

WEDGE

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

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South Wedge Farmer's Market to Hold Holiday Pop-ups

Chad Flint, Market Manager



Have you been missed the South Wedge Market the past month and a half? Of course, you have, and we've missed you! We are hosting three market pops inside the Odd Fellows Lodge (357 Gregory Street) to help you get ready for the winter and spring holidays. We would not want Valentine's Day, Easter, or Mother's Day to happen without giving everyone a chance to pick up the gifts you need from our great local vendors. Make plans to stop by the market on Thursday February 10th, Thursday April 14th, and Thursday May 5th to see all the great products they have ready for you.

Many of our usual vendors plus some great new additions will be present each week from 4 to 6:30pm for you to peruse their goods. We will even have some early seasonal produce at the May 5th pop-up when Bonnie from Upstart Berry Farm returns. From baked goods to maple syrup, and honey to so many wonderful handmade items, we do our best to have local vendors in every category to make your shopping experience fun.

The full outdoor market season is quickly approaching, with our opening night Thursday June 16th. Then we will be open every Thursday from 4 to 7pm at the same great location as last year, the Odd Fellows Lodge at 357 Gregory Street. We are planning to grow with more vendors this year than last. The parking lot should be full each week with everything you could possibly need and imagine.

The market is looking for volunteers to help with a handful of different tasks each week. If you are interested in working with us at the market, or if you are interested in becoming a vendor or sponsor, please reach out to chadflint33@gmail.com, find us on social media @SouthWedgeFarmersMarket, or on the web at swfm.org. We look

February is National Cancer Prevention Month

The American Cancer Society estimates that in 2022 breast and prostate cancer will account for over 35,000 of the new cancer cases in New York State alone. At the Breast and Prostate Cancer Peer Education Project, we know that a variety of factors contribute to the risk of developing cancer and that successful treatment often relies on early detection. That's why we aim to help our community members achieve better health through early cancer detection and screening. Our program's free education and outreach activities with local organizations and civic groups encourage community members to speak with their health care provider about breast and/or prostate cancer screenings.

If you need help affording your cancer screenings, contact the Cancer Services Program of the Finger Lakes Region (CSP-FLR) at 1-877-803-8070 or CSP@URMC.Rochester.edu. They are a New York State Department of Health program that pays for breast, cervical and colon cancer screenings and follow-up services at NO COST for eligible men and women.

In addition to regular cancer screenings, you can reduce your risk of cancer by simply maintaining a healthy lifestyle and

avoiding tobacco. A healthy diet and regular exercise can go a long way in cancer prevention – not to mention other chronic diseases.

To learn more about breast and prostate cancer prevention or to schedule a presentation by the Breast and Prostate Cancer Peer Education Project, please contact 585-344-8194 or Halee.Potter@ummc.org. We would love to work with you!



Ways to Wellness Presentation

In correspondence with National Cancer Prevention Month, a presentation titled "Ways to Wellness: Nutrition and Cancer Prevention" will be offered at the SWPC office building on February 24th at 5:30pm. The presentation is free and is expected to last around an hour. Space is limited, so participants are asked to pre-register before February 22nd by phone at 585-344-8194 or by email at halee.potter@ummc.org.

Summer Youth Employment Program Announced for 2022

The City of Rochester, Monroe County and RochesterWorks are teaming up to get Rochester youths working this summer. Youths aged 14 through 20 are invited to apply for the City's Summer of Opportunity Program (SOOP) and RochesterWorks! Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP).

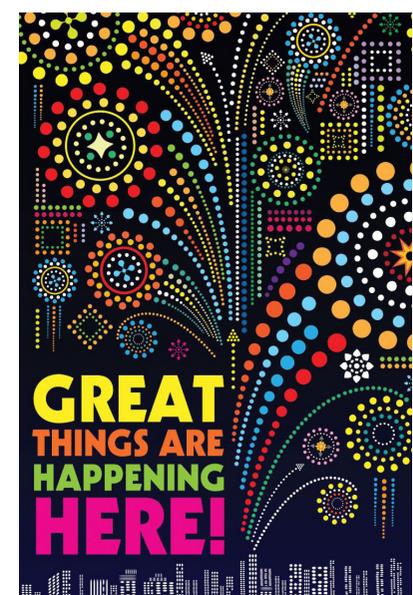
Mayor-elect Malik Evans calls programs like this "a critical element to ensuring the healthy development of our young people." He goes on to say that "when we provide them with the skills and tools they need to succeed in the workplace, we can keep our children off the streets, instill discipline and independence and provide opportunities for career growth and financial competence."

The summer employment placement and training programs through SOOP/SYEP are designed to expose local high school

students to the basic skills needed to lead to career success in the fields of healthcare, Rochester RCenters, as well as community and advocacy positions.

Applications are available at <https://www.rocsummeryouth.com> with a deadline of March 25, 2022. Applicants must live in the City of Rochester or Monroe County and currently enrolled in middle school, high school or actively enrolled in a high school equivalency program. Not all applicants are guaranteed a job with the SOOP and SYEP summer programs and are not chosen on a first come, first-serve basis.

"We hope 2022 is one of our strongest years ever, as we work to provide valuable work experience and pathways to economic opportunity for teens across our area," said Dave Seeley, Executive Director of RochesterWorks!



Where in the South Wedge?



Opinion

City Council Rules Need to Change for a Strong Rochester

Mary Lupien
Councilmember, East District



Our Rochester community has endured a lot over the past two years. It's discouraging, but not surprising, to us that city turnout this past election was low, because many felt that their vote wouldn't make a difference. As your elected City Councilmembers, we need to rebuild trust through action and show that local government can work for the common good. The first step to achieving this is by making long overdue changes to the City Council rules that will increase transparency, accountability, give community members a greater voice in the decision-making process.

In Rochester's Charter, City Council was designed to be a co-equal branch of government, but for too long our body has not lived up to the charge to set policy and provide effective oversight of the mayor's office. At the February 15th City Council meeting, Councilmembers will vote on amendments to the rules that govern Council. This is an opportunity for us to change the way we do business and rebuild the trust of the community.

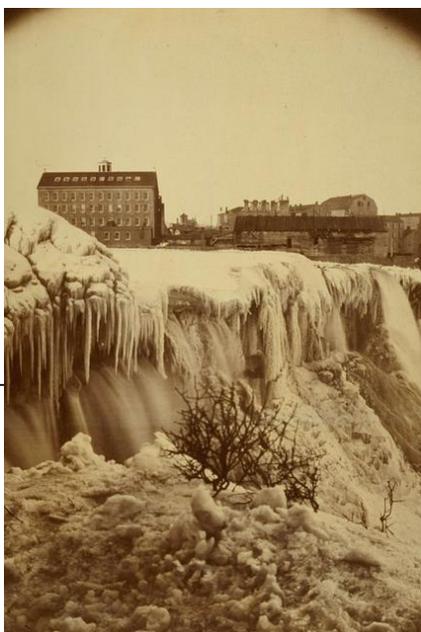
As Councilmembers, we're often asked to introduce legislation. However, the current process has been controlled by the Council President, who has no legal obligation to assign legislation to a committee, effectively using a "pocket veto."

The process for introducing legislation must be updated so that legislation can be easily introduced, so that its merits can be deliberated in committee, and then put up for a vote.

Another way to increase the transparency and effectiveness of Council is to ensure that notes from meetings between Council leadership and the Administration are being distributed to all Councilmembers within three business days. In the past, Council leadership would hold meetings, without the knowledge of other members, with the City Administration on behalf of Council. Moving forward we need to make sure the entire body is included on key decisions impacting our city.

Lastly, to increase the power of civic engagement, we need to revamp our committee processes to allow for more deliberation between Councilmembers as well as additional opportunities for residents to speak to Council before a vote is taken. Right now, the public "Speak to Council" session is held immediately before the monthly Council meeting where members vote on legislation, which at that point, most members have already made up their minds. This proposal allows Councilmembers more time to consider feedback from the public, research proposals, and discuss with one another before deciding.

Voters have elected us to serve their best interests. For the good of our city, we cannot let them down. Changing the City Council rules to make Council more transparent and democratic will show our community that we're serious about making city government work for all of us.



During an arctic blast in 2015, the High Falls came close to freezing over. This photograph from the 1860s, shows that the mighty falls capped by a thick sheet of ice. (Rochester City Hall Photo Lab)

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ROC My Biz

More great news from the City for small business owners and those who dream to work for themselves. February 8, 2022, the City of Rochester announced the launch of ROC My Biz; a free combines platform small-business portal, small business support navigator, and home-based business navigator. ROC My Biz will aid small businesses in Rochester by providing faster and better support services, and interactions with City Departments.

Visitors to the ROC My Biz website can obtain help starting and expanding their business, preparing a business location, and registering as a vendor to work with the City.

If you have an opinion you want to share, please send to thewedge@swpc.org.



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Happy Earth Tea Bar, 10% off
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The WEDGE Newspaper

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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, 224 Mt. Hope Avenue, Rochester, New York 14620 email thewedge@swpc.org. Advertising deadlines and rates are available online at www.swpc.org or call 585.256.1740, ext. 4.

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. 6 p.m. ~ Feb. & March

contact: flogan@rochester.rr.com

Community Engagement
(Neighbors & Block Clubs)
Wed. Feb. March 5:30 p.m.
gvalenti@swpc.org

South Wedge Victory Gardens
TBD
scott.wagner.ny@gmail.com

Swillburg Neighborhood Association Celebrates the Holiday Season

Mike Henry

Happy New Year everyone! Hopefully the holiday season was one of joy and peace for you.

The Swillburg Neighborhood Association (SNA) kicked off the holidays on November 20th with a pop-up sale of neighborhood merchandise at Otto Henderberg Park. Approximately fifty current and former neighbors came by to make it a successful and festive event. The gazebo was festooned with garland and mistletoe and used as a backdrop for family pictures taken by a professional photographer. A pop-up tent was erected and featured tables of Swillburg merchandise. Sales of the many special items were quite impressive, over a thousand dollars was realized for the S.N.A. Also, another table featured baked goods provided by neighbor, Allison Hess, a professional baker, her delicious offerings added much holiday flavor and cheer to the event. Thanks to Josh Jacobs who conceived this event, to all who made this gathering happen, and to the many neighbors who came to socialize, shop, and add to the fun!

On a more official note, The S.N.A. received notice that the City Planning Commission on December 13th approved rezoning of a parcel of land at the corner of South Clinton Avenue and Benton (behind Salvatore's)

allowing for the creation of a twenty-space parking lot. A few neighbors wrote the commission asking that no entrance or exit be approved along Benton Street and that a buffer zone of trees and bushes be required there to maintain the street's residential character. The commission responded to our appeals and have limited entrance/egress to South Clinton Avenue.

Did anyone notice the art mural along Pembroke Street had lost its footing and was leaning against the expressway sound barrier? Several neighbors brought that to our attention. Fortunately, again, the mural stands firm with new posts holding it in place. Thanks go to neighbors Dave Fergusson, Josh Bossman, and Winton Buddington who undertook the task to preserve this precious neighborhood art piece.

These activities speak to the benefit of having a strong association of neighbors working together to maintain a high quality of urban life. If you haven't already donated, financial support for the S.N.A. can be on our website: <https://swillburg.com/>. And, if you'd like to become involved in the S.N.A. steering committee please reach out at the same place.

Wishing you all a fun winter! Stay safe everyone!



Can you imagine having to shovel the snow from the last storm into a wheelbarrow and haul it away? In 1935 city works had to do just that. (Courtesy City Hall Photo Lab)

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Call 256.1740, ext. 4
Deadline
March 25ish**



Join SWPC in Community Building

The South Wedge Planning Committee (SWPC) invites you to join 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 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.

Support the Wedge!

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

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For an appointment:

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or email Norm Karsten at karsten@geneseo.edu

New Year Plans (And What I Learned From My My Dogs)

So here we are, well into the New Year 2022. How are those new year plans going for you? On December 31st, many of us had laid plans with the best intentions. And even though it is admirable to have goals, dreams, aspirations, how is it really going? There are many cliches that go something like resolutions are made for breaking or create solutions – not resolutions. And so on. We put a lot of pressure on ourselves to make drastic changes overnight as the calendar flips from one month to next. If you are feeling at all bad, don't. The best laid plans of mice and men often go awry. This saying is adapted from a line in Robert Burns' 1785 poem "To a Mouse", in which the speaker is a farmer who accidentally destroys a mouse's nest. The speaker laments the futility of the plans of mice and men. Later, American author John Steinbeck took his inspiration from this poem and wrote his novella "Of Mice and Men", published in 1937. The allegory demonstrated by Steinbeck, according to online Cliff Notes, is that "most people dream about lives of great significance. But most humans' limitations keep these dreams from coming true, and in the long run, they are destined to experience common lives."

Personally, this year, I made some new resolutions, some of which have fallen by the wayside, although not completely. This time around, I decided not to beat myself up for any shortcomings; I've decided to look at why I made those resolutions and to celebrate myself for how far I've come. And to recognize the fact that in our humanness, progress is something to rejoice

in every step of the way. People, just like animals and every other living being, cannot simply change overnight. That is an unfair expectation for anyone to have. Everything is a process. Business, relationships, habits, personal growth... they can all change. That is something that is often overlooked. A scenario can be something one day but may change the next. After all, the only sure thing about life is change. And it can take time.

The importance is that there is the awareness that something needs to change for the better. Then taking baby steps to make it happen. If there is no awareness, things will not change. Awareness is the critical component that is needed to break the unconscious patterns that continue to take place.

I've spent considerable time observing the relationship between my rescue dogs, one is my senior who has experienced a lot of grieving from her recently passed senior rescue brothers; the other, a new rescue from the Verona Street Animal Society, which is an amazing organization that relies upon donations and volunteers, and the work they do to help every animal that comes through is nothing short of miraculous. This new boy, young and full of exuberance, sparkles with energy and is happy to be in a safe place, and my senior girl acts happy to have a new friend. It has been a work in progress though, he sometimes annoys her and gets in her face.

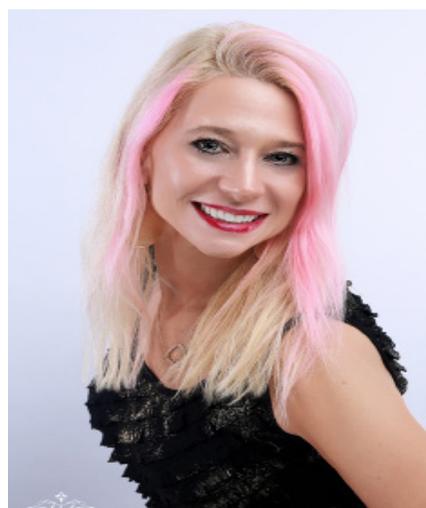
The epiphany that struck me from watching my dogs and seeing how they engaged with life was that it really is very simple. If something adds to your core joy and well-being, then go with it. If it takes away, then stop doing it. And if someone gets in the way of your peace, deal with it straight-

Michele H. Martell

on with a warning, avoid it, or block them. My point is that I've learned a lot of simple, uninhibited life lessons from my dogs, and animals in general. The greatest of life lessons come from pure souls.

So instead of depending upon an achieved New Year's resolution to feel accomplished, it may be more productive to focus on the adage: KISS – Keep it Simple, Sweetie! (I've also heard it stand for "Keep it Simple, Stupid!") Either way, if there's something you wish for this new year, whether it be well-being, joy, peace, success, don't complicate things – just keep that goal in mind, go for it, and proceed accordingly. The image of blinders on a horse comes to mind – focus on what's in front of you and keep moving and run your own race. There will always be those who distract you, are jealous, authentically not for you, spreading gossip about you, or are vindictive; remember it is just part of life. Simply deal, avoid, and block that which is not in alignment.

This new year can be a time of self-actualization. One baby step at a time. Great lessons from animals, young and old. God Bless You, and Happy 2022.



Michele H. Martell
(Photo by Sarah Jeruta Salvilla)

Meet Patti Giglio, New Wedge Editor

Writing her first article, "Ghosts of the South Wedge," for The WEDGE in 2018 piqued Patti Giglio's interest in this small Rochester neighborhood. The South Wedge's history kept her coming back to learn more. In fact, Giglio has a passion for history and has written eight books and countless articles in the non-fiction history genre, most of them about locations and people in Rochester, the Finger Lakes region, and western New York. WEDGE readers may recognize her from the South Wedge Farmers Market where she has been selling her books and other creative history wares for four seasons. One of her current projects is working on the history and formal recognition of a cemetery that was sold and paved over for a retail store in Spencerport in 1955. Still buried on the property are war veterans, the town's first doctor, and a founding father of Spencerport, among others. She grew up on a family farm in Hamlin and began writing in elementary school for the school newsletter. She continued writing in high school for its newsletter and began using writing as a creative outlet while taking a

poetry class. In addition, Giglio had to write her own speeches for state competitions as a member of the FFA. Writers are nearly always readers, too, and Giglio lists Stephen King as a favorite fiction



author, but she became more interested in non-fiction and history when she discovered books by Arch Merrill, an author, poet, and journalist for the Democrat & Chronicle in the mid-twentieth century. His descriptive accounts of events, people,

Glynis Valenti

and landscapes of the Genesee Valley, the Finger Lakes, and the Southern Tier captured Giglio's attention and spurred her to research her own surroundings. The Foxfire series by Eliot Wigginton is another favorite read. Published during the 1970s, the books are an encyclopedia of Appalachian folklore, life skills, crafting, stories, recipes, natural remedies, and customs that give Giglio a better understanding of people, sustainability, and her family's roots. She says her "thirst for knowledge" keeps her inspired to write and do other creative projects. "Research for one thing leads to another. I have 'squirrel moments' where something sparks other ideas, and I have to make lists for various projects," explains Giglio, laughing. "I'm curious, I guess—and nosy. I always try to find things that people don't know." She liked the vibe of The WEDGE newspaper the first time she saw it and likened it to the Westside News. "It's a neighborhood newspaper with neighbors contributing," she says. "Everything that happens in our neighborhood affects all of us. How would you find out about new businesses and

JustOne Begins

"Just one" minute can make a difference for children and adults with special needs and their families in our community.

Each February, blue envelopes arrive in mailboxes asking for "just one" dollar to help the more than 55,000 people of all ages served by Al Sigl's seven nonprofit Member Agencies. Each dollar works together to create opportunities for everyone to be included in community life.

Al Sigl Member Agencies include CP Rochester; EPI; Medical Motor Service; National Multiple Sclerosis Society Upstate NY; Rochester Hearing & Speech Center; Rochester Rehabilitation; and Starbridge.

Many JustOne gifts, include notes that express appreciation for being asked to give an amount that lets everyone join in, like Sherry, who wrote: "Thank you for the opportunity to help."

Others remember the help a friend or family member received. "Thanks to all at Al Sigl who helped – and are still helping – our son."

Have a favorite memory or message that you would like to share about JustOne? Please visit alsigl.org.

St. Patrick's Day Parade Returns

Good luck is when opportunity meets preparation, and we have been preparing for this moment for two years. After a long hiatus due to COVID, the Rochester St. Patrick's Day Parade is back on March 12, 2022 "live and in person". The parade begins at 12:30pm at the traditional starting point at East Avenue and Alexander Street.



localized happenings now besides these small community papers?" Looking through past issues in preparation for her new Editor role, Giglio noticed some "really interesting columns" that she would like to resurrect, focusing on everyday people and adding articles that pertain to the South Wedge in particular. She would also like to get youth involved in writing about the neighborhood and city as she used to do in school, noting that kids don't always know the history surrounding them where they live. What is Giglio looking forward to as the new WEDGE Editor? "Learning more about the South Wedge community and meeting the people and businesses here." She adds, "It's like a town, itself, in a big city." Giglio lives in Gates with her husband Steve and two dogs, Fred and Ginger. Her daughter Liesl works in a doctor's office, and her son Karl is a student at Spencerport High School where he'll be directing the Spring 2022 play. Readers and writers can contact her at thewedge@swpc.org or pgiglio@swpc.org.

Dave Paprocki's "Washboards and Beyond..."

In Dave Paprocki's hands a simple old-timey appliance, the washboard, is transformed into a musical instrument and a work of art. His collection "Washboards and Beyond..." was exhibited at the Little Theater Art Gallery during the month of January.

The Rochester native delivered mail for 30 years before he retired. Paprocki also played drums from 1962-2008 across a variety of genres including rock, blues, bluegrass, and Zydeco. The list of bands he played with is long "the Jesters, the Knorks, the Howse, Spectrum, Live Oak, Chanka Chank, the Genesee Jug Sliders, Ancient Youth, the Public Market Band, the Crawdiddies (since 2011), the Cotton Toe 3 and P.V. Nunes Band."

Nancy O'Donnell



I began adding some other percussion pieces to widen the variety of tones, color, and texture," writes Paprocki.

In 2013, Paprocki began to build "wall hung" versions, and suddenly "the washboard became my canvas."

In the Little Theater exhibit, Paprocki's washboards ranged from whimsical to thought-provoking. "All Shook Up" features the-Jailhouse-Rock Elvis Presley surrounded by dice and saltshaker tops. Another piece holds an array of wild clowns peering through tree branches, while "Sightings" lets UFO's fly across the washboard's surface and mimic the shape of a brand of cigarette.

One of his art pieces, "Self-portrait 2," is now on display at Studio 402 on Anderson Avenue.

"The assemblage is how I felt the last year..." said Paprocki. "So many things to deal with, masks, the vaccine."

The work features a photo of Paprocki behind cracked glass on the surface of the washboard with "distorted hands reaching out toward the viewer."

"It also has three mirrors, so viewers can view themselves," Paprocki added.

Paprocki's washboards range in price from \$150 to \$500. To learn more about his art, visit him on Facebook or his website, washboarddave.com, to see works sold.

Nancy O'Donnell Hale is a freelance writer and editor always looking for something new and beautiful to write about.



Self Portrait 2 by Dave Paprocki

In 2008, he put down his sticks and picked up a washboard. He described his experience with the washboard in an artist statement at the Little. "I discovered its versatility as a marvelous percussion instrument. Along it's corrugated surface, I could strum, scratch, and tap. Adding my own personal touch using the replacement for the standard drum kit. Only using a washboard and 6 sewing thimbles. Along the way,

Womens' Business Center Opens

The Urban League of Rochester is opened the ROC Women's Business Center, the first of its kind in the greater Rochester community. The Urban League celebrated with a grand opening and formal ribbon cutting ceremony at the center, 130 Platt Street, on January 26, 2022.

Powered by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), the Roc Women's Business Center (RWBC) joins a network of 140 women's business centers across the country. The SBA's office of Women's Business Ownership has provided the Urban League with renewable annual funding of \$150,000 to operate the center.

The RWBC will provide a unique array of services specifically for women entrepreneurs, including one-on-one counseling, training, networking, workshops, technical assistance, and mentoring on numerous business development topics.

"The Small Business Administration is keenly aware of the economic challenges that the Greater Rochester area has historically faced. Our services to assist women entrepreneurs in this region through the establishment of a new WBC is vital and much needed," said Natalie Madeira Cofield, Assistant Administrator of the Office of Women's Business Ownership at the SBA, "We look forward to working with the Urban League of Rochester and to doing our part to help women-owned small businesses in the region to grow, survive and thrive."

Khara Grant has been selected as the Director of the RWBC. Grant is the President of KAMG Consulting, LLC, and has over 15 years of experience in business development, sales and marketing, and project management. A Rochester native, she was most recently an enterprise program manager with Cisco in Atlanta, GA.



Nancy is a Registered Nurse who works in Same Day Surgery.

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Harry B. Bronson

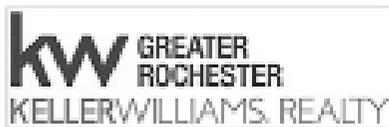


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Return to Play After COVID

Pediatricians reinforce COVID-19 guidance for kids returning to sports and physical activity, which are interim guidelines designed to protect children and teens from cardiac events. As cases of COVID-19 increase among local children, a regional task force focused on the safe reopening of schools is advocating for a potentially lifesaving set of guidelines for kids to return to sports and physical education after recovering from COVID-19.

The COVID-19 Return to Exercise After COVID-19 Infection guidance was developed by physicians of the Finger Lakes Reopening Schools Safety Task Force's Health Workgroup and based on clinical recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

The group, convened by Common Ground Health, wants families to know that COVID-19 infection can pose risks to kids and teens' hearts.

Kids 5 years and older who have moderate or severe symptoms (fever for four or more days, a week or more of body aches, chills, or extreme tiredness) should see a health care provider 10 days after the start of infection to determine if they need to gradually return to play, physical education and sports.

Kids 12 and older who play intense or competitive sports should also see a health care provider 10 days after the start of infection before returning to intense or competitive sports.

Young people may be referred to a cardiology clinic for further evaluation if they have any concerning cardiac symptoms after COVID-19. Once a child is cleared, they can slowly return to sports, gym, and recess, but they should continue to be monitored for cardiac symptoms.

The return to exercise guidance has been in effect for the last year and is intended to inform and educate the community about potential inflammatory risks to the heart and potential concerning symptoms in specific higher risk groups of children and teens (those with moderate to severe symptoms and youth 12 years and older who participate in competitive, high intensity sports). Also, it will help encourage access to medical assessment for these higher risk groups of children and youth.

Finally, the guidance is used to encourage monitoring of those participating in competitive, high intensity sports as they resume activity.

While isolation periods have been shortened due to the reduced duration of infectivity of Omicron, allowing a full 10-day recovery period before returning to sports, gym or recess is important for the health of these higher risk youth bases on current evidence and best practice guidelines from the AAP.

This guidance is not mandated by New York State but is supported by pediatric specialists, primary care providers and primary care practices serving children in our community.

For more information, visit www.commongroundhealth.org.

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.



From the Albert R. Stone Negative Collection, Rochester Museum & Science Center, Rochester, N.Y.

Celebrating Harriet Tubman's 200th Birthday in Auburn

The New York State Equal Rights Heritage Center and the City of Auburn announce the Harriet Tubman Bicentennial Celebration. The city will "Shine a Light" on 200 years of Tubman.

The seven-month celebration will begin in March on Harriet Tubman Day, and continue throughout International Underground Railroad Month in September 2022, with programming and events in Cayuga County and beyond focused on covering Tubman's inspirational life and legacy.

The Heritage Center and Commission partnered with creative and technology firm, and certified B Corp, TGW Studio of Rochester, NY, to create a special logo to mark the bicentennial occasion. Additionally, a website has been developed to attract and welcome visitors to the area, and to provide updated information on the celebration's events.

While a wealth of details has been recorded about the day Tubman died on March 10, 1913, in Auburn, NY, comparatively little is known about the day she was born into slavery in Maryland. Based on available historical research, it is speculated that her birth year is about 1822. The bicentennial of Tubman's birth presents the unique opportunity to shine a bright light on the famed abolitionist, Civil War spy, and suffragist in the place she called home.

"Auburn has had a remarkable role in American history, and we are excited to invite everyone here to learn more about the life of Harriet Tubman, why she settled here,



Harriet Tubman courtesy of womenshistory.org

and the 50 years she lived here," says Auburn Mayor, Michael Quill. "The City of Auburn is proud to support the Tubman Bicentennial and encourage all to make plans to visit us in 2022 as we celebrate and share her story."

Tubman is the only woman to have two national parks dedicated in her honor, and the celebration aligns with the five-year anniversary of the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historic Park Visitor Center in Maryland, making it a collective commemoration between Tubman's birth and resting places.

For more information on the Harriet Tubman Bicentennial and future event announcements as details are finalized, visit harriettubman200.com. Join the celebration using the hashtag #HarrietTubman200.

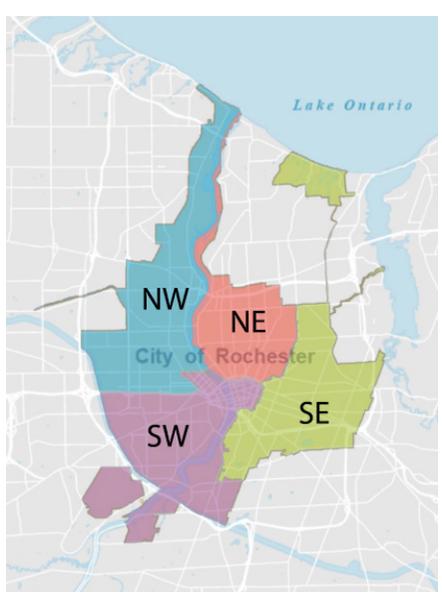
- **The WEDGE Wants You!**
- **Do you have a story you want to tell?**
- **A photo you want to share? We want to hear from you.**

Veteran Suicide - A National Crisis

Suicide among our veterans is at crisis level. From 2008 to 2016, more than 6,000 veterans took their own lives each year. In 2016, the suicide rate among veterans was 1.5 times greater than non-veterans. Veteran suicide changes the lives of the family, not just the veteran. The Veterans Outreach Center works in conjunction with the VA and community partners to support all veterans – because one life lost is one life too many. And there is something that you can do to help. The VOC is holding a training session open to the public called Operation SAVE – An Introduction to Suicide Prevention on March 10, 2022. The introductory training class will teach you basic skills that you can use to help save someone a veteran's life who maybe struggling with thoughts of suicide. If you have any questions about the program or would like to sign-up, you can contact Natalie Donato, the Manager of Behavioral Health Services, at Natalie.Donato@vocroc.org. We all need to work together to save a veteran's life.

First Round of Community Meetings to Review Zoning Maps

The Zoning Alignment Project (ZAP) Team is happy to announce an important next step in moving Rochester 2034 forward - the UPCOMING launch of the draft Zoning Map and Use Table for public review. The draft map and table will be introduced to the City Planning Commission at their virtual meeting on January 31, 2022. During that meeting, we will post the map and the table to www.rochesterzap.com so the community can begin reviewing it as well. Then, we will hold five (5) public meetings* across the City where you will have the opportunity to ask questions and provide input on how the map can better align with Rochester 2034 and the needs of our community. Each meeting will focus on a different part of the City with the fifth meeting



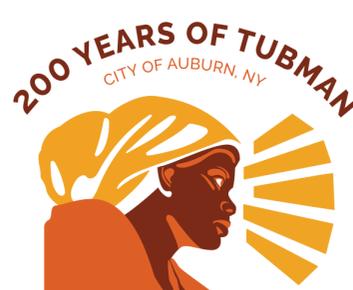
downtown for those who could not attend a prior meeting. There will be multiple opportunities at future meetings/workshops to

provide feedback after this round. All meetings listed below will start at 5:30 and end by 7:30.

The meeting pertaining to the South Wedge area will be held on February 16th at School #23 in the Frances Parker Cafeteria located at 170 Barrington Street.

For anyone who missed any one of the community meetings, there will be a final meeting on Thursday, February 24th in the City Hall Council Chamber at 30 Church Street, downtown.

In the event of directives from the Mayor's Office or Monroe County Health Department, these meetings will switch to virtual meetings. If this occurs, an announcement will be made. If you have any questions about the meetings you can visit the website RochesterZAP.com/ contact for further assistance.



Quite the Character on Averill Ave

Rattlesnake Pete, born Peter Gruber in 1858 in Oil City, Pennsylvania, ninety miles north of Pittsburgh, was the son of an oil refiner. After his father left the oil business, he and Peter opened a restaurant/saloon. In 1892 Oil City endured disaster after disaster in the form of floods, then fires that followed by massive explosions that destroyed the already crippled city. Everything laid in ruin, including the Grubers' saloon. So, with nothing left for him at home,

Peter headed north to Rochester.

Once in Rochester, Gruber settled in the South Wedge, and he opened a saloon with an attached curiosity emporium at 8-10 Mill Street behind Reynolds Arcade. In his emporium Gruber not only had snakes and reptiles, but he also had a vast collection of strange items, some of which bordered on the macabre. Rattlesnake Pete's collection included the corpse of a petrified woman, the battle flag from Custer's last stand

and what he claimed to be one of the very first electric chairs. Pete also had personal belongings of John Wilkes Booth and the James brothers, as well as the weapon used by a wife-killing axe murderer.

From a Seneca Indian medicine woman, Gruber learned how to use serpents to make medicines and antidotes, as well as clothing from their skins. He sold venom and oils from the snakes he captured as well as other things he made from them. According to stories passed down through the years, he once saved a circus clown, bitten by a rattlesnake, with his anti-venom. Pete treated hundreds of people with goiters by wrapping his snakes around their necks, the gentle massaging movements of the snake's muscles relieved their discomfort. True to his nickname, Rattlesnake Pete, obsessed with snakes and reptiles from an early age, not only kept the slithering creatures, but he also dressed head to toe in their skins. In Arch Merrill's book, *Rochester Sketchbook*, the author further relayed Rattlesnake Pete's place in the community. "Whenever any strange animals

"Peter Gruber, whose knowledge of venomous snakes made him internationally famous as Rattlesnake Pete, died at his home today after a long illness. He was 76.

Gruber was known through the Middle Atlantic States as a specialist on rattlers, but he knew all snakes from the garden variety up to the 20-foot boa constrictor or python. He maintained a combination grill room and museum in Rochester and the flivver with a coiled brass snake in its right fender with a familiar sight on the back roads of Monroe County where he hunted his reptilian pets.

His knowledge of the rattlesnake and his treatment for its poison brought him many calls from persons who had been bitten and several persons owed their lives to his skill.

Among them was Clyde Powers, recently a stage manager for Claude Dillingham, whose life he saved after he was bitten by a rattler in Bostock's animal show at Coney Island 28 years ago. Gruber was called when Powers' condition became serious, and physicians said Gruber had saved his life.



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Rattlesnake Pete (courtesy Rochester Public Library Local History Division)

showed up in Rochester, Pete was sent for...to pick up sinister lizards from banana shipments in the railroad yards, to capture monkeys escaped from the carnival, to kill snakes, invariably harmless ones, that householders found in their cellars."

Rattlesnake Pete was a Victorian version of Billy the Exterminator. He was quite the character who marched to the beat of his own drum. When Peter Gruber died at his home at 87 Averill Street, his death was national news. The following is his obituary that appeared in the October 11, 1932, edition of the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*. The headline tells it all... "Bitten by Snakes 500 Times, 'Rattlesnake Pete' Dies at 76.

scarred by more than 500 snake bites, testified to his many narrow escapes.

"Rattlesnake" Pete had been bitten by venomous snakes 33 times since he became interested in snakes during his early associations with Indians near his home at Oil City, Pa. Gruber evolved his own remedy for snake bites long before the day of anti-venom serum and when last bitten three years ago by a large Texas rattler, saved himself by the same treatment."

Rattlesnake Pete was laid to rest at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery. His collection was auctioned off after his death, never to be displayed again. With that he slipped into history merely as someone people called 'larger than life'.