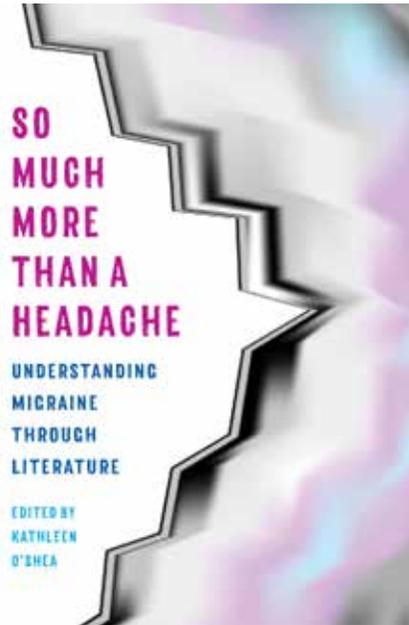


# The WEDGE

The Official Newspaper of the South Wedge Since 1982  
South Wedge Planning Committee, publisher

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## MCC Professor Gives a Common Voice to Migraine Sufferers

Nancy O'Donnell Hale

Kathy O'Shea remembers her first migraine. She was 14-years-old. She remembers sitting in a campground rec center watching a movie and the sudden violent knifing pains in her head and how her brother had to help her back to her helpless parents who didn't know what to do.

What she didn't know at the time, that this condition, "this disease" would follow her into adulthood, into grad school, a marriage, a career as an English Professor at Monroe Community College. She is now an author of a full length book, *So Much More Than a Headache: Understanding Migraine through Literature* that examines her lifelong suffering through the lens of art. She's compiled the voices of Jane Austin, Emily Dickinson, Virginia Woolf, Oliver Sacks, Michael Cunningham, Hilary Mantel among a list of some fifty poets, essayists, novelists and nonfiction writers

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"Setting Sun of the Harvest Equinox" is a work of Organic Collage that was composed on the first day of Fall by Michael Tomb and Marcia Zach. Michael designed the sun and sky and Marcia created the fanciful, strange landscape. All the foliage, vegetables and flowers were grown from seed in their garden. This is the latest in Studio Michaelino's photographic series "Celestial Vegetables" which began in 2016.

## South Wedge Farmers Market Closes 14th Season

Joan Brandenburg



Every spring, we watch and worry. Will Mother Nature cooperate? Weather is always a concern. Who could have foreseen a global pandemic? Still, the South Wedge Farmers Market, with a new home at 357 Gregory Street between South and South Clinton Avenues did just fine.

With all safety protocols in place including masks and hand sanitizer at almost every vendor booth, shoppers did not stay home once they found the new location. Great gratitude is extended to the members of the Odd Fellows Lodge who invited the market to set up shop inside and outside their facility. The new home welcomed many new vendors and shoppers.

From the beginning of the 14th season of its operation, the Market struggled

to find a farm produce vendor. It takes a lot of time and effort to pack up all the products, haul them to the market and then set up vendor space. While there was interest, it is always the same issue. Farmers want to make sure that there are enough customers to make it worth their while; customers want to see farmers' stands before they become fully engaged in a farm market. Several farmers did visit the Market during this season to check out the scene, and they promise they will participate in 2021.

Even without a fully stocked farm stand on hand, many of the loyal market vendors stepped up and provided produce at their stalls and sold out each week. Lost Woods Bread Company and Flint Maple were the market anchors. They

were joined by visual and fabric artists, community organizations, businesses and a variety of musicians who helped to create a fun and fairly robust market from June 18 to September 24.

Shoppers asked for a longer South Wedge Farmers Market season for 2021. All the 2020 vendors plan to return in 2021. A hearty South Wedge Planning Committee thanks to all those who visited, shopped or just strolled to get out of the house. Equal kudos to the vendors who came back each week no matter what the weather. The 2021 market will be placed under new management, so read next issue of The WEDGE for details. more information about the South Wedge Farmers Market, email info@swpc.org or call (585) 256-1740.

### South Wedge Planning Committee thanks the 2020 South Wedge Farmers Market Participants:

- |                           |                     |                       |                       |
|---------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| LL Cool Plants            | Emily Sings         | Greenlight Networks   | Fox & Fern Flowers    |
| United Health Care        | Regan Music         | Nature's Soap Company | Green Mountain Energy |
| Enlightened Studio        | Bob Jordan          | Lucid Garden          | Vetter's Beef         |
| Ludwigs Pickles           | Sisters Jam         | Basin Flower Farm     | Redwood Teahouse      |
| Stir Crazy Kettle Corn    | Grawn Family Farm   | Divine Whiffs         | Grace Filled Gardens  |
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| Katrina Street Sales      | Coffee Coffee       | Easy Fritter          | Simple Earth Herbals  |
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| Highland Park Conservancy | Sibleyville Flowers |                       |                       |

**The Wedge Gets Read!**

# Our Lives Together

**Matthew Martin Nickoloff**

*“That which is essential never imposes itself for love is always offered, it’s never imposed, and that which is unessential is constantly imposing itself.” -James Finley*



Rev. Matthew Martin Nickoloff

I love this reminder from one of my teachers at the Living School for Action and Contemplation. While it is true that there is nothing in existence that is not inherently spiritual, it is equally true that, like a seed, spirituality cannot fully thrive without attentive cultivation. I often liken it to the gift of a beautiful guitar. You can hang it on the wall and show it off to your friends, or lock it in the case and keep it under the bed to maintain its value and condition. But its ultimate purpose is to make music. And to fully live into the joy of creating, practice is inevitably required. Gradually, and subtly, the work itself becomes a part of the ultimate pleasure.

Activist adrienne maree brown notes that “what we pay attention to grows.” In a column like this, it’s tempting to pour gasoline on the dumpster fires of despair and subsequent apathy that our chaotic times have built. And undoubtedly, we need to give more of our attention to the voices crying out for recognition and for justice, especially those just across the Ford Street bridge from our relatively quiet neighborhood – as well as those pleading, more subtly, from our own streets, schools and hospital beds. We long to be comforted in our afflictions, when a healthy dose of affliction might be what our comfort needs.

I wonder if it wouldn’t do us well to hear chants of “Black Lives Matter!” marching down South Ave towards the former Frederick Douglass homestead, demanding reparations and reform at the site where our predecessors likely burned down the abolitionists’ home. I wonder how we would react to the rumbling of anti-riot police tanks on Rockingham Street or the sting of tear gas and pepper spray mingled with the scent of wet leaves at the Ellwanger-Berry Park. I wonder if, for some

of us, the essential would be a welcome and necessary disturbance, shattering the illusion of safety that Whiteness is custom-made to manufacture.

And yet. In order to receive even this sacred disturbance in a way that might move us into action, we must prepare the soil of our own souls. I often comment that when asked if we are racist, very few of us will say that we are, when in fact, very few of us are not. Likewise, when asked if we are spiritual, almost everyone will say, “but not religious!” when in fact, most of us are quite religious at accepting as spiritual a life of quiet desperation and passivity—a self-imposed quarantine on the sacred that the sacred has vowed to respect.

Dorothy Day, the founder of the Catholic Worker movement—our own St Joseph’s House of Hospitality on South Avenue is part of this movement—tried

*continues on pg. 5*

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## The WEDGE Newspaper

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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 readership of 13,500. It is distributed to over 140 locations (businesses, retail shops, libraries, restaurants and other drop-off points in the Southeast and Greater Rochester area and suburbs. Online issue (www.swpc.org).

**Print distribution is suspended during the pandemic. Read us online at [www.swpc.org](http://www.swpc.org).**

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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 ideas 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.

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To sign up, complete “Get the Wedge” below, visit the SWPC office at 224 Mt. Hope Avenue or the South Wedge Farmers Market (in season). 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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## 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-

September), 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 to continue 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 Wed. TBD**

contact: [flogan@rochester.rr.com](mailto:flogan@rochester.rr.com)

**Community Engagement**  
(Neighbors & Block Clubs)  
[gvalenti@swpc.org](mailto:gvalenti@swpc.org)  
Wed. TBD

**South Wedge Victory Gardens**  
Mon. 6 p.m., TBD  
[scott.wagner.ny@gmail.com](mailto:scott.wagner.ny@gmail.com)

# Swillburg Shout-out

Mike Henry



Kids of Swillburg (Photo by David Fergusson)

Everyone I speak with is weary of this pandemic with all its social restrictions; Zoom visits just aren't the same as person-to-person encounters. Recently, seven members of Swillburg's Lunch Bunch (we typically dine monthly at local restaurants) met for a picnic at Otto Henderberg Park. Each brought their own food and chair. Fortuitously we timed this event on a beautiful August day and, of course, we safely spread out to enjoy being together. We shared many laughs, and it was a cool break to the isolation to be together again!

The annual Swillburg Neighborhood Association (SNA) Harvest Diner, usually held at Artisan Church, is being planned as a one-hour Zoom event with speakers from various city and community agencies. We're looking at a tentative date of November 5th. We'll post more information on our official website and Facebook page when plans are firm.

By the time you read this issue of the WEDGE Newspaper we'll have painted several sidewalks in and around Swillburg. In Swillburg, the City's Playful Sidewalk initiative is being coordinated by the South East Area Coalition. So, if you discover new art panels along Field Street or near the garden at School 35, give a little thanks to collaboration

between the city, SEAC and the SNA! Recently, the SNA had a photo contest asking neighbors to submit pics that nicely shows an aspect of life in the "burg." Neighbor Dave Fergusson won first prize with a photo of his grandchildren in front of a neighborhood garden, runner up was a photograph submitted by neighbor Dave Boyer.

The new apartments at South Goodman and the 490 Expressway are reportedly almost full. Recently Mark IV Enterprises, developer of that property, has purchased an adjacent parcel of land to add twenty-five parking spaces. That agency contacted Judy Hay, SNA leader and sought input from neighbors. This gesture is most appreciated, and we're grateful that the neighborhood association would be notified and consulted about such a project.

And lastly, Swillburg swag continues to be available. You'll find all of it on our official SNA website: <https://swillburg.com/>. No doubt there are some excellent gift ideas with the holidays approaching! Free delivery of your purchase is provided within the neighborhood!

Here's wishing you all a safe and successful "semi-lockdown," and a quick return to something more normal, fingers crossed and prayers!

## Best Wishes, Joan

The South Wedge Planning Committee would like to say thank you to Special Projects Coordinator Joan Brandenburg for all of her work on SWPC's behalf. Three years ago, she stepped up to revamp the South Wedge Farmers Market, which just finished its most successful season in several years. Joan also organized and coordinated SWPC's annual fundraiser, City Love, which had to be cancelled this year due to COVID19. The board members and staff of SWPC wish Joan well as she begins her new ventures.

## Assemblymember Harry B. Bronson

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<b>David E. Gast Community Center</b> 700 North St. Rochester, NY 14606	<b>Edgerton Recreation Center</b> 41 Backus St. Rochester, NY 14608	<b>Perinton Square Mall</b> 6200 Finford Palmyra Rd. Fairport, NY 14450
<b>Marketplace Mall</b> (North Colabony) 1 Market Mile Drive Rochester, NY 14625	<b>Town of Chili Senior Center</b> 3255 Chili Ave. Rochester, NY 14624	<b>Harris-Whelan Park Lodge</b> 2125 Penfield Rd. Penfield, NY 14526
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Check the Monroe County Board of Elections website for the most up to date location information: [monroecounty.gov/elections-index](http://monroecounty.gov/elections-index)



## Thank you to Common Ground Health & Healthi Kids

Their donation of forty play kits filled with crayons, chalk, coloring books, frisbees and more were distributed to children at the South Wedge Farmers Market and to the Hamilton Tenants Association. We appreciate it!

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# Kathy O'Shea

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who understand “the pins and needles of light...the fractured senses...the eggshell skull...” as poet Linda Pastan recounts. O'Shea also includes in the anthology an original essay of her own.

As one of some 37 million “migraineurs,” O'Shea details the “stigma” that adds to the burden of a neurological disease that is often misunderstood or minimized.

“There’s been a kind of notion that fragile women got migraines,” said O'Shea. “It suggests weakness. You feel guilty, less than. People think it’s just a headache. They don’t realize how it affects you. Family, friends, co-workers, they can’t understand. You don’t look any different. You’re not limping.”

Along with severe pain, migraine sufferers can include nausea, fatigue and sensitivity to light. A few sufferers will experience auras. And afterwards, when the pain has lessened or gone, many feel a hangover from the experience. Migraine can impact function, mobility and cognition O'Shea said. Words get dropped. Sufferers get clumsier, and to add to the burden, anxiety and depression is a companion to chronic migraineurs.

Treatment for migraines has often been limited to “trial and error and throwing very powerful meds at it,” she said.

For decades O'Shea looked for relief through medication and Botox injections and while there have been “maintenance or rescue treatments.” Only in the last few years have some medications claimed prevention. According to a Harvard University blog, “in early 2019, the FDA approved three CGRP monoclonal antibody drugs for the treatment of migraines. The medications are known



Author and educator Kathy O'Shea

by the brand names Aimovig, Ajovy, and Emgality.”

O'Shea describes “individual warning signs” that tells her a migraine is on its way. “It’s ridiculous, but I get excessive yawning. I get pain in my neck. There are so many levels of intractable pain during migraines episodes.”

“I’ve gotten Botox,” O'Shea said. “Insurance companies covers it every twelve weeks.” The problem she faces is that “[The injection’s potency] lasts nine weeks.” Recently, a “CEFALY device” has proved to be a “game changer” for her.

“It’s an electronic patch, a little impulse that send electrical impulses to the brain. It’s almost like a massage,” O'Shea said.

“I’ve come to terms that I’ll have it all my life. Meds are helping tremendously, but there are still so few headache specialists. My doctor, who retired in 2016, had 300 patients.”

Only recently did O'Shea learn about

“a hidden gem,” a migraine treatment center in Rochester.

“I fought doctors for years that there’s a connection,” O'Shea said. “I’ve asked myself, am I ever going to come out of it? And when it’s over, you don’t know when the next migraine will come. It’s a constant fear. Is it tomorrow? The next day? I needed to do something positive with the beast that I’d be living with the rest of my life.”

In 2017, O'Shea turned her lifelong struggle with migraine into a creative quest.

“I turned to literature to help me know that I wasn’t alone. I don’t think there’s anything out there for migraineurs that’s not either self-help or clinical.”

She remembered an early experience finding solace from her migraines in literature.

“I was teaching my first comp class and the first essay was this extraordinary seminal piece, Joan Didion’s “In Bed.” I started sobbing because it captures all the themes of [my] book.”

So, O'Shea launched a three-year journey into the writings of fellow travelers on the dark road of migraines.

“I found great authors expressing the inexpressible. I looked for themes, experiences. I searched databases and one writer lead to another. I even discovered Jane Cave Winston, an 18th century poet, who experienced migraines.”

After finding the writers, she spent a year getting permission to use the works, an often difficult task especially when she had to work with deceased author’s publishers.

“Permissions could be as little as \$50 and as much as \$500,” she said. It became an expensive addition to her project.

O'Shea wrote the Association of Migraine Disorders and asked if they had any funding. While they didn’t, Dr. Frederick A. Godley, its cofounder and president, was intrigued by the project. So intrigued, he offered her \$10,000.

“He sent me a \$6,000 personal check at the beginning and said he’s send \$4,000 if I still needed it once I had a draft,” said O'Shea. “Our only agreement was that would send him an itemized list [of how the money was spent].”

“I could not haven’t done it without his belief in the book.”

Her publisher Kent State University applauds her book’s ability to increase “understanding of and ending the stigma attached to migraine and migraine sufferers” and the anthology addressing “the feelings and symptoms that the writers have experienced... the loneliness and helplessness one feels when a migraine comes on.”

O'Shea’s plans to read from her published book at a conference of the Association of Migraine Disorders was delayed because of the pandemic. She’s continues to find creative ways to share her experiences with migraines in a blog for *Psychology Today*.

In the last chapter of her book, “When it’s Gone,” O'Shea talks about “the glory of awakening from the migraine and suddenly it lifts out of your body. [and you think] this is what it must be to be normal.”

“So Much More than a Headache: Understanding Migraine through Literature,” is published by Kent State University Press. The book is available on Amazon and by order at Barnes & Noble.

To learn more, visit the American Migraine Foundation online at <https://americanfoundation.org>.

# Opinion Good Trouble

Sherita Traywick



NYS Senate candidate Sherita Traywick

I entered the race for the NYS Senate- 56th District one year ago. Not knowing I would face adversity from party politics to a pandemic, voter disenfranchisement, etc. I quickly learned that candidates are chosen and don’t just pop up like myself. It doesn’t matter if you are currently elected or not. What this amounted to for me was a lot of “You’re a great candidate, but you need to wait your turn.” In other words, prove yourself by running.

Unbeknown to me I thought my non-profit work of 14 years running a food pantry and outreach programs for children and families was an indicator of my capability to be in touch and serve the needs of the community. I would not have entered this race if I didn’t think I was prepared. I knew my work with both houses of the NYS Legislature, the Senate and Assembly, the NYS Department of Labor, and my teaching law at RIT and Schenectady Community College gave me some of the foundations I needed to do the work required. I knew the Albany landscape and how good policy is created. This is the message I was determined to take to the people.

Going door to door hearing the people’s stories was the best thing ever. I could see the picture of my community so much clearer and realized our story of success begins and ends with them. In one breath I would listen to a complaint from a Senior about prescription drug prices and in the next breath hear their solution to legalize marijuana to bring in revenue. Or a complaint about transportation from a single mom to doctors’ appointments for her kids and then her suggestion to set aside the smaller RTS buses to help out families in need who don’t qualify for subsidized transportation.

Energized we were sprinting to the finish line and then COVID hit. No more door to door contact, closure of polling sites, confusion on filling out absentee ballots, polls not having correct ballots, ballots getting thrown out by the Board of Elections. Classic disenfranchisement...

Results came out from the Democratic Primary, and I did not win. Then, the calls started coming from my constituents telling me they were unable to vote and wanted me to fight on to November. So, as I fielded the calls and weighed the issues around voter disenfranchisement. I thought at a minimum I have to stay in the race for those who felt their voices were taken from them. They wanted me to fight just as I have always done. They wanted someone who would surely fight for them and the needs of our community in the NYS Senate. Someone who would listen to the voices of the people over the Bureaucracy in Albany.

So, I am continuing on my Candidacy for the NYS Senate as a Write-In Candidate. Very simply, a Write-In Candidate means my name does not appear on the

# Somewhere in the Wedge



In the foothills of Highland Park, a fairy family lives

Photo by Nancy O'Donnell Hale

## Think Small!

Large corporations have a cushion.  
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**We are all in this together  
Protect yourself and others  
Wear a mask.**

# New Normal is not that Normal

Michele H. Martell

We've been hearing the term "new normal" quite a bit these days! Who is feeling that this terminology is becoming a cliché? And with the holiday season fast approaching, what exactly can we expect to be a new normal?

Thankfully, the school year has kicked-off and some businesses have continued to re-open. Hopefully, we will be able to maintain our lowered numbers of new COVID cases, here in New York and that we may keep moving on towards a life that resembles some sense of normalcy.

I believe that our normal will continue to change. For the time being, wearing masks, washing hands regularly (which was "normal" prior to this pandemic), and social distancing is something we can continue to expect until things normalize.

Not being able to hug people will never feel like normal to me, ever! For my children to not be able to congregate in school hallways with friends is so strange; yet I am grateful that they are able to finally get to see friends. For all of us, lack of socialization is not healthy; of course, we do what we need to for safety's sake and the great good. Thank goodness for Zoom and Facebook Live that have helped kids and adults alike to maintain some semblance of connectedness.

As we are closing out the summer season, so much wondering is occurring - wondering what Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's will look like this year. Will kids be able to Trick or Treat, or will there be limitations? Will there be costumes with coordinating masks? Will parents worry about their kids knocking on neighbors' doors for treats, and should we sanitize loot once it's unloaded at home? One thing for certain, face coverings will not be a costume option!

While talking to other folks, I'm finding that people are already planning smaller, more intimate gatherings for the holiday season. For the vulnerable and elderly, perhaps this is a wise choice. What about large holiday parties filled with sparkling lights, lively music and engaging conversations? It will be interesting to see how the season will unfold. This is uncharted territory we are now navigating.

There have been some positives to this new normal. I have been finding more value and appreciation for the occasions that I do meet with friends and prioritizing time well-spent has been taking on new meaning. We have



Michele H. Martell  
(Photo by Sarah Jeruta Salvilla)

had a greater appreciation for technology that can help us to work more effectively, which has even led to saving time and money. Unfortunately, there are many businesses, such as the travel and entertainment industries, that have been suffering during this time.

Has anyone else noticed the intensified focus in others' eyes as we talk with them? We already know that looking into another's eyes during a conversation indicates interest and engagement. While wearing face masks, we don't have much of a choice, our eyes get full attention.

So, what does the term normal really define anyways? What is normal for some is not normal for others. It's a subjective term. Some behaviors, attitudes, and habits others may consider as normal; that I find I would never wish to find normal in my life, and that I strongly reject. So, think about what exactly we mean when define as normal.

It could be feasibly more accurate to refer to this chapter in our lives as the temporary normal. The brutality, racism, rioting, violence, mental health issues and increased domestic violence statistics sweeping this nation are nothing that we want to keep. Nor would we want for all of the political hatefulness that is mounting to continue to escalate or persist.

Normal seems to take on new meanings with each day that passes. What is your normal today? Through these bizarre times perhaps the best "new normal" that we can endeavor to have in place is more peace and safety for us all.

# Matthew Martin Nickoloff

continued from pg. 2

desperately to remind folks that, for all of her radical activism on behalf of the poor and marginalized, what was ultimately needed was a "revolution of the heart." Our good intentions may inspire us momentarily, but for them to breathe life into our souls and open up space for roots to take hold, the hard truth is, we need to get to work. Despair has a powerful inertia once it sets in. Overcoming the coefficient of friction to get things rolling again can feel herculean. The work is within, as well as without.

And yet, we are not alone in this work. As activists and reformers heroically battle to open up space in the public sphere for lives and voices too long silenced, we must equally set our faces to the task of defunding our inner despair and refunding our imaginations and spirits. And as the election and the dreaded winter approach, there is no better time than the present to set up spiritual infrastructure. Like Hamilton in Valley Forge, we must prepare to outlast this storm and emerge stronger for others once it passes.

Which doesn't mean we all need to become monks and mystics. Or even particularly good at being spiritual. Dramatic talk aside, if love truly lives at the heart of the universe as some of us hope and believe, then there is more hope on our side than we often give ourselves credit for, and more freedom to experiment, to try, to fail, and to discover heretofore unimagined possibilities. We must start where we are, and do what we are able, trusting that we are accepted even and especially when we cannot accept the fact of our acceptance, what we in the Christian tradition call "grace." Knowing that the gift can never be taken away, what might we try in order to learn to let it teach us to coax music forth from our depths?

A few practical suggestions in closing. First, I teach my parishioners three "c's" of spiritual practice—consistent, committed, communal. Whether your discipline is a daily walk in the park, a few moments of joy with your children or partner, a simple deep breath before heading to work, or an hour of deep

meditation, it's vital to be consistent and committed. A penny invested each day adds up to greater returns than \$1000 deposited once (or something like that! I'm a priest, not a stockbroker). One might argue that, given the inherently sacred nature of everything, anything life-giving that is one consistently and with commitment can become the foundation of a spiritual practice. Find your starting point, and simply begin from there. If you're already going, wonderful—keep taking the next step, and take pleasure in what is already working!

And, of course, find a community to support you. If we truly enter into our practice with an open mind and our full hearts, eventually, we'll face questions and concerns we do not choose for ourselves. If your practice does not eventually bring you face to face with the pain and the needs of your neighbors, its not truly a spiritual practice. Community can help keep us honest in our commitments and sane in our consistency. And it can help us see our blind spots, challenging us to look beyond ourselves to the world with which we are inextricably bound.

What is essential never imposes itself on us. But it is always there waiting to be loved into being. The world needs what you have to offer. It desperately desires your awakening. It yearns for the pleasure you will find in being fully live, and longs for that aliveness to give life to others. It will never force you to do anything. But, it will rejoice at your consent.

Shameless plug: If you or someone you know is looking to start a spiritual practice, and would like individual guidance, or would like to join what we at the Mission call "cell groups" (simple non-religion specific gatherings structured around simple practices and deep, attentive listening), feel free to reach out to me at matthew@southwedgecommission.org. We'd love to help you get connected, whether to us, or any other place that best fits where you're at. In the meantime, grace and peace, and thank for all you do and are.

Rev. Matthew Martin Nickoloff is pastor of South Wedge Mission. See him on Facebook.

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## Traywick

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ballot but can be written in by voters. I am running harder than ever because the pandemic has taught us we must be proactive with solutions. I am a Mother who knows, we need to get our children back in school safely, and create legislation that ensures equitable access to remote learning. As an Elected School Board Member, I know it is imperative that we keep Education off the chopping block in Albany. As a Daughter of aging parents, I am committed to ensuring a better quality of life for our Seniors. As a Community Leader, I will work with our community partners to

continue the fight against drug abuse and the opioid crisis, getting guns off our streets, strengthening our community programs, alternatives to incarceration, and re-imaging law enforcement where police are extended members of the communities they represent.

This is why I am running for the NYS Senate as a Write-In Candidate. I have already overcome so much in this race and in my life. As a Woman and African American, I bring my lived experience to the table and I am ready to get into some "Good Trouble."

**Make your voice heard.**

**Vote!**

# Rochester's Jack the Ripper Connection

Patti Giglio

Jack the Ripper, English serial slasher, has puzzled and thrilled the public for over a century. Jack was never captured, and his identity remains a mystery. As of today, the serial killings remain unsolved, the coldest cold case in history.

The first murder attributed to Jack the Ripper happened on Friday, August 31, 1888 in London's East End neighborhood of Whitechapel. Mary Ann Nichols was a 43-year-old prostitute working the street in order to pay for her room at a local boarding house. The brutality of each killed escalated exponentially, climaxing with the fifth and final murder on November 9, 1888. Mary Jane Kelly was killed in such a manner that when her body was first discovered, it was reported that the police could not identify the corpse as human.

The killer was still at large, and no one knew who he was or why he killed these women. All five of the victims had two common denominators; they practiced the world's oldest profession, and each called the streets of Whitechapel home.

Throughout the investigation, the killer taunted the police and newspaper editors, boasting of his ghastly deeds in horrific detail. It was in a letter dated September 25, 1888 that the name "Jack the Ripper" was coined, signed as such by the madman himself.

Scotland Yard detectives worked day and night to compile a profile of Jack the Ripper. Some theorized that the precision of the organ removal meant that the killer had a medical background, the brutality showed a hatred towards women, and they were certain that Jack came from a well-to-do family. Others believed that the murders happened on the weekend because the killer was a regular working man who was employed at one of the local slaughterhouses.

Recently the theory has been introduced that "he" could possibly have been a woman, most likely a midwife.

Scotland Yard detectives put together a list of eight serious suspects, and two were Americans—H.H. Holmes, who was later named as a serial killer in Chicago near the grounds of the famous Exposition in 1893, and Frances Tumblety. Tum-



Francis Tumblety, pictured at the time of his correspondence with Hall Caine c. 1875. Courtesy of historian Neil R. Storey. Taken from his book, *The Dracula Secrets, Jack the Ripper and the Darkest Sources of Bram Stoker* (2012). (Private Collection).

blety was a Rochesterian, who emigrated from Ireland at a young age with his family. He had most of the profile points set by Scotland Yard. "It was no secret the Tumblety hated women. But more so he had a vicious disdain for prostitutes. While living in Washington, DC in 1881 or 1882, it was discovered that he had an extensive collection of uteruses and other female body parts preserved in jars." (*Hidden History of the Finger Lakes*).

Tumblety moved several times and on a few occasions hung a shingle outside his residence advertising himself as a doctor, although he had never been to medical school. More damning was that Tumblety had been living in Whitechapel at the time of the killing spree.

Police pegged the American as a suspect and brought him in for questioning. Although they believed that he was their man, the investigators lacked evidence. Reluctantly, they had to release him from custody. It was no surprise that he jumped on the first ship back to America.

The Scotland Yard detectives came to New York City looking for Tumblety in order to arrest him for the Jack the Ripper murders, but extradition was denied. Did Frances Tumblety get away with the crime of the century?

Frances Tumblety died in St. Louis, Missouri of heart disease in 1903. His body was brought back to Rochester, and he rests for eternity at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery on Lake Avenue.

# The Tradition of Death

Patti Giglio

Interest in all things dark and creepy peaks this time of year. Goblins, ghouls and ghosts appear as the veil between the astral planes thin and stories of haunted houses and the paranormal are told around the fires. Though talk about the topic of death itself is generally taboo, designated for the Halloween season, that was not always the case. In the Victorian-era, death was embraced, even celebrated. Victorians even built their homes around it and, of course, feared it. The traditions and superstitions of death in the mid-19th century are simply fascinating.

Funeral homes were uncommon at the time, primarily being only in bigger cities. Most people died in their home surrounded by their loved ones. The body of the deceased was generally prepared at and viewed in the home. It was only removed from the home for burial, which was usually in a family plot on the property. Cemeteries were primarily in larger towns and cities.

Preparation of the body was necessary after death. Family members or neighbors would come to house to bath, dress and get the deceased ready for the viewing and funeral. Each house at the time had a door that was known as the "death door." The door would be removed from its hinges and the dying or recently departed would be placed on it in order to move them with ease to the parlor for preparation. This is where the saying on "death's door" originated.

It was believed, and in some cultures still believed, that the soul remained with the body after death, anywhere from 24 hours to three days. The family would take turns "sitting up with the dead"



Andover House death's door is has no corners, the Devil can't get in.

final arrangements for the funeral were made. Coins were placed on the eyes of the deceased to not only keep the eyelids from opening, but to also provide tokens to pay the ferry master Charon to take their soul across the River Styx.

As stated above, most people died in their homes, the bodies were prepared at home and the funerals were held there as well. The homes were built to facilitate this event and for this reason many homes had two front doors. One door was for everyday use and visitors. The second door was used for funerals, leading directly into the parlor. It was wider than the other door in order to accommodate the casket when it was removed for burial. Those paying their respects came through the first door and exited out the "funeral door." When it came time to bury the body, the casket would be removed from the house feet first so that the spirit of the dearly departed could not look back into the house and call to family members to follow them into the afterlife. Before the body could be moved, all the mirrors in the house were turned towards the wall or covered with black fabric. This was done because it was feared that if the image of the deceased was reflected in a mirror, their soul would be trapped inside. A related superstition to mirrors and death said that the first living person to look into that mirror after the image of the deceased was captured in it, would be the next to die.

Older families still follow some of these traditions and superstitions that were passed down through the generations. As we have moved to more modern funerary methods, video montages and online memorials, the connection with the deceased through the death process is lost. These traditions paid a deep respect to their dearly departed loved ones and ensured that their memory and spirit would never be lost.



Patti Giglio

to guard the body and protect the soul from being carried off by the devil before it could complete the journey to the afterlife. Flowers filled the room, though not out of respect as today, but to serve a necessary purpose. The room that the deceased was laid out in was filled with flowers and candles to mask the odor of the slowly decomposing corpse as the



## Books by Patti Unvericht-Giglio

Patti Unvericht-Giglio has written several books about various subjects in Western New York history. Her titles *Ghosts and Hauntings of the Finger Lakes*, *Hidden History of the Finger Lakes*, *The Great Seaway Trail*; *History, Legends and Mysteries*, *Tales From These*

*Old Bones* and *The Silver Lake Institute* are available at Barnes and Noble, independent bookstores and her Facebook shop @theseoldbonestalk. Follow her on Facebook for other interesting history tidbits and announcements of events and new books coming out.



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# Planetary Messengers

Aeolea Wendy Burwell and Peter Doughty



Welcome back to our series focused on the ancient art-science of astrology. 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 and yet notice events going on in their lives, and the world at large, and wonder. We offer a look into the current celestial weather in hopes that readers will be able to use the energies for the highest and best possible outcomes.

We are obviously in a time of great change and disruption of patterns. Astrologers have been watching and anticipating great events at this time for many years. While few predicted a worldwide pandemic related to the current celestial configurations, it has been widely acknowledged that governments, monetary systems and more would break down. It is clear that things will not return to "normal" despite most everyone's desire and need to do so. Our collective task, should we choose to take it on, is to envision and work toward new, more equitable systems going forward. Knowing the current astrological energetic impulses can greatly assist us.

Everything we are currently experiencing is setting the stage for negotiating the minefield of our cultural disintegration leading up to the 2020 elections and their aftermath. Fasten your seat belts: We're in for a bumpy ride. Our eventual destination however will be worth it all.

We focus first on the Moon's cycle from New to Full and back again for each month. This is the fastest-moving cycle in our heavens and the most readily accessible in the sky to even the most casual observer. Since in astrological understanding, the Moon represents our emotions and how we respond to the ebb and flow of everyday life, it is also the most easily observed internally.

On Oct. 1 we start with the Full Moon in the early part of fiery Aries, and while it is not close to warrior Mars by degree, our feelings of frustration and headstrong tendencies will have their fires stoked even more. People with birthdays on or near Oct. 1 and March 30 can be most affected by this energy.

The next several weeks are likely to continue to burn as we approach the New Moon in late Libra Oct. 16. We can expect a greater wave of aggressive drama as it engages with the signature

challenge that marks all of 2020: namely the dynamic configuration of Mars (in Aries) and Jupiter, Saturn, Pluto and Pallas Athena (all in Capricorn). Mid-Oct. has long been identified by astrologers as containing the potential for dramatic events that likely will reverberate for years to come. Those with birthdays on or near Oct. 11-17, April 8-14, July 11-17 and Jan. 9-16 are most directly impacted by this energy. A word to the wise: this volatile, dynamic energy CAN be harnessed to be productive, with awareness to avoid angry outbursts or impulsive actions.

We have a third lunation in Oct. On Halloween, Oct. 31, the Full Moon in early Taurus will be exact with Uranus, putting an energetic spotlight on the planet of sudden and disruptive change. This can be reflected in economic and/or earth events such as earthquakes or tsunamis. Anyone born close to this date or April 29 will not only have an exciting birthday celebration but will also carry it into their year ahead!

On Nov. 15 the New Moon in late Scorpio suggests an opportunity for each of us to begin a new cycle of emotional deep cleaning as it supportively connects with the cluster in Capricorn as they are in a tense configuration with Venus in Libra. It may be challenging to find equity, direction or purpose in the rapidly changing social and economic landscape that is our current life.

Nov. 30 the Full Moon in early Gemini is also a partial Lunar Eclipse which, if skies

are clear, should be visible locally at 4:29 am. In addition to being visible in the US, making it even more significant, it is also making contact with Uranus in the Sibly chart of our country. This taps even more deeply into our well of unexpected developments over the coming months. Those born on or close to Nov. 30 and May 30 can expect to feel this most strongly.

On Oct. 14 Mercury stations (appears to stop) in mid-Scorpio in coordination (with the New Moon) to begin its retrograde phase. When a planet stations, its significance is magnified. In this case, we will all be focused on the reconsideration of accuracy of information and viewpoints. Since this entire Mercury

retrograde until Nov. 3, US Election Day, we ought to prepare for uncertainty about its outcome. Mercury was similarly positioned in 2000, a year marked by the closely contested Bush/Gore vote.

Venus covers much territory during these two months, beginning Oct. at the end of proud, notice-me Leo, then traversing the discriminating earthy sign of Virgo until Oct. 28. So, during most of October Venus will encourage us all to be discriminating, especially in the areas of health and service. She then moves into the artistic sign of Libra, with which she is strongly associated. Through this three-week stretch, our attention will be drawn even deeper into social awareness and issues of fairness. On Nov. 21 she moves into mysterious Scorpio, characterized by focusing even more intensely on complicated emotions.

During this entire time period, she will remain visible in the pre-dawn sky and if you're up that early, look to the east. She shines very bright and is easy to spot.

The prevailing potent planetary player of these two months is Mars, bright and red in the night sky, rising in the east after nightfall. Its energetic prominence is due to several factors: first, it is rare for Mars to spend six months in Aries and the last time it occurred was 1988, a year also marked by heat and drought. Second, the fact that it is in a very tense configuration with the historic group of planets in Capricorn. Mars has been retrograde since Sept., and on Friday Nov. 13 appears to stop (station) once again to make another run at the gaunt-

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Somewhere in the South Wedge



Artist Shawn Dunwoody reminds us that "Life in Abundance only comes through Great Love" on the walls of Abundance Co-op in the South Wedge. (Photo by Nancy O'Donnell Hale)

# The Only Way to Kill Ghastly Ghoulies is to EAT them!



Ghastly Ghoulies are inspired by classic horror with a twist. See the sweeter side of all your favorite monsters in a box of Hedonist Salted Caramels. (All treats, no tricks!) Made with fresh cream and the highest-quality ingredients, these Halloween caramels are

perfect for an undead loved one, a haunted house party, or simply to indulge your inner chocolate ghoul. Each box contains five salted caramels with artwork by local Rochester artist Lily Barber. As always each box crafted, decorated, and packaged by hand.



## Children Awaiting Parents

Among all those particularly hard hit from the pandemic are this country's 400,000+ children and youth living in foster care. More than 122,000 are waiting for a forever family. Whether due to the disruption in the court system, the challenge in the ability to provide in-person direct services, the instability of safety nets such as schools, or the trauma inflicted on those already traumatized, these children are more vulnerable than ever.

Lauri McKnight, executive director of the Rochester-based Children Awaiting Parents (CAP) notes that these are just some of the reasons that the November 6 gala, "Home, Heart & Harmony: Around the Table—Food from Your Family Tree" is so critical.

"We are excited to offer an in-person or virtual gala experience," said McKnight. "No matter the choice, this year's event will be an entertainment-filled evening and our most innovative gala to date! The party rolls out with local celebrity emcees Scott Spezzano and Sandy Waters, and features music, food, videos, an auction, wine pull, raffles, videos, and more."

Held during National Adoption

Month, the gala celebrates the connection between food and family, and offers a variety of ticket types available for purchase at [www.childrenawaitingparents.org](http://www.childrenawaitingparents.org), including:

- All-inclusive, In-person Gala Ticket (\$100): All access admission to LIVE event at Comedy at the Carlson (50 Carlson Road, Rochester) plus virtual auction, raffle, and wine pull
- All-inclusive Virtual Gala Ticket (\$50): All access admission to virtual event platform featuring real-time feed from live event hosted at Comedy at the Carlson, plus virtual auction, raffle and wine pull
- Auction-only Virtual Gala Ticket (\$25): Admission access only to virtual auction, raffle and wine pull on event platform

Additionally, CAP is offering creative sponsorship opportunities with new benefits. Gala proceeds support CAP's work to assist families throughout the adoption process, and provides programs and services that recruit, train, and support foster and adoptive parents. Visit [childrenawaitingparents.org](http://childrenawaitingparents.org) for more information.

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# VOTE!

**We are all in this together. Let's work together. Stay safe! Wear a mask!**

# Welcome to the World -- Miles Porter Posey



Hedonist Artisan Chocolates welcomes its newest staff member: Miles Porter Posey born August 7, 2020. Miles weighed in at 6 lbs. 13 oz. and 19 inches long. He is looking forward to eating solid foods one day, so he can be a taste tester in the Hedonist Test Kitchen. For now, he's sleeping on the job.

Photo by Asa Schutts of Schutts Productions

## Tenant Unions Call for Halt to Rochester Evictions

A group of elected officials and Chris Green, a tenant facing eviction, held a press conference in Rochester City Court on October 16. Officials joining Green included NY State Assembly member Harry Bronson; Demond Meeks, member elect of the NYS Assembly; Mark Muoio, Legal Aid Society of Rochester. Members of the Citywide Tenant Union of Rochester also came to support Green.

The group emphasized that "the widespread impression that Gov. Andrew Cuomo has extended the moratorium on evictions is not consistent with the reality of what is taking place in courtrooms across the state."

An Administrative Order on Evictions, released on October 9, makes it clear that on October 12 evictions would move forward in New York State.

More than one million families are facing Eviction Court and could lose their homes including thousands of Rochester tenants including the twenty-seven active warrants that have been signed as of October 14, 2020.

"I often remind everyone we are experiencing three crises simultaneously," said Assembly member Harry Bronson. "Between a pandemic, an economic

freefall and widespread racial injustice we are hurting. Perhaps no issue crosses into all three of these crises like housing. This year has challenged housing in a way that no other year has."

The City-Wide Tenant Union of Rochester in conjunction with the Rochester Housing Justice Alliance, Free the People ROC, and Housing Justice for All stand firmly behind the Rochester tenants who have had eviction warrants signed over the last few weeks.

Before the COVID-19 crisis, landlord-tenant court was already "an eviction machine churning tenants out of their homes, but especially during a pandemic, staying in your home is a literal matter of life and death."

The group called on the NYS Legislature to go back into session to extend the full eviction moratorium that has been in place since April for the duration of this crisis. Following the press conference, the housing alliance followed Rochester tenant Chris Green and other tenants into court to fight the Eviction Orders that have been signed against them. For more information on the Tenant Union, contact: Allie Dentinger ADentinger1@gmail.com 585-880-0025.

## Planetary Messengers

continued from pg. 9

let of the Capricorn cluster. Altogether, Mars will be retrograde for nine weeks and complete three tense contacts with the "Old Boys Network" meeting in the Capricorn board room. Venus joins the dynamic configuration also, bringing the feminine perspective on justice into the mix - again. Tensions are sky-high, and it will be most important to choose our battles wisely. It IS possible to use these energies productively in order to avoid being abused by them. Those born Jan. 5-17, April 4-16, July 7-19 and Oct. 8-20 will register these climactic energies in their personal lives most strongly.

The planets beyond Mars move more slowly through the zodiac. Jupiter (expansion) and Saturn (restriction) have a regular cycle of coming together every twenty years and their union registers with great significance in social, economic and political terms worldwide. Since they are slow movers, we feel the effects of this pattern long before they meet late this year on the Winter Solstice, Dec. 21. They have been traveling together in business-minded Capricorn through this entire year, and we have all felt their energies whether we could name them or not. One clear example of their coming together is the beginning of the worldwide COVID-19 lock-down. They will start their journey through socially-oriented Aquarius to-

gether, and we will all be aware of the great energetic shift starting in late Dec. It's likely that people will be taking to the streets either to celebrate or to protest.

This year, these two giants are also dancing with Pluto - the planet of life-and-death transformation. This is also a repeating pattern but a very rare one. The last time these three met in Capricorn was 1285, an era that witnessed the emergence of the capitalist system now undergoing radical change. The second week of Nov., Jupiter makes its third and final contact of this cycle with Pluto, deepening and expanding the scope of our shared metamorphosis.

These two months mark the culmination of the great upheaval for which this year has been long anticipated and for which it will be long remembered. Self-awareness is our greatest asset as we negotiate this challenging path toward a new era.

The authors welcome the chance to help you understand all the potential of these energies in relation to your personal chart.

**A - Z Astrology Aeolea Wendy Burwell and Peter Doughty, zoidion@protonmail.com**



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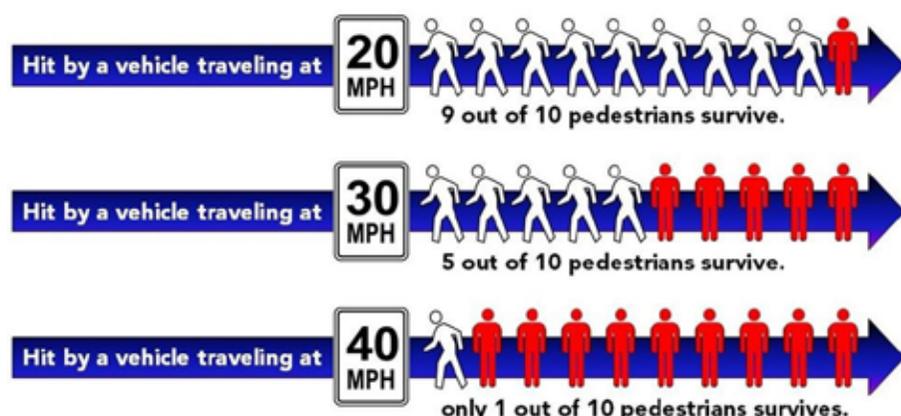
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# South Wedge Food Program Helps People through Pandemic

This story originally appeared in *Talker of the Town*, 21 Sept. 2010.

Last week I did, where I met the South Wedge Food Program's Manager Josh Knoblock who explained how the pantry — with various adjustments — also has been able to meet the needs of its patrons during the pandemic.

In January, Josh volunteered at South Wedge Food Program. Shortly thereafter, as he says, "the world fell apart" when COVID-19 hit. Given his background in food service, management, and in the non-profit sector, Josh discovered his skill set could be effectively utilized as the pandemic strained the program's resources. Josh moved from volunteer to full time manager.

Kramer: Who does the SWFP serve? Who supplies the food and how is it distributed? You mentioned that offering nutritional food is a priority. How do you ensure that patrons receive a healthy and balanced diet?

Josh: The South Wedge Food Program serves all of Rochester and the adjoining zip codes. As a FoodLink partner we get most of our food from them and follow their guidance on giving out the most nutritious selection possible.

Kramer: When the pandemic hit, you faced basic logistical problems just in terms of social distancing, masking, keeping a hygienic workspace, etc. How did the program reorient to face these challenges?

Josh: The most immediate issues were that requests for our service increased drastically and we were no longer able to invite those in need into the building to do as in-person shop through. A lot of people stepped up and started



ROC Salt Center Executive Director Rev. Katie Jo Suddaby (Photo by David Kramer)

making cloth masks for us so the need was met fairly early on for us and the rest of the solutions like providing delivery and giving out prepacked bags at the door just evolved out of necessity.

Kramer: At the peak of the pandemic, as did stores throughout Rochester,

the pantry was inundated with panicked patrons seeking non-perishable canned goods and non-food items like toilet paper. Reverend Katie Jo Suddaby, Executive Director of the ROC Salt Center, the umbrella organization that includes SWFP, says she told worried patrons that

## David Kramer

when the need was great, Rochesterians always responded generously. Did you fear that demand would dangerously outstrip supply and did you see the generosity of Rochesterians come forth?

Josh: Yes, we couldn't help but think, in the back of our minds, that we might not be able to keep pace with demand. But at the end of the day we were able to meet the needs of everyone, with help of the community. Whether it was in the form of individuals donating to food drives or just stopping by with what they had to spare, community gardens and their fresh produce, Foodlink rallying resources to keep the trucks coming, we were shown a huge amount of support that let us continue uninterrupted.

Kramer: In many ways, pantry use is a barometer of local economic trends. Run us through the numbers before the pandemic when the economy was relatively good, when the pandemic peaked, when the pandemic began to recede, when unemployment benefits expired and where we are now. How are you anticipating pantry use going forward during this pandemic economy? Is there a silver lining in that more people are now aware of the healthy food options the pantry offers?

Josh: The numbers show what you'd probably expect. At the beginning there was a high demand that reached about 500%, as the initial panic subsided it went to around 300% compared to the pre-pandemic numbers. And it has stayed steady around there with some busier days recently that could be linked to people who are no longer getting the federal unemployment. Regardless of the reason we are here for those in need and are glad people are aware we are open and welcome them to call or visit once a month.

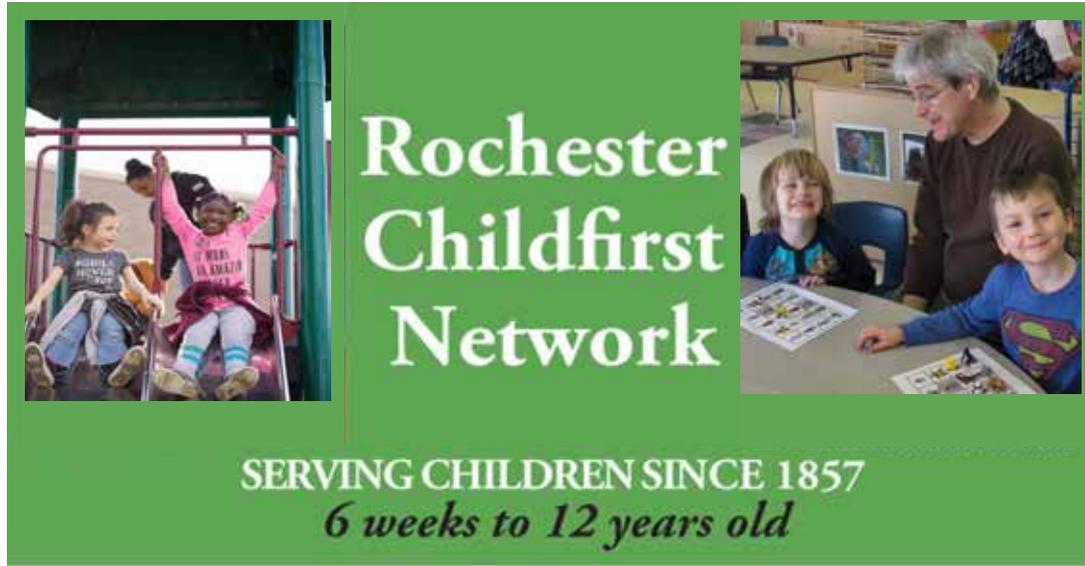
Kramer: On the day I visited, from the Alison Clarke Garden on the church grounds, I brought home a giant head of cabbage and had my eye on a pumpkin for Halloween. Tell us about the garden.

Josh: The vegetable garden as well as the other gardens are taken care of by the Friends of Calvary St Andrews Church. They grow a variety of vegetables like tomatoes, greens, carrots. On the mornings we are open their volunteers harvest and wash them and then pass them on to us to give out with our other groceries.

Moving forward, a new program will be Saturday morning educational forums organized by Reverend Katie Jo Suddaby and facilitated by Tonya Noel Stevens. As explained by Katie Jo:

The program on Saturdays will allow for groups to engage in volunteerism with the food program, and then participate in a discussion on the underlying causes of food insecurity, in our community. It is an opportunity for everyone to learn more about problems we see our clients deal with everyday, that they may or may not have experienced in their own lives.

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# Art & Gardening in the Era of Pandemic

My wife Marcia and I are now, unofficially, a family of sun makers and the pandemic has helped make it happen. We create art from the garden as our way to share appreciation for all things green, wonderful and sustainable.

After our first joint show in early 2020, all other planned exhibits, studio events and festival appearances were cancelled. Yet even as the crisis continues, we've enjoyed gifts of spirit from having our work shown nationally, albeit in an anonymous and fleeting fashion. On four occasions this year, including three since the pandemic took over our lives, our work has been shown at the conclusion of a story on CBS *Sunday Morning*. The process usually starts with an email Saturday night from Jessica Frank, aka "The Sun Lady," to tell us that the next day's program will include a showing of one of our suns. Often we don't know which image will be used, which makes the experience like having a present unwrapped in the presence of an audience of millions. In fact, our work has been broadcast a total of eleven times since 2017, including during two Thanksgiving specials and the story of CBS Sun Art shown during the show's 40th anniversary celebration.

What makes the 2020 appearances poignantly relevant is that the subjects of three of those stories were the effects of the COVID-19 emergency on home gardeners and farm markets. Within the shadow of sadness cast by the greatest crisis of our times lives another story about gardening.

I am old enough to have known family members, such as my grandparents, who survived the pandemic of 1918. Given their history and that of global disease, much of the tragedy that now defines our times was predictable. But there have also been effects to the lives of friends and neighbors that were unexpected. For example: the pandemic changed the practice of urban gardening. And that is because it created many more home gardeners immediately.

Starting in mid-March, the ranks of home gardeners grew so quickly that America's seed producers were overwhelmed.

Within weeks many were forced to halt taking orders. In addition to the unprecedented surge of new orders, businesses had problems with pandemic related staffing shortages. By mid-April even the largest companies, such as Burpee and Baker Creek were in a cycle where they resumed order taking for only a day or two before pausing again to restock and catch up with shipping. Even after ordering was enabled, many of the more popular vegetable and flower varieties were sold out and some will not be available until seed is restocked for the 2021 growing season.

The run on supplies affected local garden stores as well. Among other items, bags of organic potting soil and soil amendments that we use, such as mushroom and leaf compost, were available in limited quantity but as spring ended, one by one, these went out of stock.

Compared to most new gardeners, Marcia and I were well prepared for the 2020 garden season. This is because of our history as gardeners and artists. I've been gardening since I learned it from my grandfather when I was ten. Whether it was on a porch balcony or, later, in our apartment's side yard, wherever I could find space, I planted herbs and vegetables.

When we bought our house here in the Highland Park Neighborhood in 1991, it wasn't the size of the house (it's small) that mattered to me most, it was whether the backyard had enough space for a vegetable garden. As a new homeowner, Marcia also developed passions for growing flowers and began to create her

collection of hostas all over our property.

While our backyard garden has always been an oasis of solace, in recent years, it also became an open-air art studio as we have continued to add to our photographic series of organic collage. For art series such as our "Celestial Vegetables," we use homegrown vegetables, flowers, seeds and foliage as the palette from which we build our still life compositions.

Every year we look for new and rare varieties from worldwide sources for art and for culinary use. Because the latest or most unusual plant seeds are often in limited quantities, I begin ordering seeds in November. This meant that well before the pandemic caused lockdowns, almost all of our orders were already in hand.

In addition, I've been part of the growing group of seed savers. For some of the seven types of pole beans that I plant, I haven't bought new seed for over 25 years, I just dry and save seeds at the end of the season. Every year I add more tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, cucumbers and flowers as seed saving projects. Annually, I've often shared a few of my extra plants, including the many kinds of basil (over 20) that I grow. This year I was one of many who gave away extra plants via notices on social media. The number of plants I shared in late spring grew fivefold compared to previous years. And I especially loved that many of the recipients were new to gardening. Some have enthusiastically sent me pictures of the plants in their new homes!

In a year of many unfortunate trends, that so many of our neighbors have also joined the gardening movement is heartwarming. Early on, for the first time since we joined it, the community garden where we also grow things filled up. The demand was so popular that the garden's members went to work and built additional plots so as to welcome even more new gardeners.

If it is possible for a pandemic to have a "best part," then surely neighbors sharing a passion for growing things is the most positive side effect.

The stress of our new era cannot extinguish the joys of being a part of community, it only enhances the togetherness even as we stay apart. For Marcia and I, that community is made of neighbors, artists and gardeners. And whether by way of one of our images on a social media timeline, or within plants we share, or at the end of a story broadcast to the nation, our garden and our art is sending greetings to our friends, relatives, neighbors and everyone else that we are able to reach.

For information on Michael and Marcia's "CBS Sunday Morning" Collection of art prints and greeting cards, see their website [studiomichaelino.com](http://studiomichaelino.com).

## Michael Tomb



"Comet Toma Verde" by Michael Tomb and Marcia Zach. Celebrating our viewing of Comet Neowise in July 2020



"Garlic Pop Sun Variation" by Michael Tomb appeared after story "Jim Gaffigan on acquiring a green thumb" shown on CBS Sunday Morning August 9, 2020



"Grandma's Star" by Marcia Zach appeared after story "A Seattle Farmers Market Reopens" shown on CBS Sunday Morning April 20, 2020

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# South Wedge Food Pantry

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Tonya Noel Stevens, Co-founder of the Flower City Noire Collective and the Director of Cause and Effect Greenspace (Photo by David Kramer)

### David Kramer

One Saturday, I joined members of the Rotary Club who volunteered in the morning and then participated in a discussion on food insecurity. I met with Tonya, Co-founder of the Flower City Noire Collective and the Director of Cause and Effect Greenspace.

Tonya offered an overview of the impact of historical and institutional racism on food security in Rochester. The conversation was wide ranging. At one

point, we talked about how to build solidarity between urban people of color and white rural people who both suffer from limited access to healthy, affordable food. One woman who works with rural populations says she generally avoids the academic sounding term “white privilege.” Instead, she talks about “un-earned privilege,” that is, socio-economic privileges that perpetuate food insecurity and disparate health outcomes.



South Wedge Food Program’s Manager Josh Knoblock (Photo by David Kramer)

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South Wedge Food Program’s Manager Josh Knoblock stops to take a break (Photo by David Kramer)



The historic Calvary St. Andrews Church on Ashland Street has opened its doors to the South Wedge Food pantry and the many people are now in need due to the pandemic and its attendant financial freefall. (Photo by David Kramer)



David Kramer and green pumpkin in the Alison Clarke Garden [Photo by Josh Knoblock]

**The WEDGE want to hear from you! Do you have a story you want to tell? A photo you want to share? Please send it to us-- the wedge.org**