge Farmers Market," said Johnson. "I kept it simple with three kinds: lemon poppyseed, cinnamon and chocolate glaze." Three years later, she closed Pud-

gie Girl and went back to photography.

"I gave up the dough, but it wouldn't give up on me," Johnson said. A year later a friend told her to check out the Monroe Avenue location. "It was 900 square feet and super affordable."

In two years Johnson was running a successful business until the fire.

When Misfit opens, she'll carry her signature vegan doughnuts, Fuego Coffee and Katboocha along with other treats. Many of her doughnuts can be viewed as "out there." They're cut in half and packed with creative combinations "like a sandwich."

"I'm big on pop culture," said Johnson, who named her business after her favorite band. Flavors include Cookie Monster, a chocolate chip stuffed doughnut with a vivid blue top. Darth Vader is a chocolate cream filled doughnut with chocolate ganache and chocolate cookie crumbs. Then there's the King Dong, a banana bread doughnut with salted caramel filling, drizzled with caramel and topped with banana chips.

Right now Johnson's only goal is to get her business "up and running."

"I'm sure I'll be adding more treats-- cinnamon rolls and fritters-- when we open."

Misfit Doughnuts & Treats, 133 Gregory St.



Peppa Pot Moves Downtown

Marlene Henry realized her dream of bringing traditional Jamaican and Caribbean recipes out of her kitchen and into the South Wedge community when she opened on Gregory Street in March 2011. She named her new business "Peppa Pot" after the traditional "one pot" meal that her mother made. When Henry moved to Rochester,

she began cooking Jamaican specialties for festivals. Her friends loved her cooking and encouraged her to open a restaurant. In a WEDGE interview in December 2011, Henry said she first looked for a small place with a friend, but she found that late night bar food was more likely fried chicken and fries not fried dumplings or oxtails. She

Cheesy Eddie's Commits To Wedge Presence

Colleen Baker, co-owner of the South Wedge dessert landmark Cheesy Eddie's, said don't believe the rumors. She and husband John may have opened Cheesy Eddie's 2 at the Genesee Valley Regional Market in Henrietta, but they're committed to their shop on South Avenue. "We are not leaving the South Wedge!"

"We were bursting at the seams. It's amazing our team never hurt each other," said Baker. "The [Regional Market] kitchen is ginormous. (Think 5,000-square-foot warehouse.) It has double doors and an open café at the entrance. We placed an old pie machine and this old

Hobart mixer we found in the basement in the [South Ave] basement inside."

The larger space allows Cheesy Eddie's to showcase their extensive cake selections (some 25-30 choices) and as expected classic and specialty cheese-cakes (10—15). It also carries "Jillian's Delight" cookies. An employee Jillian created the cookie by slapping cream cheese frosting between two oatmeal cookies. They introduced "Jack's Delight" using chocolate cookies.

Cheesy Eddie's 2 in Henrietta is located near Palmer's Market.

Cheesy Eddie's, 602 South Ave.

Good Smoke Snack Shack Opens on South Avenue

John's Tex-Mex moved to a bigger space at 428 South Avenue and now Good Smoke BBQ Snack Shack will be moving into their former cozy space after walls are painted.

Kelly Wemmett, co-owner with husband Brian, has three other BBQ locations in East Rochester, Webster and Chili. They've been looking for a city address for some time. The South Wedge menu will be a bit different from the others.

"We won't do large meats," said Wemmett. "We're doing sandwiches, barbecue bowls and burgers."

Also in house are "Moinks," a one of kind Good Smoke appetizer. "That's moo and oink. Bacon-wrapped meatballs." The Snack Shack will also serve beer and wine.

The couple have gotten a reputation for award-winning barbecue around the East Coast winning over 400 awards. They placed in the very prestigious Jack Daniel's World Championship Invitational Barbecue. Last month, they



came back from a competition in Virginia "BB Gives Back," as Grand Champion.

Wemmett said hours for the Snack Shack when it opens mid June will be 1-9 p.m. M-F, 12-9 p.m. Sat. and 12-8 p.m. Sunday. They may be tweaked at a later date.

Stop by and welcome the Wemmetts to the Wedge.

Good Smoke BBQ, 489 South Ave.



John's Tex Mex moves to 428 South Avenue (Photo by Glynis Valenti)

John's Tex Moves to Bigger Digs

John's Tex Mex restaurant moved to a bigger place and introduced a bigger menu. The menu includes enchiladas, chimichangas, new burrito fillings and queso every day. (Queso was previously offered only on Mondays; vegan queso is now offered on Mondays only.) Owner John Roth plans to add new items once his staff adjusts to the new menu and space.

When a new liquor license comes through, John's Tex-Mex will offer margaritas, beers and ciders on draft, as well as more selections in bottles. The bar has its own outdoor patio where smoking is allowed. A nonsmoking dining patio behind the building is in the works, as is a small counter in the bar dedicated to takeout orders.

John's Tex Mex, 428 South Avenue

Irish Moss, Ting and "Irie" Iced Tea. Henry invites guests to bring their own wine and beer to enjoy with meals.

Right now she's offering lunch specials, and she plans to have longer hours during the summer months and especially during the Jazz Festival.

Peppa Pot, 522 E. Main Street

Lifestyle



Life and the Art of Wallpaper Removal

Michele H. Martell

Home ownership. What a blessing. And with the blessing comes a list of things to do, which is exciting and daunting at the same time and yet, so satisfying.

My first DIY job was to remove a large amount of wallpaper shortly before I was hosting a professional event in my home. It was a bit ambitious for a novice who had never undertaken such a project. My friends said that I'd chosen a monster project to start with. However, it inspired me to get the job done right and expeditiously. Shortly in, I asked myself, "what in the world did I get myself into?" After all, I really had no idea what I was doing, and I was learning as I went along. At which point, a cardinal peered into my window at me while I inexpertly had my scraper in-hand. That was the only sign that I needed. (If you've read my last article you'll know I see feathered creatures as guiding angels). I was encouraged, and it was Game On!

During this arduous task, many thoughts began to cross my mind, while I listened to my music day and night. I had a lot of time to think because what I thought would take a weekend ended up taking over a week. All other tasks were put on hold or rescheduled. My goal—crisp, clean, sparkling, beaming white walls. What I didn't know was how many layers below the current layer of wallpaper I had to dig through. It turned out there were many, many layers of more wallpaper, paint, and I couldn't tell what else, until I kept digging.

For the wallpaper, I used multiple chemicals, various types of scrapers, plus a steamer. It was a filthy, messy, long process that involved some late nights, and my active body was surprisingly sore. However, I was bound and determined to remove that which didn't serve my visualized outcome of having sparkling and radiating walls to enjoy.

It made me ponder how in life, if we are seeking a brighter, more joyous outcome, that there may be many layers we have to remove in order to get there and that we are all learning as

we go along. Underneath the peripheral layer of wallpaper, I found old, sticky, yucky stuff. In life we often have to search below the unpleasant stuff to find the joy that we need, even if it takes a grueling process of chipping away and removing that which no longer serves our highest good. It can be a backbreaking yet exhilarating process to discover just what is to be uncovered under the next layer, removing what we thought we were and what we had to be, to reach our core brightness. We each have many layers within plus what we allow into our environment. And once we are determined to search below each layer, it becomes stimulating to discover just what is next.

Although this was a job I had to complete myself, I was immensely grateful to have some generous friends offer help without my even asking. What a blessing! Just like in life processes, we are so fortunate to have genuine friends who are there for us to help us uncover our layers while it is still our ultimate responsibility to do it ourselves, without judgment of the mess and frustrations; so beautiful.

At one point I had thought the job was done. Turned out it was time to peel away more layers of what needed to go, whether chiseling piece by piece, or ripping apart in one fell swoop; eliminating that which was outdated and no longer serving me, regardless of the mess and fallout that was heaped, discarding toxicity to move forward to clarity and brightness.

Such is life in the bigger scheme... relishing what makes us feel bright and loved and valued, inspiring us to reflect the same; and stripping away what does not bring us satisfaction, joy, and happiness. Keep doing the work on the inside and out, and we will get there. The process is worth it.

The cliché of staring at a blank wall took on a new meaning for me – I now find it absolutely exciting to stare at a blank sparkling wall because I know what it took me to get there. At the end, I knew it would be bright and beautiful. And we can say the same about life. If we just continue to do the work to dig below the surface, we often find a gratifying brilliance and beauty.

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City Love Thank



WEDGE writer Michele Martell and kids



Enjoying the night!



Hickory Nut Queen Jayne Morgan and Royal Consort Gary Loitch



City Lovers packed the German House!



City Love 2019 was a huge success. The South Wedge Planning Committee's (SWPC) annual fundraising event was held on Friday, May 3 at the newly renovated Historic German House. Guests danced to some very fun and funky music by Uptown Groove, bid on great auction items, walked off with some fantastic raffle gift cards and most important, reconnected with old friends and made new ones. Thank you to all of the attendees for coming out to support SWPC community engagement programs. **Congratulations Lisa Reagan!** Lisa was named the 2019 David

Halter Community Champion. Reagan was lauded for her dedicated service to the South Wedge by her good friend and 2018 Champion award recipient Rev. Judy Lee Hay. "Lisa has used her incredible legal skills as an attorney to work for justice and fairness with such organizations as Farm Workers, Legal Aid, and Senior Housing," said Hay. "She has a passion to preserve city neighborhoods and has volunteered with SWPC on issues of removal of lead paint in homes, holding landlords accountable for property upkeep and tenant rights. As co-chair of NBN6 (Neighbors Building Neighborhoods) Lisa raised issues

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Iron Smoke Whiskey offered tastes of their delicious whiskey.

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of traffic calming on residential streets and serves on Erie Harbor Phase Two planning team. She supported neighbors in opposition to the proposed Gold Street Lofts and the projected heights of the Highland Hospital PDD. As a dedicated resident of Linden Street, Lisa has organized the Linden Street Block Party and pays attention to the needs of elderly neighbors." South Wedge Planning Committee Board of Directors Chair Frank Logan and Executive Director Glynis Valenti wish to thank all of the sponsors, raffle and auction donors, volunteers, and

those who provided delicious tastings to round out the event. "Congratulations to Ron Maier and his family for seeing the Historic German House as an anchor business in our community" says Logan. "We congratulate all of those involved in the renovation of the facility and applaud the investment being made that will benefit all South Wedge residents."

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(l-r) Judy Bennett, Rev. Judy Lee Hay and Community Champion Lisa Reagan



(l-r) Colin Coffey, Natalie, Michael Brundage



Friends enjoying the night!



Having fun



The Winners of City Love Queen and King of Funk - Teresa Hemann and Quentin Schneider (Photo by Nancy O'Donnell)



Creating memories



SWPC Volunteers



Creating new memories

Photos by Glynis Valenti, Joan Brandenburg & Diamond Shamrock Photo Booth

Planetary Messengers

Aeola Wendy Burwell & Peter Doughty

Welcome back to our second offering in a series focused on the art and science of astrology. In writing this we hope to spark the interest of a wide range of readers from those who might know their Sun signs to others who know nothing about astrology, including those who think it just might be a hippy hoax from the 60's.

In any given shorter period of time, one very observable celestial event is the complete cycle of the moon, from New to Full and back again. In June and July, we not only have two such lunation cycles but also the bonus of our second set of eclipses of 2019. The first was in January.

Most of us have a general awareness that ocean tides are related to the moon's close proximity to the earth. Since our bodies are largely water, the pull of the moon affects us also — just ask any first responder or emergency room personnel after working a full moon shift. We even have a word for it: lunacy, from the Latin meaning moon!

The Gemini New Moon on June 3 (Sun and Moon are in the same sign at every New Moon) is at sunup in Washington DC. The chart drawn for this moment also has Mercury in Gemini opposite Jupiter in Sagittarius (each in signs they rule), and so we can expect a renewed round of verbiage in which facts and zeal are at odds with higher ideals. These energies are closely aligned to key points in the president's chart, so look for him to make even larger than usual declarations of alternative facts.

Two weeks later, on June 17 Sun and Moon are now opposite each other — as with every Full Moon — and Jupiter is in the mix, amplifying and exaggerating the expression of whatever feelings began on the third. This Full Moon is joined by a strong configuration of four other planets, inviting the temptation to use heated words related to the breakdown of institutions and structures currently underway.

With the next New Moon on July 2nd, the summer's eclipse season arrives with a total solar eclipse visible only in the southern hemisphere. Every year has two eclipse seasons about six months apart, but not at the same time. (Where were you during the "Great American" solar eclipse in August 2017?) This first eclipse in July, so close to our nation's birthday, is an indicator of key shifts in the nature and exercise of national leadership.

We shared some insights into the character of Mercury and its retrogradation cycle last issue (April/May) and again we are drawn to look closely at Mercury's role in the astrological cycles of June and July 2019.

The next Full Moon will be a partial lunar eclipse on July 16 and while not visible from North America, it is on a crucial point in the chart of our country. Both this eclipse and Mercury's movements coincides with Mercury's position in the Declaration chart of July 4, 1776. This is just one of several ways in which 2019 is extraordinary in the evolution of the United States of America.

While Mercury is in Leo (June 27-July 19) it joins forces with Mars and Uranus making communication and thinking self-centered, forceful, dramatic and boastful. On July 19, Mercury slips from fiery proud Leo back into watery nurturing Cancer (until Au-



gust 12) giving everyone the opportunity to reconsider our heart's desires.

One curious fact about Mercury is that its movements repeat every 46 years, making the current cycle a repetition of 1973 in some noteworthy ways. Many comparisons have been made in the media between our current administration and that of the Watergate era.

For example, Mercury was retrograde in Pisces (March 22) when Robert Mueller released his report, mirroring when Richard Nixon was taped planning obstruction of justice in March 1973. Days after the release of the report, Attorney General William Barr essentially attempted to neutralize the effect of the report and has since perjured himself about several aspects of doing that.

If you experienced the Watergate era first hand, you also had these patterns in your own chart, in your own life. And no matter how old you might

be, these current lunar cycles, eclipses and Mercury's movements will be experienced to varying degrees in your personal world this summer depending on where they occur in your chart.

The degree to which they connect with your birth chart—or not—will be reflected in your experiences. It might be a relatively placid year for you, one of great upheaval, or somewhere else on the spectrum of change related to conscious thought, communication and/or commerce. Perhaps you will change your mind in 2019...

What do you think?

If you're interested in seeing how Mercury (and other planets) might be affecting your horoscope, Aeola Wendy Burwell and Peter Doughty are available for personal consults: aeolea@juno.com, Zodiacalspiral.com

Renovations Slated for Otto House

Chris Stocking

It's no secret that veteran homelessness is a serious issue in the United States, and the data supports it. According to the of January 1, 2018 Department of Veteran Affairs website, just over 37,800 veterans experience homelessness on a given night. According to the same data, although veteran homelessness decreased 5.4 percent between 2017 and 2018, it still remains a critical issue affecting the brave men and women who sacrificed for our freedoms.

Veterans Outreach Center (VOC), 447 South Avenue, continues to do its part to combat veteran homelessness. Acquired in March 1999 from the late Reverend Thomas Beddoe Richards, who served in the U.S. Air Force from 1942 – 1946, VOC operates Richards House and Otto House at the corner of Cypress Street and South Avenue. The facilities accommodate up to thirty-two residents in a safe, home-



VOC Executive Director Laura Stradley volunteers as part of the Otto House renovation crew.

like environment where they receive vital and life transforming services.

Renovations officially started the beginning of May at Otto House. The house contains eight one-bedroom apartments that come with bathroom, kitchen and living spaces. A laundry facility will be located in the basement.

"We are very excited about these renovations and the opportunity to better serve homeless veterans on their path to reintegrate into civilian life," said Laura Stradley, VOC Executive Director and U.S. Army veteran. "Life is difficult enough for struggling veterans without wondering where they will sleep every night. Otto House is a safe, supportive place for them to get back on their feet."

For more information or support veteran services and our renovation project, please visit vocroc.org, email info@vocroc.org or call 585.546-1081.

South Wedge Sudoku

Solution on pg. 11

STR8TS										SUDOKU									
Easy										Tough									
1	3									3	8			1	4				
					7									9					7
			1	9		5				6	7		2	8					
					2	4					1					3	9		
			6	8								9			6				
					5	3		4		2	6					7			
					5			9	7				8	2		9	5		
	6			3		8			1	7		5							
6			8			1					2	1			3	8			

How to beat Str8ts – Like Sudoku, no single number 1 to 9 can repeat in any row or column. But... rows and columns are divided by black squares into compartments. Each compartment must form a straight - a set of numbers with no gaps but it can be in any order, eg [7,6,9,8]. Clues in black cells remove that number as an option in that row and column, and are not part of any straight. Glance at the solution to see how 'straights' are formed.

To complete Sudoku, fill the board by entering numbers 1 to 9 such that each row, column and 3x3 box contains every number uniquely. For many strategies, hints and tips, visit www.sudokuwiki.org for Sudoku and www.str8ts.com for Str8ts. If you like Str8ts and other puzzles, check out our books, iPhone/iPad Apps and much more on our store.

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Dog About Town

as told to Anthony DeRomanis



Hans contemplates the possibility of an ice cream cone

I truly am the luckiest dog in the world. Not only do I get constant love from the veterans I live with at Richards House on Cypress Street, but it just so happens I reside in the coolest community, the South Wedge! Just down the street from me is Teresa Wilcox and her dog Jax. We love to play. After visiting with Jax, I try and sneak some alone time at Highland Park. It's a great place to sniff out a few new friends. After the park, I like to make my way over to the shops. Places like Equal Grounds and Hedonist Artisan Ice Cream invite me to come right on in and visit. Treats for pets are always included. They even know me on a first name basis, and leave a water bowl outside for me and other dogs to quench our thirst. How thoughtful is that?

Richards House is a haven for homeless veterans operated by the Veterans Outreach Center. After visiting all my friends on South Avenue, I am reminded that I have a very special job of looking after and caring for the men in our house. I would love for my community to come visit me and see first hand the wonderful impact the Veterans Outreach Center has on my friends at the house. After all, they served their country and it seems right that we step up and take care of them. Until next time, your friend Hans is in need of a very long nap! I know, I have such a rough life, right? For more information about Veterans Outreach Center, Richards House and how you can help or drop off a snack for Hans, call (585) 295-7821 or email Joan.Brandenburg@vocroc.org.



Hans stops by to chat and check out Hedonist Artisan Ice Cream ever changing flavors



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Community News

Disability Activist Hosts Film at Cinema

Nancy O'Donnell



Activists Sabrina Smith and Jeiri Flores host a discussion at the Swillburg's Cinema Theater

Jeiri Flores, a local disability rights activist, wants to start a conversation. In late April, Flores and community activist Sabrina Smith invited families to a free screening of the film, *The Hate You Give*. They asked the attendees to stay afterwards for a discussion about the impact of violence on young people and to learn ways to heal the trauma that follows. Flores used a grant from Rochester's M.K. Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence to hold the event.

The film, based on a novel by Angie Thomas, tells the story of a Starr, a 16-year-old African American girl, who straddles two worlds—a mostly poor neighborhood and an elite affluent private school in the white part of town. She witnesses a childhood friend, a young black man, killed during a traffic stop, and her life changes dramatically. In a plot that resembles the national news, a grand jury does not indict the white police officer in the shooting. Starr must find a way to heal and retain a loving heart despite the trauma she suffers.

"I wanted to have a conversation around trauma and unpack the movie," said Flores. "The movie is not about police brutality per se. I wanted to break down how we all have trauma, and how it impacts everyday life. I read the book, and it personally spoke to the things happening in my community."

"I felt [the topic of violence and trauma] needed to go beyond talking to my friends," Flores added. "It needed a community discussion. Some of these kids are seeing their friends being killed. That's what I'm reading on social media; someone wrote 'I buried a friend this summer.' I didn't have to process that as a child. They need resources that will

help to navigate those feelings."

Flores said she also wanted to give children "the full movie experience—access and a bag of popcorn and pop. I didn't want families to say 'I don't have the money to go.'"

Joined by her friend Sabrina Smith, Flores invited others in the community to talk about resources to help traumatized children. Pastor Ronald Smith for Restoration Worship Temple and Pastor Paulette Brown from Agape Worship Center had a spirited conversation with the audience that ranged from 10 to 70.

"We should ask ourselves what can I do not to create trauma on my fellow man?" Pastor Smith said. "I needed to deal with my own trauma when a friend was killed. We need to treat each other as humans. We all have families to go home to."

Ruth Danis, a former teacher, focused on education: "Teaching is everything."

One young African American girl shared that "it doesn't make sense that people would be afraid of me just because of the color of my skin." One teenager in the audience said that empathy was the key: "We have to feel for each other if really want to change."

Later, Flores raffled fourteen copies of Thomas' book, donated by several doctors at the University of Rochester and Flores' "mentor" at SUNY Brockport. She also distributed pamphlets about NAMI's (National Alliance on Mental Illness), a local mental health resource for families.

"It's important that the community should continue to work for an environment free of violence. Young and old can come together to discuss issues that impact all of us," Flores said.

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WOKEPac panel discussion (l-r) Reenah Oshun Golden, Shani Curry Mitchell, Jackie Ortiz, Beatriz LeBron, Robin Wilt and Christina Lee (Photo by Nancy O'Donnell)

WOKEPac Agitates for Political Inclusion

Nancy O'Donnell

It wasn't billed as an afternoon of inspiration and activism, but that's what happened when the Cinema Theater opened their doors to Robin Wilt's WOKE Pac (Women of 'K'olor Electoral PAC) and a screening of *Knock Down the House*, a documentary that follows the 2018 primary campaigns of four progressive Democrats: Cori Bush, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Amy Vilela, and Paula Jean Swearengin.

After the screening, WOKE Pac held a fast-paced panel discussion with local political luminaries. The women spoke of the current political climate, the actions of some politicians who are "taking the teeth out of the Voting Act," others who are working to revoke Roe vs Wade, attacks on health care and the environment.

Reenah Oshun Golden, founder of Blackbox Theatre and member of writing collective "We All Write," moderated the panel of six women: Brighton Town Council member Robin Wilt, Rochester City Council member Jackie Ortiz, Rochester City School District Beatriz LeBron, Brighton Town School board member Christina Lee and Shani Curry Mitchell, who is running for Monroe Co. District Attorney.

Wilt is best known for her run against now Congressman Joe Morelle when he was holding an office in the NYS State Assembly.

She said she started WOKEPac because of her belief that underrepresented communities are ignored when government officials craft policy. She describes WOKEPac as "an organization for women of color, created with 'the goal of empowering traditionally underrepresented communities' with a 'mission to change the make-up of political campaigns and diversify the movement for social justice.'" Its goal

is to "disrupt the traditional political narrative." Its simple message is "You can run. You can win. We can help."

"We're trying to challenge political operators," said Wilt. "We need to challenge the patronage system. It takes people to challenge the machine."

Each of the panelists spoke about their backgrounds and the reasons they ran for office. Ortiz spoke of her brother's death. LeBron seemed a visible reminder of how women must act as disrupters in a political system that has kept women out. She argued that established politicians often "try to take you out."

"I don't kiss anyone's ring," said LeBron.

Korean-American Lee offered a challenge to the audience in a sobering quotation "One hundred people need to run [for office] for one to get in." She described how her "new immigrant parents" had "spent one-half their income for a mortgage in Brighton to make sure their children went to a good school."

"I'd never seen someone who looked like me at the table [of political power]," said Lee, who won in her first run for political office—a seat on the Brighton School Board—that hadn't been challenged in ten years. "I did it for my children and for the students."

Curry Mitchell emphasized that women of color need to learn "how people get elected."

In the end, the panel urged the audience to "vote for a good person." Ortiz noted "the importance of creating relationships even with people you may be wary of." Wilt advised voters to "look at people's voting records and vote according to your values." Lee urged the audience "to take action and vote."

Knock Down the House is available viewing on Netflix and visit www.wokepac.com for more information.

Focus Theater continued from pg. 1

the laughs. A 2015 article in *The Atlantic Monthly*, describes how some companies are sending employees to improv classes to up their communication skills. The article says that researchers and clinical psychologists conducting studies are even bringing improv into therapy sessions: "The improv stage, in theory, is a space free of judgment or fear of failure, making it an ideal environment for people who struggle with low self-esteem, social anxiety, or other types of anxiety disorders. While not a substitute for therapy, some psychologists believe improv can be an effective complement, in part because of the way it mirrors the patient/therapist dynamic."

The Theater founders have varied backgrounds for their day jobs. Thompson is a teacher. Shea works in video production. Gomez works for the US Postal Service. Sutphen worked in mortgage banking for 40 years, went back to school to become a Pharmacy Tech and now has a part-time job in a pharmacy.

Focus Theater's comedy community performed in the Hungerford Building before moving into their first home in the PLEX neighborhood (South Plymouth Avenue and Exchange Street). They looked all over the city before ending up in the South Wedge.

"We got our DBA as Plex Theater Productions, and then we moved and became the Wedgepoint's first commercial tenant," said Sutphen.

"We were sitting around trying to find a new name when John said, 'We've got to focus!' And we all said, 'that's it.'"

The new theater is used by a growing comedic sketch and improv community in Rochester: "Estrofest," "Unleashed," "Left for Dead" (an improv troupe of 50 years and older), and "Polite Company" among others.

Focus performances are held on the first and third Friday of every month, 7:30 -9:30 p.m. A "grab bag evening," Sutphen said may include stand up, a variety show, a sketch or music.

"We get you in for only \$5, invite you to bring others and hope you'll sign up for classes," said Sutphen.

Anything goes on stage although there are definite trends as long as the word that triggers a scene isn't "platypus." An improv scene usually contains

one to three people while others stand nearby. It gets its direction from the audience, "the generator" and takes the word or phrase and starts flying. There are no costumes, no props (except maybe a few chairs). If the improv involves an invisible table, participants are sure to walk around it as they move during the scene.

"We usually try to bring everyone in the circle back in by the end," Sutphen said. "On stage we all go with the flow. You're not restricted. A couple F-bombs an evening is o.k. But, you don't have to go down the dirt road to be funny. Politics are o.k., but people have gotten tired of hearing about Trump's election. It doesn't go anywhere. [A scene] is usually relationship driven—husband and wife, mother and daughter, pharmacist and customer."

Along with performances, Focus Theater offers a variety of classes. Megan Mack whose day job is producer of WXXI's *Connections with Evan Dawson* teaches comedy sketch writing. Other classes include short and long form improv, improv for teens and tweens, standup comedy, lyric writing and script writing.

"The Focus Theater is a wonderful hub of creative energy where improvisors of all levels can get together to play, learn, and grow," said Joanne Brokaw, an improviser. "And audiences get to watch some great improv performed on a regular basis," said Brokaw. "We're really lucky to have such a supportive improv community in Rochester."

Brokaw invites the public to Improv Jam on Tuesdays, 8-10 p.m. "It's open to anyone, regardless of whether or not they've got improv experience. It's run by 'The Urge's' Cody Jones and John Vadas and guest leaders from the improv community. It's a great way for people to practice, hone skills, connect with other improvisors and try out some improv."

Ready to try a class? Sutphen said that improv candidates have similar characteristics: "They're open, extroverted, not easily threatened and [most] are certainly not shy."

390 South Avenue, Suite C (entrance on Byron Street). Parking in Wedgepoint and on South Avenue.



Left for Dead improv troupe (l-r) Jeri Dube, Tricia Campbell, Carol Shea, Patty Farneth, Dan Mulcahy, Tim Shea (back to camera) and Roger Dube

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Sudoku Solution continued from pg. 8

Str8ts Solution

	1	3	2		7	8		
4	3	5			7	6		
3	2	4	1	9	8	5	7	6
		8	9	7	2	4	6	5
	9	7	6	8		3	5	4
9	8	6	7	5	3	2	4	
8			5	4	6	9		7
7	6		4	3	5	8	2	1
6	7	9	8		4	1	3	2

Sudoku Solution

9	3	8	7	5	1	4	6	2
1	2	4	6	3	9	8	5	7
6	7	5	2	4	8	9	1	3
8	1	7	4	2	6	5	3	9
4	5	9	3	1	7	6	2	8
2	6	3	9	8	5	1	7	4
3	4	1	8	6	2	7	9	5
7	8	6	5	9	3	2	4	1
5	9	2	1	7	4	3	8	6

Positive Force Movement Opens in Blossom Business Center

Lore McSpadden was looking for a fitness center that welcomed people of all sizes, genders, orientations and abilities, so she opened her own along with co-owner Christine Walker.

On May 25, 2019 the Positive Force Movement celebrated its grand opening in the Blossom Business Center. The event included several movement demonstrations from the personal trainers and group exercise instructors who work at Positive Force Movement. "Our mission is to make elite, top-level coaching available to people who have historically not felt welcomed by the fitness industry," said McSpadden. "I wanted to help each individual discover strength and empowerment within a fun, safe, inclusive, and celebratory environment."

The Positive Force Movement "focuses particularly on the needs of LG-BTQ+ folks, fat and larger-bodied folks, People of Color, folks who are 65 and older, survivors of cancer, autistic people and people with disabilities."

McSpadden and Walker, along with their team of trainers, offer personal training and group exercise classes including: Kettlebell, Silver Sneakers, Yoga, Mindfulness and Movement, Capoeira, and MMA/Cardio Kickboxing.

They also have space available in for massage therapists and Reiki practitioners who are aligned with their philosophy of LGBTQ+ inclusion, anti-racism and radical size acceptance.

"There's no place else that I can go that acknowledges, celebrates, and encourages all of my various identities, except when I come to work out with Lore," said student Jule Sanchez.

Chris Thompson, who teaches capoeira classes at Positive Force Movement said, "As a teacher of capoeira, I need a place



Christine Walker



Lore McSpadden (Photo by Jesse Amesmith)

that's going to be safe for everyone, that's going to be welcoming for everyone."

"People need to be in a place where they're not going to feel intimidated by other people's abilities and can focus on what they can contribute to the space," Thompson added.

People with marginalized identities—whether connected to their gender, orientation, age, size, race, class, or disability—often face significant health and wellness disparities.

"The team at Positive Force Movement is committed to helping each person develop their own personal connection to movement that celebrates them exactly as they are, right in this moment," McSpadden said.

To learn more, visit The Positive Force Movement on Facebook.

595 Blossom Road, Suites 317 and 319

River Edge Neighborhood Program

Susan Wylie

The River Edge Neighborhood Program, sponsored by Episcopal SeniorLife Communities, is a membership-based, health and wellness initiative for seniors living in the South Wedge, Highland Park and PLEX neighborhoods. The Program is based at River Edge Manor on Mount Hope Avenue and has three main components: physical fitness and nutrition, social interaction, and education. The Neighborhood Program seeks to empower and support seniors to live

safe, fulfilled and active lives within their means and in their place of choice, by increasing knowledge, activity levels and overall health, through programs specifically designed for older adults.

A schedule of the activities offered in the Neighborhood Program is available at EpiscopalSeniorLife.org

To learn more about the Neighborhood Program, contact Bonnie Gregoire at 585.546.8400 x3703 or bgregoire@EpiscopalSeniorLife.org.



River Edge Neighborhood Program targets seniors living in the South Wedge

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 Pick it up when you see it.
 Check out #litterati on Instagram.
 Litterati has collected and logged over 700,000 pieces of trash!
 And while you're at it, you can cut back on your use of plastic way before the law changes. Bring a cloth or net bag for your groceries, your personal take-out containers, your own spoons, etc.
 Let's keep plastic out of the ocean.



Capoeira teacher Chris Thompson with student

Positive Force Movement Center offers personal training and group exercise and classes: Kettlebell, Silver Sneakers, Yoga, Mindfulness and Movement, Capoeira, and MMA/Cardio Kickboxing.



Check-out our workshops like... Tai Chi for Arthritis, Living Healthy, Medicare 101 & more! Most offered monthly!
www.lifespanrochester.org
 (see classes/events tab)

Making Rochester a great place to age well.

 Lifespan

www.lifespanrochester.org
 585-244-8400

The Wedge Gets Read!