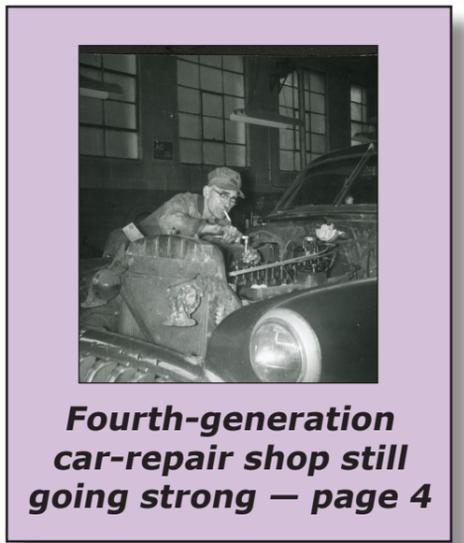


FREE

The WEDGE

April/May 2024 | Vol. 46, No. 2

Official Newspaper of the South Wedge Since 1982
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Fourth-generation car-repair shop still going strong — page 4

It's Time for Lilacs in the Wedge

Rochester's Lilac Festival is expected to draw a half-million visitors to Highland Park May 10–19 for the 126th annual event. First held in 1898 and described by planners as the unofficial kickoff of Rochester's warm-weather festival season, the Lilac Festival is billed as "one of the largest free festivals of its kind in the country," featuring "the largest collection of lilacs in the Northeast": 1,800 lilac bushes and 500 varieties covering 22 acres. This year's fest will feature more than 80 musical performances, greater than 300 juried arts-and-crafts vendors, activities for children and hundreds of lilac bushes. Organizers promise a more family-friendly event after last year's opening-night disruptions by raucous youth. Festival highlights include:
May 10: Opening Ceremony (10 a.m., festival grounds open 10:30 a.m.–8:30 p.m.)
May 11: Lilac Parade (begins at 10:30 a.m. at Science Parkway)

May 11–12, 18–19: Art in the Park (10 a.m.–6 p.m. Saturdays, 10 a.m.–5 p.m. Sundays)
May 14: Seniors Day
May 19: 45th Annual Lilac Run 5-K/10-K and "Donut Dash"

Lilac Festival musical notes
Music performers include nine national-touring artists and well-known or emerging local acts as openers:
May 10: Rayland Baxter (Americana bliss blending country, roots and vintage pop). Opening acts: Left-Handed 2nd Baseman, Bellwether Breaks
May 11: Butcher Brown (jazz, hip-hop and funk). Opening acts: Zahyia, Aaron Rizzo Band, Sage Bava, Girls Rock! Rochester
May 12: Ghost-Note (afrobeat and funk led by Snarky Puppy's percussion duo). Opening acts: Grace Serene and the Super Clean, Head to The Roots, Fall Creek Brass Band, Roc Star Academy

LILAC FESTIVAL, p. 8



Rochester native and national-touring artist Danielle Ponder will perform May 16 at the Lilac Festival.

SWPC Looking Forward to Upcoming Events

South Wedge Planning Committee is going on the road — maybe even coming to your block! The neighborhood organization's board and Community Engagement Committee are interested in hearing your concerns and what you think might improve your street, neighborhood and quality of life. Look for location announcements on our website and Facebook page about neighborhood "info tents" this spring and summer. Come say "hi" while you're walking the dog or taking a stroll. Staff and members at the tables will have information on programs, resources and what's coming up. Plus, they'll be ready to listen to your ideas for a better community. The first table in April will be at Abundance Co-op (for its Birthday Bash), 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturday, April 6. Stop by to say hello — and help Abundance celebrate 23 years!

Annual South Wedge Fest returns
Save the date: Plans are underway for this summer's annual South Wedge Festival. Block time between 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 17, for the third annual event, taking place on South Avenue between Averill Avenue and Gregory Street. There'll be all-day artisan vendors, food and music. Festivities will kick off with the pet parade from Marie Daley Park to the stage on South Avenue. If you're a vendor, sponsor, food vendor or musician interested in participating, or if you want to volunteer on the committee or on the day of the event, contact Glynis Valenti, at gvalenti@swpc.org, for information or an application. We'll keep you updated on the South Wedge Planning Committee website/social media. **Glynis Valenti** gvalenti@swpc.org



Festival-goers enjoy the South Wedge Festival in 2023.

The WEDGE Gets Read!

South Wedge Planning Committee
224 Mt. Hope Ave.
Rochester, NY 14620

In Brief

PAC-TAC training set

The city's Southeast Quadrant Neighborhood Service Center seeks residents interested in upcoming Police and Citizens Together Against Crime program (commonly known as PAC-TAC) training.



Lt. Rob Wilson

"Training will allow you to walk safety in your neighborhood in pairs or small groups with the purpose of monitoring your surroundings and reporting any suspicious activity observed," Lt. Rob Wilson, Rochester Police Department crime-prevention officer for the Southeast Neighborhood Service Center, wrote in an email. "The idea is that you know your neighborhood better than anyone. You know what is out of place and what has always been there. PAC-TAC helps the community stay on top of potential issues so they can be nipped in the bud."

Prospective participants must be at least 21 years old and reside in the southeast quadrant. If interested, contact robert.j.wilson@cityof-rochester.gov by April 8. Include name, home address and birth date (for a records check).

Training (up to 90 minutes long), conducted by crime-prevention officers, will be held at 5:30 p.m. April 16 in the first-floor auditorium of the Public Safety Building, 185 Exchange St. Anyone previously trained does not need to attend. Prior training was held in September.

For more information about PAC-TAC, go to cityofrochester.gov/pactac.

PAB seeks director candidates

The city's Police Accountability Board is accepting applications for executive director to replace interim executive director Sherry Walker-Cowart. Candidates should have an advanced degree in criminal justice, public administration or a similar discipline, plus at least five years of expert-management experience. Applications will be accepted until April 9. For the full job listing, go to roc-pab.org/work-with-us.

HUD Action Plan feedback sought

The city is preparing its 2024-25 Annual Action Plan for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Community Development and Planning Program. The plan, for the year beginning July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025, will identify ways to address needs and goals identified in the 2020-24 Five-Year Consolidated Plan. The draft Annual Action Plan is available for download at CityofRochester.gov/ConsolidatedPlan2020.

In-person public hearings will be held at 6:30 p.m. April 23 and 6 p.m. May 16 in City Council Chambers, 30 Church St. Written comments will be accepted until 7 p.m. May 16. The city is especially interested in input from low- and moderate-income individuals (intended as the primary beneficiaries of HUD's formula grant programs). Send comments to: HUDFunding@CityofRochester.gov or HUD Program Management, City Hall Room 224-B, 30 Church St., Rochester, NY 14614.

Senior summit held

City Council Vice President LaShay Harris (D-South District) on Feb. 10 hosted the second annual ROC Senior Estate Planning Summit. Drawing more than 100 people, the event focused on topics related to aging, including wills, identity-theft protection and banking. The summit was held in collaboration with Mayor Malik Evans and Senior Expressions Founder/CEO Martha Hope.

Auto recall is urged

City Councilmember Mary Lupien (D-East District) in February introduced a memorializing resolution calling on the National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration to implement a recall of Hyundai and Kia vehicles. All nine council members signed the resolution at City Council's regular Feb. 20 meeting.

"The theft of Hyundai and Kia vehicles in Rochester is a clear safety concern," Lupien said. "This epidemic of stolen vehicles has caused immeasurable damage to property, livelihoods and the trust that must exist among members of our community."

A design flaw in some of those vehicles, manufactured between 2011 and 2022, allows the cars to be easily stolen.

"We have initiated legal action against the manufacturers, but we need an immediate, concrete solution," Lupien said. "The thefts won't stop unless the flaws in these vehicles are fixed. We need a recall now — before anyone else is hurt or killed."

"Hyundai and Kia's previous efforts to curb these thefts are insufficient, and it's clear these companies are unwilling to correct their wrongs," City Council President Miguel Meléndez Jr. said in a news release. "Government intervention is necessary in order to preserve the safety of our streets [and] the jobs of car-dependent families."

City is 'Storm Ready'

Rochester has been officially designated a "StormReady" community by the National Weather Service. According to a news release, as a StormReady community the city has demonstrated itself ready to handle hazardous weather by having a 24-hour warning point and emergency-operations center, multiple weather-alert avenues, weather-condition-monitoring systems and a formal hazardous-weather plan.

StormReady is a voluntary National Weather Service program that promotes weather-hazard readiness and encourages communities to take proactive approaches to improving local hazardous-weather operations.

The status comes on the heels of the city's appointment of Frederick Rion as emergency-management director. Rion will work in close collaboration with the city's police, fire and emergency-communications departments to coordinate disaster and emergency preparation and response in the city.

"Rochester is no stranger to hazardous weather, and we've made significant strides to prepare ourselves for such events," Rion said. "And with our partners at StormReady, we'll continue expanding and improving our weather preparedness resources, making Rochester safer for all."

Hyper-Reach Alert now for cellphones

Monroe County's Hyper-Reach Alert service is available for mobile phones. In case of emergency, the 911 Center can automatically notify residents by home phone or cellphone. Landline phone numbers are automatically registered with 911, but mobile phones also can be logged. In case of an emergency, if you have registered your cellphone you will receive either a call or text with information about the incident.

To sign up, go to monroecounty.gov/SAFETY-ECD.

Boulder expanding

South Wedge mainstay Boulder Coffee Co., 100 Alexander St., is expanding to downtown with a second location.

Its new venue, in remodeled space in the second-floor lobby of Hyatt Regency Rochester, 125 E. Main St., was expected to open by April 5. Hours will be 6 a.m.-2 p.m. daily. ▲

Michael Safran
msafran@swpc.org

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Spice Up Your Life

Merriya Valleri
merriya@stuartsspices.com

Rochester-Style Cincinnati Chili

It should go without saying, but as a small, locally-owned business, we love being part of the Rochester community. That's why we wanted to share our recipe for Rochester-Style Cincinnati Chili!

This dish combines the classic taste of robust chili with zippy meat sauce, all topped with red onion and freshly grated sharp cheddar cheese. We can't think of a better way to celebrate the Rochester food scene!

Ingredients:

- 2 to 3 sweet onions, diced
- 2 pounds ground beef
- 2 to 3 tablespoons *Stuart's Spices Rochester Meat Sauce Seasoning*
- 2 15-ounce cans of diced tomatoes
- 2 15-ounce cans of kidney beans
- 2 to 4 ounces light beer (why not use a Genny?)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 pound spaghetti, cooked al dente
- Freshly shredded cheddar cheese (it will melt better than pre-shredded)
- Finely diced red onion, for garnish

Instructions:

In a large pot, sauté diced onions in olive oil, cooking until translucent. Add ground beef and cook until meat is almost done. Stir in 2 to 3 tablespoons *Rochester Meat Sauce Seasoning*. Stir in tomatoes and beans and mix well. If more liquid is desired, add 2 to 4 ounces of a light beer. Simmer at least 45 minutes. Serve over spaghetti, garnish with red onion and cheddar cheese.

Extra tip:

Like it spicy? Try it with shredded cheddarjack and pickled jalapenos. Enjoy!▲

Long-time baker and amateur chef Merriya Valleri is a spice merchant and social-media manager at Stuart's Spices, 754 S. Clinton Ave. In her spare time, she enjoys trying out new recipes, writing on rainy days and going for walks with her family.



When people are fed, futures are nourished.



FeedingAmerica.org/ActNow

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Open 24 hours!
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Jennifer Posey
Robert Marvin

Honorary Board Members

Mitchell Dannenberg, John Dennis,
Joe DiDonato, Cheryl Stevens

Staff

Glynis Valenti, executive director
Bridget Portune, market manager
Construction manager (position to be filled)

The WEDGE Newspaper

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The WEDGE Newspaper is published by the South Wedge Planning Committee, a non-profit community development organization. Its mission is to provide accurate coverage of community news and local people and places. Printed bimonthly (February/March, April/May, June/July, August/September, October/November and December/January), The WEDGE reaches a wide readership (print and online at swpc.org/).

Send story ideas or news to: The WEDGE, 224 Mt. Hope Avenue, Rochester, NY 14620 or email to: thewedge@swpc.org. Advertising deadlines and rates are available online at swpc.org or by calling 585.256.1740, ext. 4.

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.

Join SWPC in Community Building

The South Wedge Planning Committee (SWPC) invites you to help us make a difference in southeast Rochester by joining our board of directors or serving on a committee. Founded in 1978, SWPC, works as a conduit for federal or state repair grants that help keep people in their aging homes. It builds community through the South Wedge Farmers Market, South Wedge Victory Gardens on Hamilton and Cypress streets and The WEDGE newspaper that publishes six issues a year.

Your time, talent and commitment can help us to continue SWPC's work. If interested, call 256-1740, ext. 4, or contact Executive Director Glynis Valenti at gvalenti@swpc.org or 224 Mt. Hope Ave., Rochester, NY 14620.

South Wedge Planning Committee Meetings

The community is invited to attend all SWPC meetings held at 224 Mt. Hope Ave. (Hamilton Street entrance)

April/May Calendar

SWPC Board 6 p.m. Wednesday
April 17 and May 15

Community Engagement

(Neighbors & Block Clubs)
5:30 p.m. Wednesday
April 24 and May 22

For info, email:
gvalenti@swpc.org

Articles, columns and essays in The WEDGE do not reflect the views and/or opinions of the South Wedge Planning Committee.

Get The WEDGE!

For 42 years, The WEDGE has chronicled the lives and times of the vibrant South Wedge neighborhood — and beyond.

Please consider becoming a WEDGE supporter. You'll get the issue printed and emailed to your home — plus a WEDGE card, too!

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Please mail form, with your payment, to:
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Business & Neighborhoods

Pride Inspires Family-run Auto-Repair Shop

Dick Schrader marks 50 years at Schraders' Garage; his son is fourth-generation general manager

Upon stepping into the Schraders' Garage customer-waiting area, it's evident that family is central to the South Wedge business.

A large bulletin board is half-filled with photos of immediate and extended family members (leaving just enough space for other messages). In fact, there's a decent chance that at least one of the faces in the massive collage could be that of a future proprietor of the 92-year-old family-owned car-repair shop (but let's not get ahead of ourselves).

At the moment, Dan Schrader, 38, is a fourth-generation general manager. He followed in the footsteps of his father, Dick (who, at 69, still comes into work three days a week). Dick Schrader took over the business, as part owner, from his father (Dan's granddad), Charles Jr. (who died in 2000). The neighborhood garage was founded, in 1932, by Charles Sr. (the current GM's great-grandfather).

For Dick Schrader, this spring marks a milestone: 50 years in the family business.

But the familial connections run even deeper. Along with Dick and Dan Schrader, a couple brothers/uncles remain involved in daily operations: Alan Schrader, who started working at Schraders' in 1977, is head technician/part owner; and Bob Schrader, who began in 1976, is foreman/part owner (and carpenter). Their mother, Doris Schrader, used to stop into the shop daily until about the year before she died, at age 93, in 2023.

So, it's safe to say the family business, at 686 S. Clinton Ave. — only its second location during more than nine decades in operation — is here for the long haul.

Long history and loyal customers

Charles Sr. and a partner opened Mutual Garage & Service Station at 535 Broadway in 1932. (The original site, at the corner of Broadway and Alexander Street, just outside the South Wedge, appears now to be a parking lot.)



Erin Turpin

After the business partnership ended, Charles Sr. opted to go it alone, establishing Charles W. Schrader & Son — later known as Schraders' Garage — a general-repair shop. In 1947, despite facing post-war materials shortages, he built a new structure (the one still standing today) on the current site. (Pictures in the customer waiting area show the building under construction.)

In the 77 years since, various renovations and upgrades have been completed, including installations, a couple years ago, of a new concrete floor and car lift. But the shop's heart and soul — the family running it — has been a constant. It's something fourth-generation patrons, too, can appreciate about the neighborhood garage.

"We have a lot of customers that have been coming here for generations," Dick Schrader said. "I love my customers, I love my new customers. We try and look out for their best interests and that's helped us take care of ourselves."

Long-time client Jack Kronenberg is a second-generation patron of Schraders'.

Kronenberg, 74, who lives just outside the South Wedge, has been taking his cars to Schraders' for 30 years (as his father did before him). He credits Dick and Dan Schrader for keeping his cars running through the years.

"Thanks to my wonderful team of doctors — and to Dick and Dan Schrader — I am able to maintain my independence and drive my old car wherever I need to go," Kronenberg said.

"I am profoundly grateful to Dick and Dan Schrader for their great service for many years. They are a great resource for our community."

At the recommendation of a friend, Erin



From left, Dan Schrader, Dick Schrader (who this year marks 50 years with the auto-repair shop), Bob Schrader, the late Doris Schrader, Alan Schrader and Carl Schrader. (Photo provided by Schraders' Garage.)

Turpin, of Gold Street, has been going to Schraders' for a couple years.

"She told me they were friendly and not condescending — which is something I've experienced before with other shops," Turpin said about her friend's referral. "Both times I've been to Schraders' I've been treated with kindness."

Mary Myers posted to a Facebook neighborhood group (in response to a reporter's query): "Schraders' Garage is a friendly, efficient and very professional place. They know their stuff."

In the same thread, 30-year South Wedge resident Jason Dornford wrote, "Schraders' is awesome."

Dornford, who lives off Mount Vernon Avenue, has been taking his vehicles to Schraders' since 2006.

"They are the best, and I never feel I'm paying for things I don't need as they always prioritize repairs that are needed and how crucial or immediate the issue is," Dornford said in a follow-up message. "Never had an issue with their work either."

More than 30-year patron Fran Davis, of Diem Street, described Schraders' owners and employees as considerate, honest, friendly and efficient — and the service as high-quality.

"I always refer people to them knowing they will be satisfied," Davis said in a handwritten letter to *The WEDGE*.

"You try not to take that for granted, and you try to earn that," Dan Schrader said. Repeat customers, he added, benefit from Schraders' mechanics having familiarity with patrons' vehicles.

"One of the advantages we have over your 'quick lubes' and your brake-and-exhaust places is, generally, you have the same people working on your car every time. They may not



A Schraders' Garage mechanic works on the engine of a Buick 8 sometime in the 1950s-1960s — in the same auto-repair shop still open today. (Photo provided by Schraders' Garage.)

remember your name, but they'll remember your car. I think there's a lot of value to that."

The shop's narrow, but deep, nearly full parking lot suggests many customers must feel the same. On the weekday a reporter visited, a long row of cars was stacked, two deep, leading from the Clinton Avenue entrance all the way back to the garage, near the rear edge of the parcel (overlooking I-490). Only one customer (a white-haired woman) waited in the light-blue-painted lobby, but the periodic toot of a car horn, signaling a mechanic's request for someone to open an overhead garage door so a vehicle could be pulled in, hinted that other patrons must've left their cars behind for the day.

Keeping up with auto advances

Inside the shop (heated with used motor oil), a stream of sounds typical of a bustling car-repair shop occasionally makes conversation difficult. But although noise from pneumatic wrenches and other tools is the norm (there's no quiet way to put tires and hubcaps back on a car, after all), Dan Schrader said many car repairs nowadays have gone high-tech.

Auto-repair shops, like Schraders', he said, will need to adapt (as they always have).

Decades ago, Dan Schrader said, car mechanics working on early internal combustion engines might've wondered, "I don't know how we're going to survive if we're not changing the oil every 600 miles." But future technicians (possibly including a nephew who might be interested in the business, along with one or both of his kids) probably will be more concerned with electric cars and "telematics" — including a vehicle's various computers and how they communicate internally (with each other), externally (with other cars sharing the road) and with manufacturers (via shared information). Other high-tech components include automatic-braking systems and various safety features, rear-view cameras and in-car "infotainment" systems.

The future might also bring self-driving vehicles and subscription or road-sharing (instead of ownership) models. "You have a whole generation of kids who are growing up in the information age who are used to ride-sharing," Dan Schrader said.

"Obviously, there's a big shift to electric, which we are monitoring and slowly preparing for," he said. "I don't think it's going to be as swift as politicians and pundits would like

people to believe, but it is going to be a consistently growing trend — more of an evolution than a revolution."

The next generation?

Dan Schrader is the youngest of five siblings (he has four older sisters). Raised in Fairport, he also briefly lived in Swillburg (on Wilmington Street and on Laburnam Crescent). He's the only one to follow his dad (and grandparents) into the business (though sister Lisa worked part of a summer in the shop). A cousin also has worked at Schraders'.

Who could be next to run the shop — taking over the GM's loft office overlooking the shop floor — after Dan Schrader?

A nephew, Aaron (son of Dan's sister Sara), 17, has expressed interest in possibly pursuing a career in the auto-repair business. As for the two sons, ages 5 and 3, of Dan and his wife, Jenn (who works as a manager and executive assistant for Hover), it's too soon to tell whether or not they'll be drawn to the family business (Dan said he won't push them into it).

"There's definitely a pride that comes with it — having your name on the building, seeing your name used around town," Dan Schrader said.

Though he plans on sticking around a while, like his dad he's mindful of the family legacy.

"One day I'll be gone," he said. "What [are] the stories they'll tell of me when I'm gone, and are those stories I'm going to be proud of?"

When he started working at Schraders' 17 years ago, in 2007, his new boss (his dad) allowed him a special privilege. "He told me, on one of my first days, 'You don't have to call me dad.' It still freaks my sisters out."

"Working with my dad is awesome," he said. "Just being able to work with him every single day, see a different side of him."

He's also on a first-name basis with his two uncles who work at the shop. Alan Schrader has served as a mentor in automotive mechanics.

The shop has 10 full-time employees (including six technicians) and one part-time worker: Dick Schrader (Dan's mentor on the business and service-advising side).

Regarding his new part-time (around 30 hours a week) role, Dick Schrader said: "I have to keep working a few days a week to support my habit of spending money on the things I like to do. So, it's a good balance. I don't know how I ever got by with a two-day weekend!"

What's in a name?

Incidentally, is it "Schrader's Garage" (possessive) or "Schraders' Garage" (plural possessive)? By now, you probably know the answer (possibly from seeing it multiple times throughout this story; or, from now knowing the story behind the family business, officially Charles W. Schrader Inc.). Dan Schrader sums it up best:

"I always put the apostrophe after the 's,' as there are multiple Schraders and that is how it is on our logo," he said. "But I never correct anyone who does it wrong."

Dick Schrader started working in the shop, at age 19, five decades ago. Now that he's stepping back, he said of the family business under his son's management:

"Couldn't be more happy with the way things are going. It makes me feel proud." ▀

► Michael Saffran
msaffran@swpc.org

■ Schraders' Garage
■ 686 S. Clinton Ave.
■ Hours: 7:30 a.m. – 6 p.m. Monday-Thursday;
7:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. Friday
■ 585-271-5179
■ schradersgarage.com

Neighborhoods

Garden Tips for Warm Days

I'm a 27-year resident of the Wedge who, like many of you, loves to garden. Puzzled over how to deal with the recently concluded drastically warm winter, I checked with some local experts.

GREEN THUMB

- Increased irrigation capacity
- Drainage systems
- Frost and freeze protection:

Freeze blankets, mist irrigation and modifying pruning timing and severity.

For Our Gardens — Growing a Greener Garden:

- Plant trees (and other perennials) in the garden (cools the environment, reducing human energy use, and sequesters carbon in above- and below-ground biomass).

- Do less to do more.
- Reduce frequency and intensity of tillage (increases organic matter and carbon in soil).
- Reduce and improve efficiency of nitrogen-fertilizer use.

- Mow the lawn less often (reduces fossil fuel use, allows grass to grow deeper roots and accumulate more carbon).
- Reduce use of fossil fuels and replace with renewables.
- Reduce use of disposable products like plastics.
- Grow, consume and buy local foods in season.

- For Lawns — Improving Nitrogen Use Efficiency for Lawns:

- Select grasses with relatively low nitrogen requirement (e.g. fine fescues over Kentucky Blue Grass)
- Consider clover (legume) mix.
- Mow high (above three inches) to promote root growth.
- Recycle lawn clippings.
- Use organic nitrogen sources.
- Urea is preferable to ammonium sulfate or ammonium nitrate.
- Healthy mature lawns, shaded areas, might only need two applications per year (early summer and late fall) and lower annual rate (e.g. 1 lb. N/1000 sq. ft.)

The neighborhood looks forward to seeing the fruits of your work.

Keep an eye out for the dreaded Black Swallowwort and good luck! ▲

Submitted by Lisa Reagan.

Because we all want to be better gardeners, I excerpted some of the wealth of information available on Cornell Cooperative Extension for Monroe County website, which has some of the best resources in our area. In existence since 1913, the non-profit organization is part of the Cooperative Extension land-grant system, a partnership between county, state and federal governments to provide research-based information, tools and education to local people. It suggests the following:

- The pace of change today and projected for this century is such that we cannot rely on historical records to tell us what to expect from the weather and what plants to grow.
- Longer growing seasons and shifts in hardiness zones will allow gardeners to explore new species and varieties, but some long-time favorites may no longer be suitable to the shifting climate.
- Insect, weed and disease pests will be changing and more difficult to control.
- Water management will be more challenging with threats for more short-term flooding and summer drought.
- There are many things gardeners can do to lead the way in climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Consider using plants from the "Plant List" chart available at: monroe.cce.cornell.edu/environment/climate-change/climate-change-gardening.

Consider adapting to changing conditions in our gardens through:

- Plant selection — diversification — experimenting with new species and varieties tolerant to new weather extremes and able to take advantage of longer growing season.
- Earlier planting dates
- More vigilant weed and pest monitoring and control
- Improved water management
- Building healthier soil with more organic

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- Plant selection — diversification — experimenting with new species and varieties tolerant to new weather extremes and able to take advantage of longer growing season.
- Earlier planting dates
- More vigilant weed and pest monitoring and control
- Improved water management
- Building healthier soil with more organic

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DIY gardeners and volunteers wanted

The 2024 garden season is here!

If you're interested in growing your own vegetables and/or flowers, fill out an online application at the South Wedge Planning Committee website (go to "Living in the Wedge" and "Community Gardens"): swpc.org/community-gardens.

There are raised-bed plots available at both the Hamilton Street and Cypress Street gardens (a \$25 fee covers the cost of water and supplies for annual garden repairs).

Contact contact Sharon Turner at picturelady135@gmail.com. ▲

Submitted by Jo Cummings.

Highland Park Conservancy seeking garden volunteers

Calling all garden volunteers!

The Highland Park Conservancy's Steward Program starts its sixth season in Highland Park this month (in April — the exact date is weather dependent).

Last year, participants tallied about 1,600 hours digging weeds and removing vines in selected collections.

If you're interested, please submit a volunteer application at highlandparkconservancy.org/garden-teams and you will be contacted. ▲

Submitted by Milli Picchione.



Swillburg Shoutout

Mike Henry
swillburg1@aol.com

'Clean Sweep,' Summer Picnic and United Way Day of Caring slated

And the beat goes on ... to keep neighbors connected, the Swillburg Neighborhood Association continues busying itself planning social and community improvement activities.

On Feb. 10, more than 80 Swillburg neighbors, lots of joyful children among them, were hosted by the Swillburg Neighborhood Association at ROC Cinema (former Cinema Theater) to a free viewing of the 1995 movie "Babe." It was an endearing comedy drama of a little pig, Babe, who longed to be a sheepdog. The two-hour film captured our hearts indeed, and it was good to see and reconnect with neighbors who had been in hibernation over the early winter.

The event was made possible with funds from a NeighborGood grant through Rochester Area Community Foundation, to which we extend our gratitude. Also, the Highland Park Diner provided a \$25 gift card as a door prize. Thanks to them and, of course, to ROC Cinema for helping us host this cool event!

On another upbeat note, a group of seven neighbors attended lunch bunch, Feb. 15, at Zemeta Ethiopian Restaurant (see photo). As usual, it was fun to visit and enjoy great Ethiopian food (thanks to Zimatons there!). Our next luncheon was on the calendar for March 14 at Sushi Samba on Gregory Street.

Now with spring coming, neighbors are preparing for annual rituals that ready us for warm weather. The city's annual Clean Sweep will be on May 4, and Swillburg neighbors will be cleaning the Bloom Garden at Field Street and Monroe Avenue and preparing it for later planting. Neighbor Megan Critelli has agreed to take the lead on this. Always a fun event!

Another spring ritual, the United Way Day of Caring, is on May 23. Neighbors will prepare the community gardens at School 35 and weed the Labyrinth Garden at Pappert and

Henrietta streets — with the help of University of Rochester volunteers. Another fun and appreciated project. Neighbor Sarah Keyes is leading us on this project.

Next, we're excited to anticipate our annual Summer Picnic, scheduled for June 15 at Otto Henderberg Park. Plans are in the works to have live music, barbecued chicken and pulled-pork from Bubby's Barbecue (very popular last year!), visits by the Rochester Police Department Mounted Patrol and the Rochester Fire Department's Engine 1 from Monroe Avenue. In addition, activities for children are also being planned.

A big thanks to *The WEDGE* for allowing us space here! A big thanks to all the Swillburg Neighborhood Association steering committee members for all their time and hard work, and especially to Judy Hay who leads us tirelessly and keeps us updated on lots of important issues.

As always, please check out our Swillburg Swag available online at swillburg.com.

Also, any neighbors interested in joining in on our planned activities, please watch for announcements on Nextdoor and emails. We really would appreciate strong community support as we clean up at Bloom Garden and the school garden plots.

Enjoy the season! ▲

Mike Henry, a retired Monroe County social worker, has lived in Swillburg for 32 years and been intermittently active with the Swillburg Neighborhood Association since 1993.



The Swillburg Neighborhood "Lunch Brunch," from left, Mike Henry, Frank TenBroeck, Bob Day, Tracey Mykins, Bob Palmer and Jack Mars got together Feb. 15 at Zemeta Ethiopian Restaurant on South Clinton Avenue.

Assemblymember Harry B. Bronson



Proudly representing the 138th District (Rochester, Henrietta, Riga, & Chili) in the Finger Lakes Region of NY

840 University Avenue
Rochester, NY 14607
BronsonH@NYAssembly.gov
(585) 244-5255



Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn icons followed by @HarryBBronson

Viewpoints

Movement to Help Aging Residents Remain in Their South Wedge Homes

Have you thought about how you want to live as you age? The South Wedge Planning Committee is thinking about it (and the question affects all of us — not just older residents).

Some people want to remain in their longtime homes for as long as possible, while others want to lighten up with smaller space and fewer maintenance obligations and expenses.

Most of us really love where we live. Studies show that maintaining longtime reference points — neighborhoods, streets, stores, neighbors and friends — helps seniors stay mentally and physically healthy longer, avoiding disruptions that can accelerate dementia.

The South Wedge and nearby neighborhoods have many assets to recommend them — so much so that our neighbors from the suburbs are purchasing homes in this area. They, like us, enjoy being a short bus ride or drive to downtown activities, restaurants, bakeries, chocolate and hair shops, Abundance grocery and the sidewalks that allow them to walk for pleasure or exercise and to get to parks.

But we, too, love being here and have invested in our homes and community to keep it human-scaled. The ability for those who already live here to remain at home or in a nearby accessible home is severely limited by the investor-driven rise in the cost of homes, bid up by cash offers due to the income incentive for investors. Several rounds of assessments that have raised the assessed values of our homes to a much greater extent than other areas of the city, combined with higher maintenance and utility costs and fixed incomes, are squeezing our seniors. Many are driven to sell when they can no longer safely take the stairs to their second floor bedroom and bath, but there are limited accessible affordable places to live, and few are in our neighborhood. The previously longtime owner-occupied homes that had anchored their streets usually flip to student rentals or short-term rentals, offering less stability and community connection for everyone.

The South Wedge area would like the assistance of community partners, including the city, county and community institutions, to help support what is essentially a robust naturally occurring retirement community (sometimes called NORC) — one that’s not merely seniors, but with a significant percentage of seniors who are integrated into the community. A NORC is more than just a housing design. In a New York program, formally recognized NORCs coordinate a broad range of health and social services to help support older residents to age in their own homes. NORCs do that by facilitating and integrating the health and social services already available in the community while organizing additional services and supports necessary to help meet the goal of enabling older adults to remain in their community. This area

is blessed to be near experts in the care and support of seniors.

An additional idea under consideration is to acquire homes that are either accessible or able to be made accessible in the neighborhood, and use community partnerships to make accommodations necessary for the seniors to live safely in the homes and provide supportive services. In addition to the close-knit neighbors, the Episcopal Home and St. John’s Home could provide support services for successful aging in place. The original idea was to attempt to access one-story housing stock before they are bought up by institutional investors and at least keep people in their familiar surroundings, if not in their own homes.

The last decade’s increase in the costs of acquisition, made almost insurmountable by recent market dynamics where investors can offer cash, with no conditions of sale, is the challenge. This goal might also be accomplished by trading multi-story homes that are not suitable for aging people for single story homes in the area that are owned by people who themselves need or want the larger homes.

To the first effort, when we realized that there were several tax-foreclosed homes being sold by the city in the South Wedge. We focused on accessible duplexes and one-story properties. It would require partnering with a 501(c)(3) that could be listed with the City Land Trust to have the city convey the property to the organization. Partnering with a nursing home might also allow the staff of those facilities to live in a duplex’s upstairs and have affordable homes near their work. This would allow a natural partnership for the senior and the nursing-home staff to share that resource. Any partnerships would need to be done in a way that the original purpose is fulfilled, providing supported safe aging in place for people who have lived a significant amount of time in this neighborhood.

As many of us have seen, this neighborhood has a tradition of seniors staying in their home and family either moving in with them, or near them, to help support them both. The inability for young families to afford homes nearby in the area affects whether people invest in their homes and neighborhoods, and whether other family members and friends move or stay nearby. Some of the stability of the neighborhood has suffered. We’d like to support the traditional diversity of the South Wedge, and that includes supporting seniors.

If these issues resonate with you, or if you are interested in exploring solutions, the South Wedge Planning Committee would be interested in hearing your thoughts. Let us know the challenges you face in your home that concern you. Contact 256-1740 or info@swpc.org.▲

Submitted by Lisa Reagan.



Kelly Cheatle

BID Education Committee member
connect@nobidroc.com

Rejecting the Controversial ‘BID’: A Call for Balance in Rochester

If you’ve been downtown recently, you’ve probably noticed window signs with “NO BID” in bold red letters perched in the windows of some of your favorite restaurants and small businesses. You might be asking yourself, “What is a BID, anyway?” That’s exactly where advocates found ourselves two years ago when we first stumbled upon this initiative. What we discovered was enough to shock us into action.

“BID” stands for Business Improvement District. It’s sort of like a water or sewer district, where extra taxes are collected every year for special services. Except a BID doesn’t support essential utilities, it funds big commercial real-estate interests. Just like a Homeowners’ Association, a board would drive decisions for the area. In New York state, the law actually requires that the board has a majority of property owners, and majority rules. So, the biggest businesses, like RG&E, and big real-estate developers, gain even more power over our city.

A BID works by charging a mandatory annual fee, based on the value of a property — collecting over \$2M in its first year alone from nearly every property within its territory. Those fees are basically a tax and usually end up being paid for by tenants, in the form of higher rents. Renters and small business owners who will bear the cost won’t have a real say on how those funds are spent. And it doesn’t stop there; the whole city feels the pinch because city-owned properties have to pay these fees. If the BID goes through, it will take at least \$350,000 of our citizens’ hard earned tax dollars every single year. Those funds can’t be used to support youth programs, or home repair grants, or any other pressing community need. Money that comes out of our pockets as taxpayers, that should be going to the common good, gets commandeered by big developers.

BIDs are an economic-development tool for already wealthy property owners. They are designed to attract wealthier clientele for the people who own the most property within their self-defined borders. The goal is to turn downtown into a glossy sales brochure. If you

don’t fit the vibe you’ll be pushed out, either by price or by force. BIDs overlook our most urgent challenges, like combating poverty, opting instead for a veneer of prosperity that hides issues rather than addressing the root causes. Worse, they speed up gentrification, increase living costs and push out working-class families and small businesses.

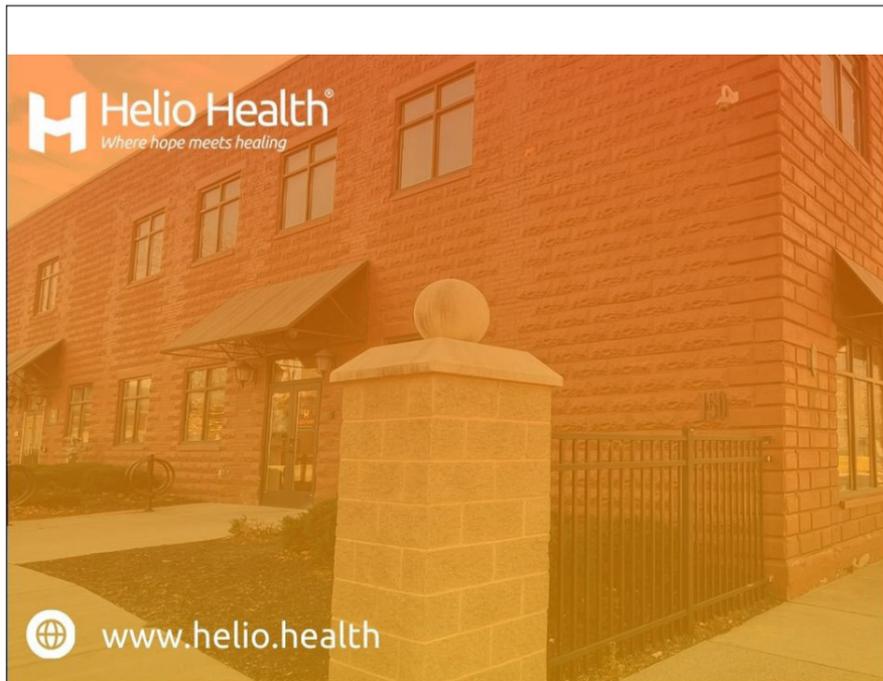
Of course, that’s not how the BID is being sold. Instead, Rochester Downtown Development Corp. (the same organization that tried this in 2014) is pitching it as a solution for litter and more events, implying that privatizing government services is the only way forward. Downtown already benefits from an

Enhancement District: a city-run initiative that takes care of additional cleaning and beautification in parts of downtown. This program proves that enhancing services doesn’t require handing control over to private interests; this could easily be expanded or improved and stay under public management. In addition, funding for events can be managed through a transparent, accountable process and open to the whole city, not just downtown. There are numerous organizations that know how to organize festivals and public events. Our community is already equipped to provide these services effectively.

Middle management is a big part of the proposed BID’s budget, along with the RDDC’s current business services. Shifting the costs for their current members onto other properties means we are subsidizing services that many don’t need or desire. This redistribution of public funds in the RDDC’s own interest highlights their skewed priorities that continue to prioritize commerce over community.

A growing coalition of more than 30 social-justice and community organizations, 1,200 individuals, 33 small businesses and small property owners have come together under the banner of the BID Education Committee. We believe the future of Rochester is everyone’s business, not just the folks at the top. This BID will not build a downtown that is vital and thriving, it’s simply a real-estate

‘BID,’ p. 8



Helio Health
Where hope meets healing

www.helio.health

What services does the Rochester Outpatient Program offer?

- 1 Outpatient substance use services
- 2 Low Threshold Buprenorphine Program
- 3 Screening, assessment and diagnosis, including risk management
- 4 Health screening and collaborative care/referrals to primary care
- 5 Peer support, counseling services and family support services
- 6 Connections with other providers and systems

585-287-5626

150 Mount Hope Ave

Perspectives



Sparklin' in the Wedge

Michele H. Martell
MHMartell@outlook.com



From the Editor's Desk

Michael Saffran
msaffran@swpc.org

Go Ahead and 'Flex That Muscle!'

As I was driving to work recently, I was thinking about all of the things I wished to accomplish that day, both during and after-work hours (as many of us undoubtedly do). As I started to ponder how I was going to get it all done, I took a deep breath at a red light on Alexander Street, focused on the moment and prayed. The words suddenly popped into my occupied mind seemingly from out of nowhere: "Flex that muscle!"

In the world of fitness, when you have a weak muscle, you work with it the best you can so the muscle can heal and grow stronger. Eventually, with consistency, you physically see the results, and you are able to confidently flex that muscle. From within, identifying areas that need strengthening can be more complicated, even though the external and internal components of our beings are indeed connected. It comes down to being aware of those muscles that need the work, so we may strengthen them. The result of flexing physical muscles is that we can feel more vibrant and energetic. Likewise, when we work on an internal area consistently, we become stronger and are able to "flex that muscle."

A common phrase with building muscles is "No pain, no gain." According to Merriam-Webster.com, that phrase is used to say that it's necessary to suffer or work hard in order to succeed or make progress. This phrase may have a negative connotation that can be discouraging and even self-sabotaging for some. Hard work is non-negotiable, yet I feel there is more to the equation. I prefer to think more in terms of stretching those muscles beyond a comfort level to ascend to a more positive place. It's an ongoing process.

It takes strength to become cognizant of our external and internal areas that need improvement, especially if there are areas that have been a hindrance for a long time. It takes another level of determination to carry out the steps we need to rectify those limiting restrictions. But when we exercise this resoluteness and move forward, the efforts



File photo

are worth it — one flex at a time. How about just flexing a symbolic muscle to triumph the day, each day? Do you have something inside of you telling you that don't have the muscle to finish a metaphoric race in your work or personal or physical life? Identify that weak muscle that concerns you, know that with faith and self-compassion and steadiness you can nurture and grow it, one step at a time. Go that extra mile, step outside of the comfort zone, just to do it, moment by moment. You will indeed see the re-

.....sults in the moments that provide the only validation that you truly need — inside your inner sparkling self when you are confidently doing your best to flex your unique muscle to improve, one stretch at a time.

"Go that extra mile, step outside of the comfort zone, just do it, moment by moment."

The day that had inspired this piece, I had decided to listen to this serendipitous message that came from God and the universe when I needed it. It was a moment of inspiration that led me to a place of peace that everything would be OK, with the resolution that I was going to flex the muscle to focus on my priorities. I likewise had decided to say "No" to the things that wouldn't strengthen any muscles that day; that I would stretch the necessary internal and external muscles for the day to do my personal best in my outer and inner worlds.

May you flex your muscles the greatest you can, in whatever areas you most need, today and every day! ▲

Michele H. Martell (MBA Walsh College, Rochester, Mich.) works at Veterans Outreach Center and is an independent consultant with Mary Kay Cosmetics. She volunteers at Rochester Animal Services and enjoys her kids, rescue dogs and everything that sparkles.

Serendipity in 'Semi-retirement': The Winding Path Leading to 224 Mt. Hope

Originally, I considered modifying the label for this month's column (the first in a series) to something other than "From the Editor's Desk" ... because it's nearer to a first-person essay than it is to "editorial" in nature.

But as it's ultimately about my path to the editorship of *The WEDGE* — including, along the way, definite South Wedge connections and a few other things that readers might find interesting — I guess the column label still makes sense. Plus, I hope my next few columns collectively might be, ultimately, even inspirational (similar to how Michele's always excellent column, to the immediate left, is consistently so uplifting).

Last time, I told you a little about my professional background and journalism philosophies I bring to these pages and that contribute to shaping the newspaper. But I only hinted at how I ended up in the role. In fact, until now even South Wedge Planning Committee (the paper's publisher) Executive Director Glynis Valenti knew only the part of the story, beginning last spring, when I unexpectedly wandered into the neighborhood organization's office for an unrelated meeting ... with someone else.

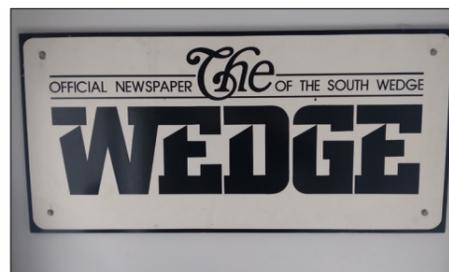
So, let's go back to early May 2023 when I was preparing to submit my retirement paperwork (yay!) to the college where I'd been teaching for the prior 11 years. Arriving early on my way to HR, I stepped, unplanned, into the New York Small Business Development Center (sharing space in the college's administration building) to explore what it has to offer. You see, approaching just 60, I was retiring from the college *only*. I had merely "semi-retirement" in mind (along with ideas for my "next chapter," professionally speaking, that included a community-news startup).

In the center, I chatted briefly with an assistant. Within a few days, I heard from Hans von Gehlen, a business adviser, and I learned about a "satellite office" on Mount Hope Avenue. That's great, I thought, because I live just

down the road. So, we booked a meeting for a few days later.

Upon entering 224 Mt. Hope Ave. for my get-together with Hans, one of the first things I noticed was a big sign for *The WEDGE*. I was familiar with the newspaper (I occasionally used to pick up a copy at Pontillo's, formerly in Mount Hope Plaza), but I hadn't seen it in a while. So, when my meeting with Hans ended, I went exploring. Glynis, working alone upstairs, was at first surprised, I'm sure, upon hearing footsteps coming up the long staircase. Welcoming me for a brief (albeit unscheduled) chat, she shared that *The WEDGE* would soon need a new editor because longtime wordsmith Nancy O'Donnell Hale planned to step down.

Because I wouldn't be officially retired from the college until the end of summer (and I had a few summer projects planned), that first chance meeting with Glynis served as merely an in-



Signage just inside South Wedge Planning Committee's main entrance.

formal introduction (I'd have another one later with Nancy). But because I live just outside the Upper Mount Hope neighborhood (and always considered parts of the South Wedge — especially Mount Hope Cemetery, where I like to bike — as part of my extended neighborhood), the thought of

potentially joining *The WEDGE* — and getting back to my journalism and writing roots — was intriguing.

Describing that first happenstance meeting with Glynis, I've used the word *serendipitous* (or, in my prior column, *providential*). Such descriptors can be variously interpreted, from meaning merely favorable to possibly involving a force much greater than mere fortune or luck (depending upon one's personal perspective, perhaps). So, in my next column I'll give you *my* interpretation about how I *providentially* landed in the South Wedge ... and working at *The WEDGE*. ▲

Michael Saffran is editor of *The WEDGE*. A semi-retired former college media instructor, he previously worked in radio and in higher-education and healthcare news/public relations.

Call for Submissions

In the spirit of encouraging lively conversation within the South Wedge and fostering discussion about vibrant topics relevant to the neighborhood and to readers of the newspaper, *The WEDGE* invites readers to consider submitting letters to the editor and/or to pitch ideas for potentially lengthier opinion essays.

Letters intended for publication should be civil in tone, concise and to the point (250 words maximum), timely (referring to content previously printed in *The WEDGE*) and signed by the author (including contact information).

Longer, more in-depth opinion essays (generally up to around 500-750 words) should demonstrate the writer's expertise on a given topic; and, similar to letters, should get to the point and be civil in tone, timely (related to a subject in the news or raising a topic of relevance to the South Wedge neighborhood and its citizens) and signed by the author (including contact information).

Anonymous submissions (letters and essays) will not be considered for publication.

Contact Michael Saffran, editor, at msaffran@swpc.org.

THE WEDGE GETS READ!

LILAC FESTIVAL (from p. 1)

May 13: Pachyman (breezy, dub and reggae infused with artist's Puerto Rican roots). Opening acts: The Medicinals, Nuyoricana Project

May 14: Big Bad Voodoo Daddy (high-energy swing). Opening acts: Horacio & La Fama Salsa Band, Ellen Pieroni & The Encyclopedia of Soul

May 15: The Skycoasters (lively nine-piece cover band and Rochester institution for more than 40 years). Opening acts: Teagan & the Tweeds, Adrianna Noone

May 16: An Evening of Soul Curated by Danielle Ponder (Rochester native and nationally touring artist known for masterful songwriting, bold vocals and soulful storytelling). Opening acts: Chi TheRealist & Natalia Ekua, EKUA featuring ZWENA

May 17: Hypnotic Brass Ensemble (eight-piece brass, funk and hip-hop band). Opening acts: Claude Bennington's Fever Dream, The Sideways

May 18: Dopapod (funk, jazz-fusion and progressive-rock jam band). Opening acts: Eli Flynn & The Everymen, The Pete Griffith Group, Judah, Submarine School of Music

May 19: Trousdale (all-female band featuring melodic and heartfelt harmonies). Opening acts: Claudia Hoyser, The Honey Smugglers, Meg Williams & Travis Bowlin, AKOMA Choir

A variety of high-school bands and local community music organizations also will perform on the main stage. For the complete music lineup, including exact times and dates, and information about a 10-day VIP pass, go to roclilacfest.com/music-lineup.

"The Rochester Lilac Festival showcases the spectacular beauty of historic Highland Park and provides residents and visitors the opportunity to enjoy free, family-friendly, world-class entertainment," Mayor Malik Evans, a native



of the South Wedge, said. "On behalf of the City of Rochester, I would like to thank the producers and all of the sponsors and partners for their dedication in producing this year's Lilac Festival."

Bully Hill Vineyards, Wilkins RV, Dunkin', Pepsi, MVP Health Care, Community Bank, United Health Care, Fidelis Care, Wellcare, Zweigle's, Point of the Bluff Vineyards, Medved Running & Walking Outfitters, Boulder Coffee Co., United Rentals, Golisano Institute for Business & Entrepreneurship, ADMAR, McCarthy's Tents & Events and House of Guitars are sponsoring this year's festival, hosted by Monroe County, the City of Rochester and Visit Rochester. New co-producers Jenny LoMaglio and PEC Management LLC replaced long-time promoter Jeff Springut, whose firm had organized the event for 11 years.

New safety measures will be in place throughout the 155-acre Frederick Law Olmsted-designed park for this year's festival. They include strengthened perimeter fencing, added security personnel at entry points and throughout the grounds (enforcing code-of-conduct and chaperone policies) and an updated clear-bag policy.

For more information, go to roclilacfest.com and RochesterLilacFestival on social media; or contact info@roclilacfest.com.

Michael Saffran msaffran@swpc.org

126th annual Lilac Festival May 10-19, 2024 Opening Ceremony: 10 a.m. May 10 Lilac Parade: 10:30 a.m. May 11 Seniors Day: May 14 Lilac Run 5-K/10-K: May 19 Source: Lilac Festival

'BID' (from p. 6)

scheme to further enrich a powerful few by concentrating more power and control at the top. Our community deserves balance. We need transparency and accountability in city government, we don't need a BID.

BIDs are contested in cities throughout the U.S., and many communities are working to undo the harm caused by these lodestars of gentrification and special interest. Learn more and join our efforts at nobidroc.com.

There is still an opportunity to end this unjust Business Improvement District scheme. City Council can stop this BID, just as they did the last time the RDDC tried to push one forward, but they need to hear from you. Call Council President Miguel Meléndez at 428-

6056 or email Miguel.Melendez@cityofrochester.gov and tell him to stand with community and "Stop the unjust BID!"

Editor's note: In late March, Rochester Downtown Development Corporation and Partnership for Downtown Rochester abandoned Business Improvement District plans due to opposition.

Kelly Cheatle is a light-hearted and lion-hearted advocate for community and informed decision-making. Her art career has taken her across the globe, designing and directing the creation of massive-scale community-built sculptures.

Columns, essays and letters in The WEDGE do not reflect the views and/or opinions of the South Wedge Planning Committee.

Somewhere in the Wedge...



Do you know where this is/was? (Email thewedge@swpc.org)



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Neighbors say, 'I heard about it from The WEDGE!'