

WEDGE

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

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Photo by Nancy O'Donnell Hale

Earth Tea Shop Expands on South Ave.
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Succulent Japanese plums, sweet with floral notes, were grown at Upstart Farms for the South Wedge Farmers Market. This ancient fruit was used to treat respiratory and digestive problems in traditional Chinese medicine. Stop by the Market on Thursdays, 4 to 7 p.m. to find more interesting goodies. (Photo by Glynis Valenti)

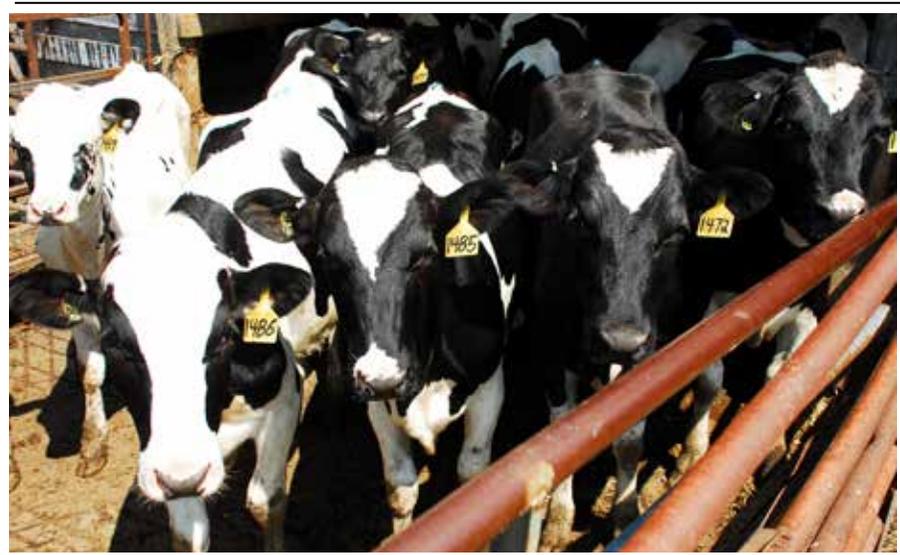
South Wedge Farmers' Market Bustles this Season

Chad Flint, Market Manager

The South Wedge Farmers Market has been bustling this season, and we are very excited to bring you great local produce, fruit, baked goods, and so many other locally made products. We appreciate all the customers that come out and support all of our vendors each and every week. We have had between 12 and 20 vendors each and every week along with different community organizations. This season we have three amazing bakers offering a wide array of different baked goods, many of which are vegan and some that are gluten free. If you have not had a chance to check out GG Bakes, Soulistic Sweets, and The Little Brownie you should make plans to stop by and try out a sweet treat each and every week because you deserve it! Upstart Berry Farm has been bringing a wide variety of locally grown in season

produce and fruit each week. Customers have been enjoying different varieties of berries, greens, tomatoes, and so much more. Bonnie and her niece have been a great addition to the market, and we are lucky to have her join us every week providing the neighborhood with a great selection of produce and fruit. Having a local beef vendor who raises their own cattle is something that not many small local markets get to enjoy. Vetter's Beef has been coming to the market on selected dates during the 2020 and 2021 season with many great cuts of meat for customers to enjoy. If you have not had the opportunity to try some ground beef or a steak from Vetter's, make a point to pick up something for the grill the next time they are at the market. Vetter's is scheduled to be at the market August 5th, August 19th, and

September 2nd, but check the website, Facebook, or Instagram to make sure the schedule has not changed if you are coming for some great cuts of meat! We have some new vendors starting up including Fiddlehead Farms who sell locally-grown honey and other beeswax products. Stay tuned to our website and social media channels to see what vendors we will have each week. If you are interested in volunteering at the market, becoming a vendor, or sponsoring the market please contact Chad at chadflint33@gmail.com. Many thanks to our 2021 South Wedge Farmers Market Sponsors: Highland Hospital, Rochester Gas and Electric, Abundance Co-op, Angry Goat Pub, and Greenlight Networks. 357 Gregory Street. Odd Fellows Lodge.



Vetter's Beef starts with a crossbreed of Holstein and Black Angus. The cows graze in free-range pasture and are fed a blend of grasses from the farm with high quality, all natural minerals, vitamins, and amino acids, filling their complete nutrition requirements every day. (Photo by Glynis Valenti)

Vetter's Beef at the South Wedge Market

Glynis Valenti

When Bob was a boy growing up in rural New York, farms fascinated him. His family didn't farm, but one down the road did, and he started visiting, watching the activity, learning about the animals. That family put him to work, and he knew he wanted to work with farms for the rest of his life. As Vetter continued learning and working with other farms, he became a Registered Animal Scientist with the

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

City Council Update

Rochester Community Power Info

Mary Lupien



City Council member Mary Lupien

The Rochester Community Power program has been a popular topic of conversation in the last few weeks. The response ranges from excitement to skepticism to outrage. I'd like to share what I know about the program with WEDGE readers.

The Rochester Community Power (RCP) Plan helps us to meet the City of Rochester's Sustainability Goals that we adopted in the Climate Action plan in May of 2017. RCP is classified as Community Choice Aggregation (CCA), and it's listed in the Climate Action Plan as one tool to facilitate the transition away from fossil fuels in our electricity use. You can read more about it online at cityofrochester.gov/climateactionplan.

Climate advocates, myself included, have been advocating for the CCA model because it can effectively switch cities over to 100% renewable energy very quickly by pooling all its residences, businesses and public buildings and go out to bid and negotiate for a competitive bulk electricity price due to the sheer number of customers.

I think most of us could agree that transitioning to renewable energy is paramount. As I write this article, parts of Germany and China are under water, and Rochester's skies are hazy from wildfires burning in Oregon. We've seen dangerous heat waves in the Northwest and record rainfall and flash flood alerts in Rochester. The Climate Crisis is at our door, and we must act with urgency.

However, it is also important to ensure that residents understand this very important change in their electricity bill and how it will impact them.

Many have questions about the extra cost and why they are being opted into something they hadn't heard about previously. I understand. Trust in government is at an all-time low and lots of us have received questionable letters from energy companies trying to pull one over on us. So, I'll tell you what I know.

Opt-in or Opt-out?

Residents will be auto-enrolled in September unless they opt out, receive HEAP or have another Energy Supplier (ESCO) other than RG&E. If you didn't get a letter and are not on HEAP, you may have another energy supplier. RG&E requires that you contact the Energy Supplier you have and request to cancel your contract from them, and

then call RG&E with the confirmation number. You can then you can opt-in to the Rochester Community Power Plan.

The Department of Public Service requires an opt-out letter and outreach to inform the community of their ability to not participate. The opt-out is essential to being able to negotiate a bulk purchase, and influence pricing and is required for cities to participate in Community Choice Aggregation programs. However, you can opt in or out at any time at no cost.

What's the cost?

The cost can range from a few dollars extra to saving a few dollars. The Rochester Community Power plan rate is fixed at 0.058 cents per kilowatt for 100% renewable energy, while RG&E's rate is variable and contains a fossil fuel mix. Though we've had very low energy prices during the pandemic, rates are now rising and are projected to rise even more. Today, the price for RG&E is .0497 cents and on my electricity bill, the rate difference reflects a \$3.50 increase for July.

Where does the renewable energy come from?

Constellation New Energy, the supplier for the Rochester Community Power program, is offering 100% NYS renewably generated electricity purchasing from primarily hydropower facilities and some wind facilities.

The City selected Constellation and Joule Assets, the administrator, through

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Letter to the Editor

Moderates! Time to Step up!

Stew Epstein



Stew Epstein is a new volunteer for/w/ith The "National Eating Disorders Association" ("NEDA"). A retired college professor of Sociology, Social Policy, and Psychology, Epstein has taught at West Virginia University, Slippery Rock University, and Keuka College.

I believe that our country needs to have more political "moderates" and "centrists" than we do now. I think we were better off in the 1960s when about 20%-30% of us considered ourselves to be "in the middle of the road." Today, this has gone down to about 10%-15%. I miss the times when most Democrats and Republicans used to disagree "but with respect." That ship sailed a long time ago.

While I am definitely on the side of one of the two "warring tribes," I am still a 1960s-style Bobby Kennedy liberal-Democrat, and I refuse to view conservative-Republicans as my enemies even though a lot of them make it very hard not to do so with their use of what Jane Mayer calls "stealth tactics" and what Paul Krugman calls them operating out of "bad faith."

I think we were better off when most elections were usually decided by the 20%-30% who were in the middle of the road. They had open-minds. Most of us don't anymore.



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The WEDGE Newspaper

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Print distribution is suspended during the pandemic. Read us online at 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 or letters 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.

Before recycling the Wedge, please share with others.

South Wedge Planning Committee

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

SWPC Board Wed. Aug. 18, Sept. 15, 6 p.m.

contact: flogan@rochester.rr.com

Community Engagement (Neighbors & Block Clubs)

Wed. Aug. 25 Sept. 22, 5:30 p.m.
gvalenti@swpc.org

South Wedge Victory Gardens

Mon. 6 p.m., TBD
scott.wagner.ny@gmail.com

Swillburg Shout Out

Mike Henry

This summer seems especially welcome as we emerge from the restrictions of COVID while enjoying beautiful sunny days (if not a bit extra hot here and there)!

Swillburg neighbors wisely heeded the call to distance and toned down our usually busy schedule of social events. However, we're happily reemerging as CDC guidelines allow and already this early summer have had multiple gatherings, primarily for planting and cultivating our several neighborhood gardens. Roughly ten neighbors came out on a Saturday in early June to plant an abundance of flowers at the Bloom Garden's neighborhood entrance at Monroe Avenue and Field Street. Thanks to Monroe County for providing the flowers and many bags of mulch! Thanks too to neighbors Kelley Mariano for coordinating this and to Dave Ferguson who used his truck to transport all the plants! And, thanks for the many volunteers!

Also, at the Bloom Garden we've had our sprinkler system repaired made possible by a grant from the Rochester Area Community Foundation, made possible, too, by neighborhood leader Judy Hay who wrote and submitted the time-consuming grant request. The many flowers in the Garden gives us a visually pleasing welcome when we arrive home to Swillburg. Now we're about to enjoy another colorful event, the Playful Sidewalk Painting Project, which will take place along Field Street and around Otto Henderberg Park. The



Bloom Garden, Field Street & Monroe Ave.
Photo by Mike Henry

South East Area Coalition is sponsoring this along with Swillburg Neighborhood Association (SNA) and The Upper Monroe Avenue Neighborhood Association.

Artists Chloe Smith and La Shanda Davis have created the templates and designs for this project, an event especially intended for children and their parents. I'll be anxious to see the results!

Coming in late August, we'll be having another pop-up sale of Swillburg merchandise. The plans are still in the works, but we'll be sure to spread the word via Next Door, the WEDGE Facebook page and on our Swillburg website. We hope to present some new Swillburg items including outdoor blankets with the Swillburg logo as well as pens with pig motifs. Get it? Pig pens for Swillburg!

And another event, coming in late August is Wilson Day of Engagement, an annual University of Rochester sponsored event (2020 was the exception) where U of R freshmen join

us in Swillburg to undertake various clean-up projects while we introduce them to our part of Rochester. Neighbor Sharon Price will again take the lead in coordinating with the university.

Wow, this all speaks to the wonders of community collaboration from all levels - the large university and community foundation along with the urban preservation corporation of SEAC to grassroots door-to-door efforts of neighbors!

Before closing I just have to make a special shout out of thanks to Josh Jacobs who lent his great design and organizational skills which greatly promote the SNA's efforts. Also, a great shout out of thanks to Nancy O'Donnell and South Wedge Planning Committee for affording us a column in the Wedge Newspaper! Community indeed!



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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 logan@rochester.rr.com.

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Business Buzz

Nancy O'Donnell Hale

Happy Earth aka Leaf Tea Bar Expands Space & Community on South Avenue



(l-r) Niraj Lama, Tara Lama and Mary Boland (Photo by Nancy O'Donnell Hale)

To the delight of many followers, Happy Earth Tea Shop reopened, transformed into bigger and brighter space in the South Wedge. Happy Earth moved from its cozy space for five years at 650 to 696 South Avenue. On July 11, owners Niraj Lama and Mary Boland were joined by their daughter Tara to welcome shoppers and sippers during the grand opening. Long time staff member Jane Wineberg said that even before the 10 a.m. ribbon cutting people had lined up all the way to the intersection of South Avenue and Gregory Street. The cozy feeling remains even

though there are now a few more seats at the bar and three tables for two are inside. Three more sidewalk tables are in front of the store. "We want it to be an intimate experience," said Niraj, stopping for a moment as he moved around the room, greeting customers and answering questions. The larger space allows the couple to add favorite art works to the walls. A varicolored cloth hanging on the wall is a "women's empowerment quilt," said Boland who bought it years ago in India. "The pieces are from women's clothing."

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Instant Relatives, Cemetery in a Cup, Monster Repellent, oh my!



Instant ancestors

Imagine having relatives without all the baggage. Writer Patti Giglio makes it possible with the addition of historical photos aka "Instant Families" now for sale at her table at the South Wedge Market. She's also added adorable decorative tiny cemeteries, "Monster Spray," and house blessings in a bottle, born out of her Appalachian kitchen witchery roots. "My 'Instant Relatives' started off as material for my writing projects, just simple old photographs that I picked up at antique stores, Co-ops and flea markets," said Giglio. "The more photographs I collected, the more I thought about the people in them and the circumstances under which they came into my possession. Often families may discard them like strangers because they knew nothing about the people in the photo and had no interest in finding out who they were. "I am a firm believer that you don't truly die until the last person speaks



Tiny cemeteries

your name, and I didn't want them to "die" that way," Giglio added. "So, I began doing more in-depth research into their lives, their parents, spouses and children. I found obituaries, marriage announcements, basically every bit of information that I could find and wrote their biography. The goal was to have people "adopt" them into their family and give them a new life. The "adoption package" includes a bio, obituary, military records if they have any, and newspaper articles about them if available. Giglio said that "perhaps the most interesting and exciting one that I have found so far came in the form of a letter from the Civil War-era. The letter was from Elgin, Illinois and talks about family life at the beginning and then speaks about a soldier in her husband's regiment who had just died at Camp

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Renewing Massage Adds a Touch of London to the Lawn



Little Red Free Library (Photo by Michael Brundage)

South Wedge businessowner Colin Coffey now enjoys a reminder of his English birthplace through a little bit of help from his friends. A Little Free Library in the shape of a London telephone booth now sits in front of his business Renewing Massage on a busy stretch of South Avenue. "Since Colin used to work for British Telecom, I asked my father, Gary Brundage, to make it look like a London phone box," said husband Michael. "My first proper job was in 1988 with British Telecom Payphones in London, helping to remove these old telephone boxes," explained Coffey. "Then my job became to protect the few remaining that were listed as 'historic buildings.'" Coffey said he moved to the U.S. when "The National Communication Workers Union negotiated a severance package that allowed me to study for an MBA in Houston, TX." He met his future husband Michael in Texas, and the couple moved to Rochester and married in 2009 in Lee, Massachusetts. The Little Free Library was designed and built by Colin's father-in-law Gary Brundage (MGM Designs) while mother-in-law Mary painted on coats of red paint and 10-year-old nephew Quinn Dale was the designated "day laborer," helping to dig out the hole for the post. Michael acted as design consultant and assistant to the whole project. "This red phone box was not my idea, but it's a symbol to me of how so many of us have been welcomed though, and I feel that doubly, as the child of Irish immigrants in England, and as a naturalized US citizen," said Coffey. A free doggy poop bag dispenser was recently added to the design while above the telephone booth fills, empties and refills with free children and adult books.

Think Small!
Now more than ever small businesses need your support. Be there for them when you can.



Untamed Nutrition celebrated shark week by dunking a gummy shark in their tea

Untamed Nutrition Opens on South Ave.

Finding it hard to transition from junk food to foods good for you? Untamed Nutrition is your kind of place. The smoothie and tea bar's menu, offers "protein-based bakery-inspired" shakes with names like "pecan sticky buns, banana cream pie, cinnamon roll, strawberry shortcake or lemon pound cake." Believe it or not the shakes register under 300 calories without add-ins. Care for some candy? How about "joyful of almond, buttery fingers, or

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Roc Community Power

continued from pg. 2

a competitive RFP process. Joule Assets was selected specifically because of their commitment to NYS renewable electricity and their unique ability to incorporate community solar into the program - which is in process of being developed but is not a part of the initial offering. Joule partners with Roctricity, a local administrator made up of climate advocates. All of the purchasing is going to support renewable energy facilities that are located within NYS - contributing to our state economy through Renewable Energy Credits (RECs). When an electricity generator is creating energy, it puts the electrons into the grid - every invisible electron is like another one, and they flow within the wires - when we turn on our power - the electrons could have come from anywhere. This program is making sure that the purchasing of electricity is supporting those generators that put electrons into the grid from renewable sources. Those generators have certificates that verify the authenticity of the renewable energy and those certificates are traded through a separate market called NYGATS - NY Generation Attribute System. Constellation New Energy will make sure there are enough of these RECs to equal the energy consumption of the participants in the Rochester Community Power program. Thanks for reading! If you have any other questions, reach out to info@rochestercommunitypower.com.

Living the Good Old Days

Michele H. Martell



“Wish we could turn back time, to the good old days” laments the talented Twenty One Pilots while they drink their juice pouches on a curb and reminisce in their “Stressed-Out” video. What a timeless tune.

The premise of this song is actually pretty brilliant. After all, it can represent a universal concept across generations. And as fun as this song and video are, when kids sing along to this tune, I have to wonder how much of its meaning does indeed stick with them. “When our momma sang us to sleep, but now we’re stressed out.” How many times have we each looked back to earlier times, fantasizing about how wonderful they were? Perhaps they were indeed wonderful, and we just didn’t realize it at the time. It is true that as life goes on, things can become more complicated.

When my kids were little, more experienced parents would tell me that the days of sleeplessness and potty-training were nothing compared to what was ahead; that the older the child, the more complicated it gets. Just like with childhood and teenage drama, what we thought was insurmountable was usually not so much life-shattering as we felt then. But yeah, they were still important; after all, they were the good old days.

When we are younger, there is, too, a sense of carelessness. Somehow we have the concept that we are immortal, forever young, and that mentality can continue until suddenly, we may realize that life is no longer footloose and fancy-free. I think what happens is that consequences become more serious as life goes on, and less able to easily fix.

Perhaps regret is part of the propensity for some to look back to the “good old days.” We may have regret over decisions made, opportunities ignored, and more. I don’t believe in regret as long as we learn from decisions that may not have been the best and work to improve life from there. And others who take away from the positivity of our days can be a part of those life-building lessons, too.

I think also of the perspective that just like the old saying that “time heals all wounds,” as time goes on, the difficulty of a situation loses its intensity, and we don’t feel the same grip it used to have on us.

So, we may reflect on the past using a different lens than the one that were the reality at the time, feeling that that time period was the good old days.

When I look at the time frame when my dad was sick and I traveled back and forth to Cleveland, I remember it as a horrible, painful and tumultuous time; but now when I reminisce about the conversations we’d have during his lucid moments I miss those simple moments.

What are times in your life that you had wished away, yet now you look back wistfully, realizing now that those were good old days of precious moments?

During my dad’s final days, I gathered collections from his home that I knew had meaning for his good old days-- baseball and classroom and musical pictures and his songs. His songwriting mementos included ones from the Cleveland Rock Hall of Fame and Amateur Radio and precious letters from days gone by. I collected these items during that chaos because I knew they meant something to him. At his funeral I handed those things out to the people who I knew would appreciate them. The joyful look in their eyes when I presented those things from the good old days—their gratitude for being remembered and cherished – those are the blessings of the good old days that moved into the present moment.

Several of these friends have died in recent years. I will never forget the heartwarming look in their eyes

when they saw photos and letters from the good old days. Joy, appreciation and remembrance are timeless.

The inspiration for this topic actually originated from my kids. We were talking while riding in my car about the importance of friends and family and being happy. And then Twenty One Pilots’ “Stressed-Out” came on the radio and we all sang along. Voila! Just like that, the inspiration I had been seeking for an entire weekend appeared. Music and kids can certainly have a way of inspiring! And it’s kinda funny how my kids hold the same musical inspirations I do.

So how about this thought: These are the good old days! Every moment, every smile, every day that we get to wake up in our own bed and to have the health to arise from that bed, is indeed a good day! Singing along in a car, walking dogs, brushing our children’s hair, planting flowers, healing past wounds or present ones, playing music, enjoying our ambitions, helping another, heck – even breathing – those make for good days.

Enjoying family and friends of the two-legged and four-legged varieties, reading a book, journaling, writing, strolling, exercising, and just being your own authentic and fabulous self, all these moments make for good old days.

Listing these important elements in making life good, is a reminder of the craziness of recent times and how it’s taken a toll in so many awful ways for many. Yet I will also always look back on the shutdown with a reflective twist that I actually got to be shut-in with my kids who pretty soon won’t need me around anymore. With no disrespect to so many who have lost so much during this strange season in history, there will be some of us who will look at this nutty time, weirdly, as some good old days. Perhaps they have brought us back to the simplicity of what is good and basic for joy in our lives.

So, what makes up your good old days? Think about it--that is your today! And tomorrow you can look back at your good old days while still building more sparkling tomorrows. We can always be present in these good old days. After all, in the words of singer Carly Simon in her beautiful song “Anticipation” -- “And stay right here ‘cause these are the good old days”. And they can be.



Michele H. Martell
(Photo by Sarah Jeruta Salvilla)

Meet Robbie Braman

Nancy O’Donnell Hale

Robbie Braman’s long journey to a life as an integrative health coach and chef began in his hometown of Carlsbad, San Diego. His love affair with food and the food industry began at 16 years old when he landed his first restaurant job at the city’s famous destination theme park, Legoland.

“I’ve always been in the restaurant business. At Legoland, I was the apple scooper and made pancake balls,” said Braman. “But even before that when I was a young kid I was baking apple cakes from a recipe I found on a real estate postcard.”

Another job at a San Diego restaurant, Pat & Oscar’s, confirmed his love of the industry.

“I was challenged by the manager in a kind of negative way,” said Braman. “She asked me ‘do you belong here?’ And I said, ‘yeah, I actually do.’”

He took cooking classes in a local community college and worked at the Four Seasons in Carlsbad always “front of house.”

“They wouldn’t hire me in the kitchen,” said Braman, so I was a pool boy or working in the bar.

Along the way, Braman said, “I served Arnold Palmer an Arnold Palmer.”

“My intention was to learn how to cook and to experience, to eat and taste.”

Eventually he moved on to creating cold appetizers and salads, cooked crab and stocked the buffet.”

In 2007 he moved east and entered the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park right before “the market crashed in 2008.”

“It was the first time I was living on my own. I had just come out of the closet. While it was a lot of fun, it was stressful. I was working private events in NYC, going to school. Cooking for other students; being criticized as a student.”

He earned an associates degree and a bachelor’s degree, and he continued working in the food industry.

“I had an internship in The Modern, a restaurant attached to the MOMA. “I was making lots of pate, *amuse bouche*. Many of his favorite jobs in NYC front of house, becoming more knowledge-



Robbie Braman, chef and health coach

able with wine and spirits. He worked front of house at Lincoln Ristorante.

Eventually, he returned to California in 2016 and found a different restaurant scene.

“[Restaurant industry] was slowing down in San Diego,” said Braman. “Other restaurants were shutting down. I had to make a quick decision. Do I stay in restaurants and wait around or get more into health cooking and fitness?”

The deciding factor in bringing Braman eastward was falling in love. When his boyfriend decided to move back to his hometown of Rochester, Braman was ready to go.

He kept his hands in the kitchen by offering cooking lessons every other Sunday via Zoom early in the pandemic. His easy-going recipes using only a few ingredients were definitely a stress reliever “burrata, strawberries, tomatoes and basil pesto.”

“I started with my family and then added more and more people,” said Braman, eventually making it “a pay what you wish.”

continues on pg. 13

Vetter’s Beef

Continued from pg. 1



American Registry of Professional Animal Scientists (ARPAS) and a Livestock Nutritional Consultant. His focus was on family farms and helping them with better production, healthier animals and “believing in family farming” that could compete in larger agriculture markets.

Along the way, Vetter discovered that he was feeling sick when he ate mass-market beef, suspecting additives in the meat as the culprit. So, he set up an experiment. He purchased his own cow and raised it on the diet he prescribed to many of his clients: grass, hay, and alfalfa supplemented with amino acids and all-natural mineral and vitamin supplements; no hormones, no antibiotics, no animal by-products.

“Cows have nutritional requirements for their bodies just like we do,” Vetter notes. “It stands to reason that the more nutritious the food for the cows, the more nutritious the beef will be for humans.”

He had the beef processed, ate that, and was no longer sick. At that point Vetter decided to raise his own cows.

One of his clients purchased a dairy farm between Avon and Honeoye Falls in 1955. For over a decade Joe Mroczek and his son Andy have used Vetter’s consulting service to enhance and optimize feeding and production for their herd of Holsteins, but the farm has been scaling back milk

production little by little due to society’s waning demand for milk products.

“COVID was the final nail in the coffin,” says Andy.

It turns out that school systems are the biggest consumers of milk, and with the closure of schools last year for remote learning, the family made the difficult decision to cease operations.

About the same time, Vetter was looking for a new location for his small herd of beef cattle in the Finger Lakes that would be closer to his home in Avon. One day he stopped at the Mroczek farm with a proposal that would keep him closer to his family and keep Mroczek Farm operating.

“Today’s start-up costs for a farm, well, it just isn’t feasible,” Vetter says. “Combining my business with Andy’s is allowing us to grow at a rapid rate.”

Andy agrees, adding, “An empty barn deteriorates.” Having activity in the buildings and animals in the pasture keeps the farm functional and healthy. The farm also produces wheat, corn, soy, and hay for feed, rotating the fields for optimum quality and soil health. In fact, Mroczek Farm received an award in the 1980s for its environmental conservation practices.

The new partnership, a combined

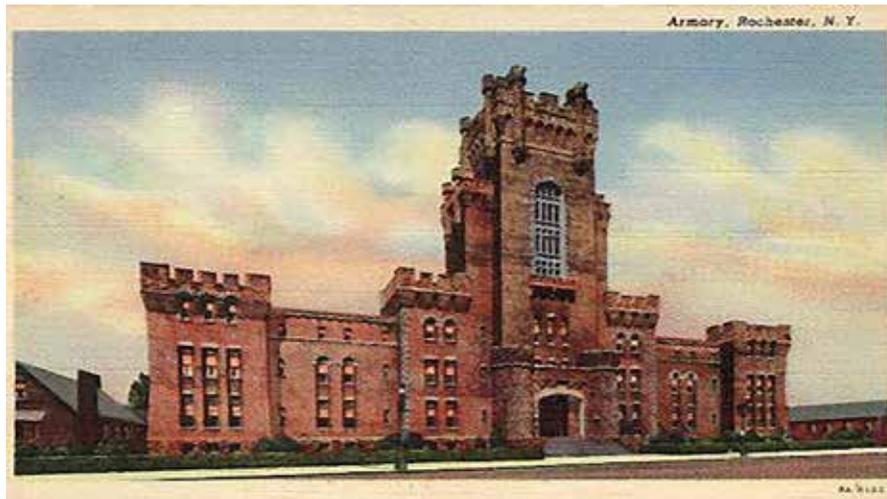
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Rochester's Main Street Armory

Patti Giglio

The turn of the twentieth century was a tumultuous time around the world, and the United States military was pulled in several different directions. The Spanish-American War boiled in the Atlantic and the Philippine-American War raged in the Pacific. Asia was experiencing political unrest and the nations of Europe had begun to grow restless. Tensions grew and with the uncertainty of how long the peace would last, there was a heavy push to get Americans to perform their patriotic duty and enlist in the military. To train the influx of military personnel, local cities became responsible for the early training of the recruits. At 900 East Main Street, near the CSX Rochester Rail Yard, stands a dark, foreboding "castle," seven stories tall at its highest point and expanded to a cavernous 138,000 square feet. The Richardson Romanesque-style building was designed by George L. Heins, a New York State architect. The stone structure was built in 1905 as an armory for the United States Army and the New York State National Guard. The Main Street Armory was a mustering point and training facility for new recruits. Oftentimes, this was the last place soldiers saw before going off to war; many of whom would never set foot on American soil again. During the influenza epidemic of the late 1910s, the Armory was used to house and triage thousands of sick Rochesterians. The hospitals were overcrowded, and doctors and nurses were in short supply. A skeleton crew

of medical staff did their best to care for the stricken. As we have learned throughout history, thousands did not survive the epidemic. The bodies of the dead were temporarily stored in the morgue located in the basement. After World War I more federally run bases opened and the Main Street Armory saw little in the way of military action. The National Guard continued, for a time, to use the building but the city thought it would be a shame for it to remain virtually empty most of the year. They began to host community events on the indoor parade grounds. It held high school and college basketball games, circuses and automobile shows until the War Memorial opened in 1955. Local semi-professional sports teams also called the Armory home. The Rochester Central, a basketball team, played there for six years starting in 1926. Also, the Rochester Iroquois, an indoor lacrosse team, used the venue in the 1930s. One team member of the Iroquois was Harry (Harold) Smith later known as Jay Silverheels who was famous for the role of Tonto on the popular 1950s television show The Lone Ranger. The National Guard used the building until 1995 until it was no longer needed by the government. For more than a decade, it sat empty until Rochester native and entrepreneur Scott Donaldson purchased it at auction for \$1,000.00. Donaldson began the daunting task of rehabilitating it, which was no small task for a man who was complete-



ly blind. Today it is used for concerts, conventions and paranormal investigations after the crowds have gone home. The grand indoor parade grounds have held a wide variety of events throughout the building's 106-year history. Perhaps the most solemn and important was the role it played during times of war. When a soldier was killed in the line of duty, his flag-draped coffin was returned to his home soil with a great pomp and

circumstance. The coffin was taken to the local armory, from where the family would have it moved once the military burial was arranged. Tradition was to honor the fallen with a soldier in military dress keeping a twenty-four-hour vigil, standing beside the casket stoically and at attention. The armory has not been used for this purpose in decades, but sometimes in the quiet of the night, this scene is played out again and again.



Patti Giglio

Author Patti Unvericht-Giglio's books include *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.



NY State Senator Jeremy Cooney, Jess Kamens and daughter Lila

Jess Kamens Gets Empire Award

New York State Senator Jeremy Cooney (D-Rochester) honored local photographer, Jess Kamens, with an Empire Award for the documentary work she created during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic. Senator Cooney honored her work on National Camera Day. Last year Kamens shot over 400 photos of families around the city for a series she affectionately named "Porch Por-

traits," and later the Quarantine Porch Portrait Documentary Series, as she followed social distancing guidelines. Kamens is a single mother whose career in event photography was halted by the pandemic in March 2020. Along with her 5-year-old daughter, Kamens began chronicling what the pandemic looked like in Greater Rochester. Kamens received more than 700 requests and spent several weeks documenting people's pandemic lives. The New York State Senate Empire Award recognizes excellence in business throughout the state. "Jess's work is a reminder of the challenges we faced during the pandemic and how our daily lives completely changed. Whether

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New Highland Hospital Patient Tower Adds More Safety, Privacy & Comfort

Marianne Benjamin

After pausing in Spring 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, construction has resumed on Highland Hospital’s Patient Tower Project, a modernization effort that will enable the hospital to provide private rooms for nearly all patients.

“COVID-19 has highlighted that private rooms are critical for patient care,” said Cindy Becker, Highland Vice President & COO. “They provide so many benefits including a reduced risk of infections, more space for patient needs, and the positive therapeutic impact of more privacy and less noise during recovery. Private rooms are becoming a standard of care for hospitals nationwide and we are excited to embrace this standard at Highland to care for our community.”

The tower enlarges the existing hospital campus without expanding its footprint. The project adds four levels plus a mechanical penthouse to the hospital’s southeast wing; three of the floors will house a total of 58 patient rooms and one floor extends other clinical programs. The mechanical penthouse will be fully enclosed to reduce noise levels in the neighborhood. There will also be a small, seven-story infill between the existing three-story building and the current South Wing. Estimated completion date of the entire project is Spring 2023.

The next phase of construction, scheduled to begin in late July, will include the erection of a crane. The fixed crane will

be mounted on site and will be used for the structural steel erection of the tower. The crane will be located within the southeast portion of the construction area at the edge of the hospital’s property line. Additionally, the base of the crane will have a locking eight-foot barbed wire fence surrounding the foundation to limit access to authorized personnel only.

Structural steel erection will begin in August. Crane operators will be LeChase Construction, LLC, employees with many years of experience on this specific crane and fully licensed and certified for the specific model. The crane operators are responsible for daily inspections and a third-party certified crane inspection is required monthly and annually.

Since 2014, Highland officials have met regularly with neighborhood representatives from the Highland Park Neighborhood and NBN6 to discuss this project. The goal is to promote healthy dialogue between Highland and its neighbors about construction as well as day-to-day concerns, such as parking and noise.

Highland welcomes questions and input. To receive emails sent out when the Highland Facilities blog is updated, click on “Sign Up for Updates” at <https://www.urmc.rochester.edu/highland/facilities/tower-project.aspx>. *Marianne Benjamin is a member of the Highland Hospital Public Relations Team*



Southwest view of new tower

South Wedge Food Pantry Faces Uncertain Future

Jay Rowe



South Wedge Food Program Executive Director Jay Rowe

The South Wedge Food Program has been a fixture within the 141-year-old Calvary St. Andrews church for years but that will soon change when the property at Averill and Ashland St. transfers to new ownership.

Local developer Patrick Dutton’s purchase offer for the property was accepted this month. Dutton’s portfolio ranges from loft apartments like Woodbury Place to the industrial creative spaces of the Fedder Building, and there’s every indication that his work at Calvary St. Andrews will be on par with the rest.

However, the change of ownership presents a challenge to me, the incoming Executive Director of the South Wedge Food Program, and the rest of the staff and volunteers. Together with the outgoing Executive Director Katie Jo Suddaby and leadership of fellow tenants Open Arms Community Church we’ve looked at countless properties with varied results. Our tone has changed from “wait and the right opportunity will come” to “please don’t panic” as this week we were presented with a timeline: be out by October 1st.

The logistics of finding a new space, alerting vendors, volunteers and clients and moving the food pantry are intimidating, for sure, but the abbreviated timeline presents a

new challenge: picking a new name.

With skyrocketing real estate prices and a hesitancy to accept a food pantry in certain locations we are unable to find anything within the South Wedge. This is concerning for a couple of reasons. Despite the cost of living in this neighborhood we are still within walking distance of many of the people who rely on us. Hunger has no borders, as evidenced by the range of our food delivery area. Also

of concern is the fact that many of our volunteers are connected to the church building in one way or another; will our distance from Calvary St. Andrews affect our volunteer pool?

One thing is certain: change is coming. For the South Wedge it likely means more housing and a gorgeous event space. For the food program, time will tell, but that won’t stop us from ensuring that no one in Rochester goes hungry. If you’re interested in learning how this story concludes keep reading The WEDGE and find South Wedge Food Program on social media. And if you have a building you’d like to donate, let’s talk. Contact Jay Rowe at jayrowe@gmail.com.



Jaslynn is a Registered Nurse and has worked in the Observation Unit for 4 years.

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Let's Color the South Wedge Green

Matt Gallo

There's an old adage that "the solution to pollution is dilution." Some people believe that the Earth is so large - and human impacts on it so small - that any negative environmental impacts created by humans could harmlessly "dilute" into the larger world.

While it's a catchy phrase, we've since paid dearly for that mindset. The science is unmistakably clear - climate change is here - and decades of pollution, deforestation, and more have pushed the Earth to the brink. We know that the stakes are high for nature, but they are equally high for humans as well.

COVID-19 showed us how sensitive our economy is to change. How will we be able to handle a shortage in the water supply in a drying California? Can we handle hurricanes wiping out cities like New Orleans and Miami? We shouldn't wait to find out.

For humanity and nature, time is running out to act, and the time to act is now.

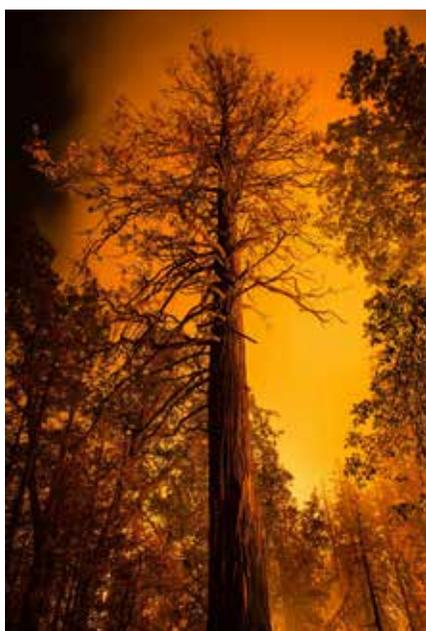
Often when we think about environmental issues, in particular climate change, it's quite easy to become overwhelmed. We feel a real sense of powerlessness to make effective changes to fight climate change, and often it becomes easy to just give up. We think, "Someone will figure it out." However, while we may often hear about climate change in the news, our leaders often simply talk about making changes without advocating for any real or even specific plans.

Climate change is a complicated issue, one that will require a variety of different solutions, but those do not have to wait for action from the top down. We can act from the bottom up.

Color Your Community Green (CYCG) is a Rochester-based movement where local communities organize to accelerate the transition to a climate-friendly future. Since Brighton first blazed the trail, CYCG organizations have spread to Penfield, Irondequoit, and beyond with great success. In just a few short years,



Matt Gallo is a volunteer with the Climate Solutions Accelerator and a South Wedge resident.



Global warming's higher temperatures are contributing to massive forest fires



Alternative energy sources such as windmill farms are making a difference

these groups have helped usher in the creation of a Community Choice Aggregation program, where electricity in Brighton (and other communities soon, including the City of Rochester) is now supplied with 100% renewable sources for a cheaper price than the original fossil fuel supply. And these organizations have brought together diverse groups of people from all backgrounds to find nonpartisan, effective solutions to the climate crisis. With a diverse team, CYCGs can build the foundation for a climate-friendly future that helps grow the economy and create jobs. This is especially powerful here in New York, a "home rule" state where municipalities have greater leverage than elsewhere. For those that have felt powerless before, there is a proven method already in place to get climate change solutions off the ground. To take real agency in our own future, there's much to be done. We need electric vehicle charging stations, solar panels, and heat pumps. We need people using public transit, more trees, and less pollution. We need to color the South Wedge green. Right now, there is not yet a CYCG in the city or at a neighborhood level. Let's change that. Join Color South Wedge Green. Contact colorsouthwedgegreen@gmail.com for more information.

Kamens

Continued from page 6

it was Halloween celebrations or an intimate moment outside in the rain, her 'Porch Portraits' captured the humanity of our community during a time of prolonged fear and uncertainty," said Jennifer Cooney. "Small businesses like Jess' played an essential role in staying connected throughout a global health crisis. I am honored to recognize Jess' work with the Empire Award."

Jess Kamens described the award ceremony as "a wonderful moment."

"I am incredibly honored on behalf of the hundreds of families who participated in the project, my daughter who was with me during every single portrait, as well as all the frontline workers, families and all humans around the world who

were suffering at this time and to those who are still suffering," said Kamens. "It is an honor I place on all those we have lost to this pandemic. To have been able to give something so small, one minute of my time, to brighten this dark time for our community was the most rewarding gift I've given. I am so grateful to Senator Cooney and Town Supervisor Bill Moehle for honoring my work, and I look forward to working closely with the community to help further commemorate what will eventually be a small moment during a momentous and historic time. I am humbled and grateful."



Shannon Bellamy

The City of Rochester is launching Rochester Community Power (RCP), a program designed to provide eligible residents and small businesses with locally-selected, 100% renewable electricity at a fixed cost.

RCP is a Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) program, which allows the City to leverage the collective buying power of its residents and small businesses to solicit competitive bids from qualified New York registered electricity suppliers. This competitive bidding process resulted in the selection of Constellation NewEnergy.

Effective September 1, 2021, the default electricity supply to eligible homes and small businesses in the City of Rochester will be 100% renewable power generated from within NY State at a fixed price of \$0.05800 per kWh and \$0.05877 per kWh for residential and small commercial consumers, respectively. Eligible residents and businesses will be automatically enrolled, but anyone may opt out or withdraw, at any time, without incurring fees or penalties. Eligible RG&E customers were mailed a letter from the City of Rochester that included information on how to opt out. Those who choose to opt out will continue to receive basic electricity supply service purchased on behalf by RG&E at the variable utility rate. Regardless of program participation, RG&E remains responsible for electricity. What are the benefits?

Your Choice: Because the City has already signed a contract with the new supplier, there are no individual contracts and eligible residents and small businesses are free to opt-out or back into the program as they please with no fees or penalties.

Protection: Currently with RG&E, customers pay a variable rate for their electricity supply. This program offers a fixed rate for the next 2 years, meaning customers are protected from the volatile prices of the electricity market.

Product pricing: The fixed rate of 5.8 cents/kWh for 24 months is 15% cheaper than what an individual would have paid for the same product at the time of the bid, according to the NY State Power to Choose website. (100% renewable, fixed rate for 24 months with no exit fees).

Environmental Impacts: Over the two years of the current contract, the City of Rochester participants, receiving 100% renewable electricity, are expected to contribute to the avoidance of more than 450,000 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions. This is the equivalent of amount of carbon sequestered by 553,561 acres of forest, which is 23 times larger than the City of Rochester.

Local Support: Rochester Community Power is supporting New York State hydropower. This is important for working to meet the State's clean energy goals.

Who's involved? There are three main players helping the City to launch this program. Joule Community Power, a division of Joule Assets, serves as the

Program Administrator. Roctricity is Joule's local operating partner providing public outreach, education, and customer service. Constellation NewEnergy is the new supplier responsible for providing 100% renewable, NY state generated electricity.

What is CCA? Rochester Community Power is a Community Choice Aggregation program (CCA). CCA is promoted by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the New York State Energy and Research Development Authority (NYSERDA) as a priority climate action.

Community Choice programs allow municipalities to pool together their community's local electricity buying power to negotiate for renewable electricity supply at a bulk-rate price. The state designed CCA programs to be opt-out so that communities could take advantage of bulk purchasing, the creation of competition and experience of energy experts. While Rochester is the largest city in NY State to establish a CCA program, Rochester is not alone. There are already over 13 aggregations across New York state. These programs have provided increased consumer protections at the same time as providing easy access to 100% renewable electricity. For more information on CCA programs please visit the NY State Department of Public Service's website.

How did we get here? Rochester Community Power is the result of the City working to address greenhouse gas emissions and fulfill their climate goals. The City of Rochester has made climate commitments as detailed in the Climate Action Plan that was approved in May 2017. City staff and elected officials have been exploring CCA for a number of years, and it is listed in their Climate Action Plan. The City has also taken all of the necessary steps to implement this program. To begin the process, the City passed a local law enabling the program back in December 2019 and selected Joule as Program Administrator. Since then, the City has been working with Joule and Roctricity on program outreach and education, in accordance with state regulations.

What's next? Rochester Community Power is pursuing additional opportunities, including community choice solar which would bring new electricity generation onto the grid and offer guaranteed savings. As with this supply program, all eligible residents and small businesses will be notified when this new offering becomes available.

The Rochester Community Power team is available M-F 9am-5pm to answer any questions regarding the program, via email at info@rochestercommunitypower.com or by phone at 585-244-0244. Shannon Bellamy is a Roctricity employee who helps with public outreach and education for all of the Community Choice programs that Roctricity manages.

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Setting Up Kids for Success in a New School Year

Jenn Beideman

This past year has been rough on students and families. Together we have faced several crises of a global pandemic and its ensuing loss of jobs, homes and increased food instability and ongoing systemic acts of police brutality on Black and Latino Brown residents in our community. As families have navigated both crises, we've seen higher death rates due to COVID-19 in the Black and Latino communities.

COVID-19 has changed so much for the adults in our communities—we know that all of the compounded stress from these crises likewise have affected our children. As we move into the new school year, there are a few things that you and your school can do to support kids' health and well-being as we continue to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic and learn our new normal.

Continue to follow COVID-19 health and safety standards/protocols

A recent study by the CDC shares that there has been little evidence that schools have contributed meaningfully to increased community transmission in the United States and abroad. This study shows that current health and safety standards by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, New York State Department of Health and the Monroe County Health Department are working. However, as cases of the Delta variant continue to rise, vaccination alongside the proper health and safety standards are one way we can continue to keep our kids safe and protected. We're not sure yet what guidance will come out of New York State Department of Health for the Fall and when schools reopen. Keep up to date on current guidelines by visiting the Monroe County Health Department website. In the meantime, continue to follow proper health and safety standards including masking, hand washing and social distancing.

Learn more about current health and safety standards from the Monroe County Health Department <https://www.monroecounty.gov/health-COVID-19>

Continue COVID-19 vaccine education –

or get vaccinated if you haven't already

In Monroe County 62% of eligible adults have received their full dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, compared to some City of Rochester zip codes where only 28.4% of residents have received at least one dose of the vaccine.

While scientists say the best way to protect yourself and your family from COVID-19 is to get vaccinated, many people may need more information about the vaccines before making a decision on them. Scientists used decades of research on similar viruses and vaccines to develop the vaccines against COVID-19. Black and Latino people were involved in the research, development and the testing of the vaccine, and all safety steps were completed. Hundreds of millions of people have safely taken the vaccine. For people who have completed all necessary doses of the vaccine, the vaccines have been extremely effective at preventing hospitalization and death from COVID.

Everyone aged 12 and older is now eligible to vaccinated, and the vaccines are free. Talk to your health care provider about the vaccines, and call 585-753-555 to find out how to get a vaccine, including if you are homebound. While studies are taking place for vaccines for children younger than 12, many of our children are unprotected without current health and safety protocols and vaccine efforts.

To learn more about the COVID-19 vaccine and where you can get it, visit: <https://youdeserveanswers.org> or <https://mercerespuestas.org>.

Find time to play with your kids

The COVID pandemic is compounding existing trauma in our children and impacting their overall brain development. We can promote brain healing and continue to build resiliency of our children by supporting families and fostering healthy relationships between kids and adults.

The best thing that we can do as adults is making time to play with children. Play is a great time for you to build a healthy relationship with your child, learn from them, and allow them to express themselves. Play is also a great



Students at School 10 take advantage of daily recess

way for your child to interact again with other kids. Going to the playground, participating in group play days, going to the library, or going to the park can all be opportunities for your children to interact with others. The research shows that through play, we can help our kids heal from the trauma of the past year.

To get some ideas of playful activities to do with your kids visit the following resources:

Playworks: www.playworks.org
 WXXI and PBS Kids: www.wxxi.org/education/parents

The Strong Museum of Play: www.museumofplay.org

Rochester Public Library: <https://roccitylibrary.org/>

Generation Two: <https://www.g2rochester.org/please-play-campaign/>

Take advantage of hands-on learning opportunities

One of the keyways we can support our kids is finding those opportunities for healthy relationship building. One great way of doing that outside of unstructured play is to take advantage of hands-on learning experiences and out-of-school-time programs. Rochester has amazing museums, galleries, and programs available for kids to learn and explore. Most of the local cultural institutions now have SNAP pricing for families, which lowers the

cost of admission for those participating in federal benefit programs.

Out-of-school-time programs like those offered at the Urban League, Boys and Girls Club and through City of Rochester R-Centers are also great ways for kids to catch up in school, but also interact with their peers and build up important social-emotional skills.

To learn more about what programs are available reach out to the Child Care Council. They have a list of all registered out-of-school-time programs and can help you navigate available programs. www.childcarecouncil.org

Also be sure to check out the free programs offered by the City of Rochester Department of Recreation and Human Services. Their new R-Central online system will let you view, enroll and see what recreation programs/activities are currently available: <https://www.cityof-rochester.gov/drhs/>

Seek out mental health and trauma supports

Schools are such a key place for many kids and families to receive critical support services like school based mental health supports, special education, intervention services, health care access, emergency needs, and

continues on age 10

REF & South Wedge Unite for a Book Drive for City Students

Joan Gerrity

Rochester Education Foundation (REF) is reaching out to the South Wedge to help in giving city school children the gift of a new book in the coming school season. Research has demonstrated that having books in the home for children and reading with parents and siblings is critical to success in school. Recently, through REF's efforts almost 20,000 books reached children in their homes during the COVID-19 Pandemic. As children return to the classroom full-time in September, REF wants to make sure that students continue to receive new books for their home libraries, and the South Wedge can help.

REF was founded in 2003 by community volunteers who believe that



Research shows reading books in the home is critical to success in school success

every child in Rochester deserves a great education. The Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit that is independent from RCSD. Since its inception, REF has been providing programs and resources to improve learning and success for all Rochester City School District students through partnerships with educators, business, and the community. REF promotes three core programs: Give Back, Give Books; College Access

for Rochester Students; and Spring for Music and Arts Opportunities.

Our Spring for Music and Arts Opportunities program provides instruments for city students, supports summer music lessons at Hochstein School of Music, and provides art supplies. We also provide funding for the wonderful Marching Band and for all-district musicals like Frozen, Jr. and much more.

Through our Give Back, Give Books program, we have donated almost 70,000 books to classrooms and home libraries. REF wants to make sure during the 2021-22 academic school year that students continue to receive new books for their home libraries.

Our South Wedge book drive will be a crucial part of reaching that goal. Every new book we receive will find its way

into the hands of a RCSD student! Local businesses and the South Wedge Planning Committee (SWPC) have been wonderful partners for the book drive. We are grateful for this opportunity to share the drive in the WEDGE Newspaper. We will also have a booth at SWPC's Farmers Market at 357 Gregory Street on Thursdays (4-7 p.m.) in August to accept new books of the donors' choice.

The booth will also include a key component of our College Access program—our College Help Desk where students can file for financial aid on the spot or sign up for a one-on-one appointment to learn more about college life, admissions and financial aid. The College Help Desk is also available at Teen Central at the Rochester Public Library every Tuesday afternoon in August and everyday through our website.

We want to highlight some of our business partners who are working with us to help Rochester's children. Advantage Federal Credit Union will be promoting our drive in all of its branches. Hipocampo Book Store on South

continues on age 10



(l-r) State Assemblyman Harry Bronson and John White (Photo by Ove Overmeyer)

Harry Bronson & John White Wed

Nancy O'Donnell Hale

Partners in love and business, John White and State Assemblyman Harry Bronson, became a South Wedge fixture when they opened the Equal=Grounds Coffee shop in 2006 in what had once been the historic home of Lauterbach's Hardware Store on South Avenue. Ten years later, they remained business partners but went their separate romantic ways. After ten years more years, the COVID pandemic hit, and the two friends/business partners decided to hunker down together in White's country home. "It's like a Captain and Tennille song—'Covid brought us together,'" said White, laughing. Within the year the now coupled made wedding plans.

On July 17, the couple was married at Lamberton Conservancy by Reverend Stephen Cady of Asbury First United Methodist Church. Witnesses at the nuptials were James White (John's father) and stepmother Joanne White. Bronson's two witnesses were friends Jennifer Skoog and Scott Fisher. The wedding party celebrated Farmer's Creekside Tavern and Inn, a 200-year-old historic site, in Leroy, NY. The couple's honeymoon plan is a drive along the coastline of Maine, stopping at romantic little towns, eating seafood and staring into the moonlit Atlantic Ocean.



Despite the rainy season, the Cypress Street Victory Garden's individual boxes of green continue to flourish. This Spring the Victory Garden added a perennial herb bed filled with three kinds of basil -- (sweet, lemon, and Thai), chives, cilantro, dill, lavender, parsley, rosemary, sage, and thyme that is shared by all its members. Make sure to write a reminder in your 2022 calendar to apply to either the Hamilton Street or Cypress Street Victory Gardens, both part of South Wedge Planning Committee's mission to build community (Photos by Kenneth Rich)



Kids' Success

continued from page 9

crisis intervention. Schools can use American Rescue Plan Stimulus dollars to fortify and expand these supports to address the wellbeing of kids. If you're noticing that your children have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, reach out to your child's teacher and building administrator to find out what additional supports are available through your school to support your child.

Parents of teens should know that, recently a group of youth in the Finger Lakes region came together to develop mental health literacy supports for other youth through a project called "FLX Teens are Alright". The joint project was managed by Common Ground Health, Monroe County Library System, Pioneer Library System and the Rochester Regional Library Council. The resources and zine are available online or at any local library in Monroe, Wayne, Livingston, Ontario and Wyoming counties.

To learn more about the FLX Teens are Alright Resources visit here: <https://www.healthikids.org/flxteensarealright>

Become a resident and parent advocate! There is a lot we as a community can do to support our kids as we navigate back to in person learning in the fall.

We also know that access to available services and opportunities isn't always there. Our community and parents like you need to keep pushing our local districts to continue to prioritize the social-emotional health and wellbeing of our kids. That's why the Healthi Kids coalition continues to center kids' and families' voices to advance what's best for kids' health and well-being.

Our grassroots coalition is an initiative of Common Ground Health. Together the team advocates for policies, systems and environmental changes that support kids' physical, social emotional and cognitive development in the City of Rochester and Finger Lakes region. That means our whole team and coalition are actively moving every day to ensure our kids have the healthy relationships they need to support them, and the safe secure environments they need to thrive.

Visit www.healthikids.org or reach out to info@healthikids.org for more details about how you can join our coalition to advocate for whole child health. Jenn Beideman is Advocacy Manager at Healthi Kids Coalition at Common Ground Health

REF Book Drive

continued from page 9

Avenue in the South Wedge will feature wonderful books that are sure to delight city school students. On special days during August, Tap & Mallet on Gregory Street will be offering a \$1 off a pint for anyone who can show that they donated a new book to REF. And Equal=Grounds Coffee Shop and Happy Earth Tea Shop, both on South Avenue, will also be promoting the drive and serving as a drop-off point for new books.

We will be keeping the community posted on social media and our website, regarding all the other wonderful business-

es who will be supporting the book drive.

For those who would like to learn more about REF or donate online to the South Wedge book drive, please visit our website at rochestereducation.org. For questions about the book drive or to volunteer to help us, please call Joan Gerrity at 721-1267 or email jgerrity@rochestereducation.org. We are so grateful for all of your support.

Joan Gerrity is REF's Coordinator of Special Projects.

Instant Relatives...

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Douglas, the POW camp in Chicago. I was able to find out about the soldier, found his photograph (in uniform) and about the author of the letter's husband as well. Come to find out that both the families had originated from Western New York, and her husband was from Victor. I love when people get excited to see them and want to "adopt" one."

Giglio's cemetery in a cup is a playful reminder that we only get one life to live. Monster Repellent lets you exchange the smell of sulfur with a delightful scent of either lavender or clary sage essential oils,

purified water and "liattle bit of magic." (Spray it under a bed or into closet).

Her house blessing bottles contain white rice, sage, sea salt and lavender—keep the bad energy out and the good energy in.

Recently, Giglio attended Comic Con, but she reported that attendees wanted something to attract not repel a monster. Giglio is back in her lab concocting a recipe for "Monster Bait."

Stop by Patti Giglio's table at the South Wedge Farmers Market on Thursdays, 357 Gregory Street, 4 - 7 p.m.

Untamed Nutrition

continued from page 4

peanut butter cup? The list is long. Since Untamed Nutrition is all about choice, it may take a while to make a choice.

The 40 flavored teas come in varying caffeine levels from caffeine free to "lit" and are sweetened by plant-based Stevia.

Newbies to nutrition can join gym rats who are welcomed both "pre and post workout."

Smoothie adds-on among others include probiotic, collagen, belly busters, and immune support

According to the company's website

their "Boosted and Lit Teas contain 100% of your daily recommended dose of Vitamin C, 300% of your B6 and 200% of your B12 as well as other energy supporting B vitamins...all of our teas are thermogenic therefore naturally boost your metabolism."

The UN team welcome questions, so stop in and ask away. 1409 South Avenue, Hours: M-F 6 a.m. - 5p.m., Sat. 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

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.

Poke Sushi in the South Wedge

Nancy O'Donnell Hale

It's hard to get an interview with Lauren Dax, manager of Poke Sushi on South Avenue. It's the same thing for owner and head chef Adam Hamilton. The Japanese fusion restaurant has been slammed with customer since it reopened in March. The food and vibe are that good. Once people discover how good it is, they keep coming back.

"We are absolutely short staffed," said Dax. With loosening of pandemic restrictions, the restaurant is ready to serve, but short on servers

Dax describes her partner's sushi journey as "pretty unique." His delight in eating sushi led him to life of making sushi. "I think we've watched *Jiro Dreams of Sushi* a lot of times," Dax said, laughing. "Adam loved eating sushi, and he started training at California Rollin'.

For several years Hamilton offered his talent at the Hideaway and weekly pop-ups. For a time, he shared a space in Roc City Ramen Corn Hill right in time for the pandemic and then the BLM protests nearby.

"We could see the cars on fire from the doors of the restaurant. The crowds were basically peaceful, but it was impossible for people to get into the parking lot because the streets were closed," said Dax.

"We picked the South Wedge, and it picked us at the same time. It was perfect timing. The space was available. There's more energy and more foot traffic," said Dax.

When South Wedge location became available. The space has had a few iterations. A few decades ago, it housed a Santeria botanical shop with a resident python (Obatala Shango still sells their candles, oils, herbs, incense, and stat-

ues in a store on State Street). In more recent history Banzai Sushi held the space, followed by Harry G's until 2021.

Now sushi is back. Hamilton created an intimate space in the South Wedge that seats about 30/

The menu is comprehensive with options for carnivores, vegetarians and vegans. Ten starters from miso soup to tuna takai (Togashi tuna seared and served over shredded daikon tossed with a spicy ponzu sauce). Raw rolls and cooked rolls and maki rolls and tempura rolls (Hamilton makes his own secret tempura batter Dax said) and chef specialty rolls with names like Muscle Beach, Laird Hamilton and Johnny Cashew (34 total to choose from). Add sashimi and finally, kitchen entrees include a Kobe Burger and Pork Udon Dan Dan among others. If there's still space, desserts are available—Japanese cheesecake souffle and mochi ice cream.

Along with beer, and wine, the restaurant offers craft cocktails.

"People loved our Honeydew Limeade. We used local fruit as fresh as possible. No fake ingredients," Dax added, explaining Poke Sushi's one of their

continues on pg. 13



Adam Hamilton and Lauren Dax (Photo by Roberto Lagares)



Poke sushi



Poke sushi craft cocktail




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South Wedge Went Wild for the Bigger Better Earth Tea



The line of eager tea shoppers reached Gregory Street from the entrance on South Avenue. (Photo courtesy of Happy Earth Tea)

The larger space allows Happy Earth to include more products--pottery, bath scrubs, honey, tea pets, and room to hang a well-loved quilt composed of pieces of clothing from Indian women.

Photos by Nancy O'Donnell Hale



More room, more beautiful pottery



Mary Boland added a colorful Indian quilt to the wall in Happy Earth Tea



Botanical Bath Salt - Himalayan Rose Salt, Organic Rose Petals and Chamomile



Honey from local bees

On one wall, large silver jars hold bulk tea selections from Darjeeling to the Himalayas. Tables hold work from local potters. Another table glows with bottles of golden 100% honey "made by resident bees in Wayne County." The honey is touted as "strained, not filtered...pure, natural, raw." Along with the devoted returning customers, the expanded space has attracted new ones. "A young kid in high school who said he was learning Mandarin came in with his mother," said Wineberg. "They had never been here before, and he said he wanted to explore Chinese tea and see how tea was served in a traditional gong fu cha manner." continues on pg. 13

Somewhere in the Wedge



Farmers Market host Barnaby Flint on a snack break (Photo by Nancy O'Donnell Hale)

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Vetter's Beef

continued from pg. 5

total of 100 years of farm experience, will continue the commitment to cleanliness, quality, and sustainability utilizing the systems already in place for silos, pastures, barns, and feed. They are also using crossbred cattle, Holstein (dairy) and Black Angus (beef.) This combination produces hybrid vigor: bringing out best traits of the breeds while decreasing the worst traits. In this case the result is excellent marbling in a lean meat that enhances flavor and tenderness without a heavy outer covering of fat.

Vetter adds, "Everyone wants Black Angus, but I've eaten some tough Black Angus. I'll put my steak up against a Black Angus steak anytime."

Each day the cows on this farm are checked and walked to confirm overall health and are fed a largely home-grown diet with a complete nutrition package. Their bedding is natural hay, and barns are cleaned daily with the manure carted to a separate pit to use for crop fertilizer. Cows are put into the free-range pasture in the morning and wander back into the barn out of the mid-day sun, where water and fresh hay are available for grazing. When the cows are sent for processing, it's to a local, relatively small USDA-inspected facility.

In the barns, the lights and noises are low. The cows are serene—curious about visitors, but not anxious or jostling or bellowing. Humans in the barns speak in quiet tones and move slowly. This is by design, according to Vetter. The calmer, less-stressed the cows are, the happier they are, and this is reflected in the end product. "When you buy ground beef in grocery stores and fast food, chances



Working together is keeping two businesses going: a 66-year-old family farm and a growing beef business. The partners are, from left to right, Andy Mroczek, Joe Mroczek, and Bob Vetter with his sons Evan and Wyatt. (Photo by Glynis Valenti)



Bob Vetter shows one component of what the cows eat daily. Alfalfa and hay are stored in silos and ferment naturally, providing nutrients and probiotics, aiding digestion, and keeping the cows happy. (Photo by Glynis Valenti)

are much of it comes from a big facility that processes large quantities of meat a day," explains Vetter. "You don't know where it came from or what the animals have been through. It makes a difference in what you're eating."

Vetter says that working with his farm clients and seeing their commitments to quality food led him to "want better" for his wife, Jessica, and two sons, Evan and Wyatt. He says each day inspires him to provide not only a living, but an improved quality of life for his family, the animals, and for his clients and customers.

Beef from Vetter's can be purchased at the South Wedge Farmers Market (see the SWFM Facebook page to see when he'll be there,) through the website www.VettersBeef.com, and at Weaver's Farm Market in Canandaigua.

Braman

continued from pg. 5

After earning a certificate from the Institute of Integrative Nutrition in NYC, Braman turned his focus health coaching.

"It's helping people see all the options, holding accountability and space so people can get healthy in their own way, their own pace," Braman said. Today Braman may work from 3-6 months with a client in a variety of ways. He described how clients may want to lose weight, but they don't know how to change their lifestyle. "I work with a client, and if possible, their doctor to start their health journey."

One client had arthritis in her toes and Braman helped her eat in ways to reduce inflammation and find ways to reduce cravings. In another example, he says a mother would come home stressed from work and would reach for a bowl of candy before dinner. He helped with ideas for meal prepping to avoid triggers and ways to make the day less stressful. "TwicemonthoverZoomIholdcooking classes and workshops showing people how to start on a health journey and how not to plateau," Braman said.

"My cooking classes are not the fanciest. I prepare foods that maximize flavor. One of people's favorites is a cold asparagus salad with herb dressing."

Recently, Braman made connections with Wickham Farm CSA in Penfield, and now contributes recipe and health tips to their newsletter. On social media he's exploring Un-

lock the Roc, a group on social media that introducing people to all that's new and wonderful in Western NY.

"We eat healthy, it takes away our

The main goal is to make as many people as possible happy and healthy through Integrative Nutrition Coaching which helps you start learning how to love food and cooking while crowding out bad habits to make room for more self care, confidence, and completion of your biggest dreams.

--Robbie Braman

cravings. Or rather our cravings change. When I changed my diet, I discovered I ate more vegetables, and I wanted to eat more vegetables," added Braman.

To learn more about Braman's health coaching, cooking classes or catering, visit robbiebraman.com.



Happy Earth Tea

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In this tradition, a small teacup, sans handle, is placed on a small wooden box with a slated top that holds the spilled hot water or tea. A tea pet can be placed on the tray if requested. (Tea pets are animal-shaped clay figurines to keep you company.) Before drinking the first cup, tradition says it's good luck to give the tea pet the first taste with a brief spill over its head, and even a bit more with each steep. With some teas you can get at least five steepings said Wineberg.

Every cup of tea can come with a lesson if you want. Lama or Wineberg will explain the importance of using the right temperature, the right amount of steeping, the difference between the subtle flavors—some floral, some vegetal or nutty.

On opening day, the iced tea was named "Verde Delight" by Tara Lama. The tea combined green tea, cucumber syrup and lemon. Iced tea flavors change each week. In the last week of July iced tea flavors were Lavender Field, Happy Hibiscus and Bombay Iced Chai.

Edible tea companions come from a happy collab with Hedonist Artisan Chocolates These handcrafted truffles are flavored by Lama's teas and include Ra-cha-chai, Earl Grey, Lapsang Souchong, Matcha and Rooibos Ginger Lime. Finally, there's sweet and savory nuts, cookies, and brownies from Red Fern Vegan Restaurant. 696 South Ave. 585.730.7754 Info about future tea tastings or classes will be posted on Instagram and Facebook.



Poke Sushi

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revolving menu of craft juice cocktails And then there its menu of fruit blended, non-dairy milk tea with tapioca pearls with a jolt i.e. "Drunk Bubbles." Try Strawberry with vodka, Irish cream, coconut cream, shiso bitters and mint or Taro with Mezcal or Mango with Tequila, Coconut with rum, Green Tea with bourbon, oh, my!

Along with the in-house sushi extravaganza—if you can't get a seat—give a call, because Poke Sushi also caters. 682 South Avenue, 585.270.8890, Hours: Mon.-Thurs. 11:30 a.m. – 3 p.m., 5- 9 p.m. Fri. & Sat. 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m., 5-10 p.m. Closed on Sunday. Visit www.pokeshuiroc.com for more info.

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