

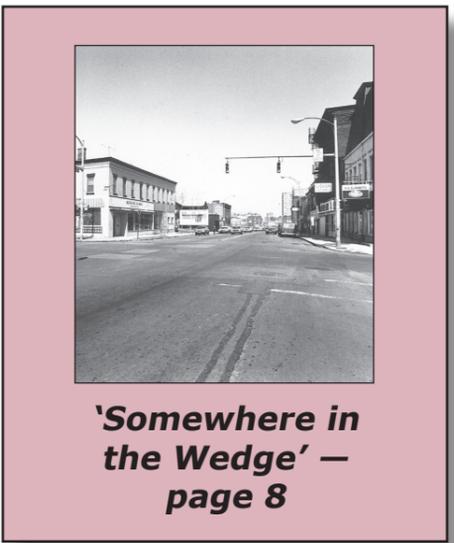
FREE

The

October/November 2024 | Vol. 46, No. 5

WEDGE

Official Newspaper of the South Wedge Since 1982
Published by The South Wedge Planning Committee, Rochester, N.Y.



'Somewhere in the Wedge' — page 8

2024 WEDGE FEST/PET PARADE



An estimated 4,000 people attended this year's South Wedge Festival — the annual neighborhood block party commonly known as Wedge Fest — Aug. 17 on South Avenue between Averill Avenue and Gregory Street.

Festivalgoers, joined by artists, vendors, food trucks and music acts, enjoyed beautiful summer weather for the six-hour gathering. The event kicked off with its Pet Parade, which started at Marie Daley Park. Thirty-eight participants and their pets proceeded to the festival area on South Avenue for an awards celebration.

Wedge Fest was presented by the South Wedge Planning Committee, with support from UR/Highland Hospital, First Student, Abundance Food Co-op, Goodwill of the Finger Lakes, Ryan Plumbing, Heating, Air Conditioning and Fire Protection, Veterans Outreach Center, St. Joseph's Neighborhood Center, Canandaigua National Bank & Trust, and the City of Rochester. (Photos by Lisa Reagan.)



CITY PLANS INITIATIVE: 'NEIGHBORS IN ACTION'

Mayor Malik Evans on Sept. 30 announced the launch of a new community engagement program. Neighbors In Action will empower residents to come together and take purposeful action toward strengthening and improving their neighborhoods.

The initiative is based on Neighbors Building Neighborhoods, begun in 1996 by former Mayor William A. Johnson Jr. The initiative was recognized nationally as a model for government and civic partnerships that inspired and supported hundreds of projects across the city, ranging from beautification initiatives to enhanced public safety.

"I've wanted to launch this program since before my first day on the job as mayor," Evans said. "NBN was an incredible program that is still being continued by some neighborhoods. We wanted to refresh the model and expand participation as our community's need for a program like this has not changed."

Residents and neighborhood/local organizations will be able to apply for resources and grants to support community-driven projects.



Mayor Malik Evans

The city is asking for input from community members via a survey and four public meetings where residents can learn about the initiative and share insights about the needs of their neighborhoods. Each meeting runs 5:30–7 p.m.:

Oct. 10, Thomas P. Ryan R-Center, 530 Webster Ave.; Oct. 15, Arnett Branch Library, 310 Arnett Blvd.; Oct. 17, David F. Gantt R-Center, 700 North St.; Oct. 22, Edgerton R-Center Stardust Ballroom, 41 Backus St.

To learn more about NIA and take the survey, go to CityofRochester.gov/NIA.

'Aging in Place' Practices Examined in New Report

Common Ground Health, a health research and planning organization serving the Rochester-Finger Lakes region, has released a report, "Aging in Place: Re-imagining Housing for Older Adults," examining initiatives needed to help residents age in place.

The report spotlights local housing pressures influencing whether people are able to age in place, and it urges communities to continue efforts to coordinate services provided for older adults in their homes. It also highlights sever-

al promising practices that can be supported to expand aging services, and it notes policy changes that could make a difference in trends.

"We know people want to age in their family homes and neighborhoods, and the number of older adults are steadily increasing," Melissa Wendland, director of strategic initiatives said "We want to give people choices that best fit their circumstances."

To read the report, go to commonground-health.org/aginginplace.

Annual Wedge Waddle Set for Nov. 28

If you haven't already started a new Thanksgiving tradition, here's your chance! The Wedge Waddle, a three-mile walk/run/waddle around the South Wedge neighborhood is set for Nov. 28. The event brings friends, neighbors and pets together for fresh air and exercise in support of St. Joseph's House of Hospitality.

The first 300 people to sign up receive a free T-shirt, waddler-number and packet. Participants can pick up packets and T-shirt from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Nov. 26–27 at Abundance Food Co-Op, 571 South Ave. Any remaining packets will be handed out at the registration table before the event. Online registration is free.

First come first serve, and all participants must sign a waiver.

Show up at 10 a.m. Nov. 28 at Abundance. Day-of registration opens at 9:30 a.m. Participants are encouraged to bring a new pair of socks for donation to homeless shelters.

Enjoy snack-or-treat stops along the way. All stops/booths are available while supplies last. The Wedge Waddle is free and open to the public.

'South Wedge Steps' begins

Years ago, the folks at the Hungry Hedonist Social Club thought it would be fun to have a Thanksgiving event to get folks out of bed, meet neighbors and pets, and waddle around. Wedge Waddlers have braved snow and freezing winds walking, running and skipping over to Mount Hope and back down South Avenue.

Neighbors can now get their fresh air quota at 8:30 a.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays. All are welcome to meet outside Abundance Food Co-op to take a half-hour walk around the block. Routes will vary. Just show up!

►Rose O'Keefe
rosehistory@gmail.com



A Thanksgiving Day scene, a decade ago, of Wedge Waddle 2014. The next annual three-mile walk/run/waddle through the South Wedge will be held Nov. 28. The first 300 people to register will receive a free T-shirt and packet. Wedge Waddle benefits St. Joseph's House of Hospitality.

The WEDGE Gets Read!

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

In Brief

Animal Services director named

Anastasia (Staci) Papadopoulos was named, Sept. 5, director of Rochester Animal Services. Papadopoulos most recently was regional director of operations for the Pennsylvania Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, where she managed shelter operations, veterinary services and animal population management.



Staci Papadopoulos

Papadopoulos will be tasked with overseeing shelter operations and field services and developing and implementing short-term goals and long-term strategies to ensure the best care for shelter animals. She brings 16 years of experience in animal welfare and effective leadership to the position.

“I look forward to becoming part of the Rochester Animal Services team to support its employees, volunteers and partners, as we provide shelter animals with the premium care they deserve until they find permanent homes,” Papadopoulos said.

Child poverty is focus

Spearheaded by City Council Vice President LaShay Harris, the city will hold hearings with local childhood advocacy leaders as part of an initiative to combat childhood poverty. Hearings will be held 4–6 p.m. Nov. 5 and 12 in City Council Chambers; and a youth dialogue session will be hosted 4–6 p.m. Nov. 18 at Martin Luther King Jr Memorial Park. Also, a survey has been launched at forms.office.com/r/jeN1QJ8SDg.



LaShay Harris

“It is my hope that this effort will lead to tangible, actionable policy solutions that will uplift struggling Rochester families and pave the way to a better life for our city’s most underserved children and families,” Harris said.

Home-repair help available

The city’s Targeted Home Improvement Program (T-HIP) is one of several initiatives aiming to provide vital assistance to eligible owner-occupants for critical repairs, improve housing quality and ensure safe living conditions for residents. The program is made possible by a \$4 million grant from the New York State Housing Trust Fund Corporation.

“This program is a significant step forward in our ongoing efforts to ensure Rochester residents have access to safe and healthy living conditions,” Mayor Malik Evans said.

For more information on programs, visit the Southeast Neighborhood Service Center, 320 N. Goodman St., Suite 209, or go to cityofrochester.gov/homerehab.

Work impacts traffic

South Avenue, between Broad and Court streets, in front of the Rundel Library, is reduced to two lanes as part of the Rundel Memorial Library Exterior Building Envelope Repairs project. The lane restriction will remain in place through late November 2025.

In a separate project, the state Department of Transportation announced that the ramp connecting South Avenue and Howell Street to I-490 eastbound traffic will be closed until November of this year. There also will be long-term left-lane closures along Interstate 490 at Alexander Street for bridge maintenance.

2025-26 budget planning underway

Mayor Malik Evans and the Office of Management and Budget kicked off the city’s 2025–26 fiscal-year budget-planning process Sept. 9 with opportunities for public input, including an online survey, telephone town-hall meeting and pop-up tables at community events this fall.



Mayor Malik Evans

“The community’s input is essential when considering how we allocate city funds,” Evans said. “Receiving community input at the beginning of the budget-development process allows us to hear from our stakeholders sooner and place their concerns at the forefront of our decision-making.”

In addition to tables at upcoming events, a telephone town-hall forum will held at 6:30 p.m. Oct. 28 and an online survey, at cityofrochester.gov/budget, will be available through Nov. 4. The Mayor will submit his 2025–26 budget proposal to City Council by May 9, 2025.

Data officer named

The city announced, on July 31, the appointment of Dhimant Master as chief data officer, a new position to oversee the implementation of a comprehensive data strategy and an evidence-based cul-



Dhimant Master

ture in the city’s workforce. In the role, Master will advance the city’s ability to apply data to decision-making, program evaluation and policy implementation. He will work with department leaders, staff and other stakeholders to better integrate data analysis into operations and measure the effectiveness of city services.

“The city data strategy and the data maturity of our workforce are critical components of our efforts to create a safe, equitable and prosperous Rochester by inspiring hope and delivering opportunity for everyone,” Mayor Malik Evans said.

Master most recently was head of business intelligence, analytics, data and robotics process automation at Crown Castle. He holds master’s degrees from the University of Rochester and Syracuse University.

“Throughout my career, I have cultivated a passion for fostering data-driven cultures and leveraging data to drive meaningful insights and outcomes,” Master said. “I am grateful to Mayor Evans for this opportunity to contribute to the strategic direction and operational improvements of the City of Rochester.”

Support for plantings

The city was awarded \$3 million through the USDA’s Urban and Community Forestry Inflation Reduction Act to support a tree expansion and beautification initiative. Funds will go toward planting 6,000 new trees in Rochester by the end of 2025.

Residents are encouraged to request, by calling 311, tree plantings in the public right-of-way. For more information, go to cityofrochester.gov/forestry.

Final garage sale set

The season’s final Greatest Community Garage Sale and Super Flea at the Rochester Public Market, 280 N. Union St., will be held, rain or shine, 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. Oct. 13. The market features vendors selling new and used clothing, tools, home décor, sporting goods, vintage collectibles, artwork and more; and coffee shops, cafes and food stands. Admission is free. ▽

Michael Saffran
msaffran@swpc.org

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

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



@HarryBBronson



Schraders' Garage
686 Clinton Ave S
Rochester NY 14620
271-5179

Complete Maintenance & Repair
Domestic & Japanese Cars
Volkswagen & Volvo
Convenient to Downtown

Monday through Friday
7:30 am - 5:30pm

VISA-MASTERCARD-DISCOVER

Quality Work - Fair Prices



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

Proud to be your community hospital.





Spice Up Your Life

Merriya Valleri
merriya@stuartspices.com

Seven Pepper Corn Salad

With autumn in full swing, we can think of nothing more exciting than the seasonal flavors we get to experience. And one of our favorites is fresh, roasted corn on the cob! We took inspiration from esquites — Mexican street corn salad — because not only is it delicious, it’s incredibly easy to make. The Seven Pepper Rub brings a robust, bright flavor to the party, and we genuinely think it should become a kitchen staple!

Ingredients:

- 4–5 tablespoons Stuart’s Spices Seven Pepper Rub
- 4 large ears corn, shucked and washed
- 1/2 cucumber, diced
- 1/2 bunch cilantro, washed and chopped
- 2–3 radishes, diced
- 1/2 cup cotija or feta cheese
- 3 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 2 limes for juicing
- Optional:** pickled red cabbage or onion

Instructions:

In a large bowl, shave corn off the cob and then add to a medium-size pan. Roast corn on medium-high heat to get it blackened. While corn is roasting, mix mayonnaise, lime juice and Seven Pepper Rub. Start with one lime and use the second to taste. Add roasted corn back into bowl, then add sauce, cucumber, radish, cheese and half of the chopped cilantro. Mix thoroughly to combine. Top with extra cheese and cilantro to taste.

Tip:

Pickled cabbage, onion or even jalapeno pairs well with this corn salad and adds a bright pop of color!

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.



The WEDGE Card 2024

- Cheesy Eddies, 5% off**
602 South Ave.
- Hedonist Artisan Chocolates & Ice Cream, 10% off**
674 South Ave.
- Equal=Grounds, 10% off**
750 South Ave.
- Little Button Craft, 10% off**
658 South Ave.
- Happy Earth Tea, 10% off**
696 South Ave.
- Mark’s Texas Hots Open 24 hours!**
10% off reg. menu item
487 Monroe Ave.

SWPC Board Members

Lindsey Allen, acting chair
Anthony Sciarabba, treasurer
Joel Elliot
Alvin Lomibao
Robert Marvin

Honorary Board Members

Mitchell Dannenberg, John Dennis,
Joe DiDonato, Cheryl Stevens

Staff

Jennifer Posey, interim executive director
Bridget Portune, market manager

The WEDGE Newspaper

Michael Saffran, editor
msaffran@swpc.org
585-256-1740, ext. 4

Writers

Mike Henry, Michele H. Martell,
Nancy O’Donnell Hale, Rose O’Keefe,
Michael Saffran, Merriya Valleri

Photographers

Nancy O’Donnell Hale, Lisa Reagan,
Michael Saffran

Copy editor

Nancy O’Donnell Hale

CONTACT

E-mail staff, type first initial,
last name@swpc.org
South Wedge Planning Committee
224 Mt. Hope Ave., Rochester, NY 14620
585-256-1740, ext. 4

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 and 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, which publishes six issues a year.

Your time, talent and commitment can help us to continue SWPC’s work. If interested, call 256-1740, ext. 2, or contact Interim Executive Director Jennifer Posey at jposey@swpc.org or 224 Mt. Hope Ave., Rochester, NY 14620.

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!

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____
State: _____ Zip: _____
E-mail: _____

_____ \$25 Wedge Supporter

Please mail form, with your payment, to:
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)

October/November:

SWPC Board: 6 p.m. Wednesday
Oct. 16 and Nov. 20

Community Engagement
(Neighbors & Block Clubs):

5:30 p.m. Wednesday
Oct. 23 and Nov. 27

For info, email:
jposey@swpc.org



Business & Neighborhoods



Madelyn Posey, owner of Posey Letterpress, 348 Mt. Hope Ave., welcomed admirers of her work and supporters of the South Wedge Planning Committee at a poster launch party, Aug. 15, at Angelina's On South, 689 South Ave. Michael Hardy, independent consultant at HINTS, was one of many who purchased the "Spread the Word Bird"-themed poster celebrating this year's South Wedge Festival. (Photo by Nancy O'Donnell Hale.)

Organization Hosts Art-show Benefit

Catoberfest, an art show benefiting RockKats, will feature art donated by RIT professors and other professional artists.

An opening and art sale will be held 5-7 p.m. Oct. 11 at Joy Gallery, 498 W. Main St. The show will close Oct. 25.

RockKats is an all-volunteer nonprofit that helps the city's burgeoning stray-cat population. Founded by South Wedge resident Gail D'Urso, it's focused on "Trap Neuter Vaccinate Return," an evidence-based method to humanely reduce and manage the outdoor cat population. Friendly cats are adopted out.

"Our goals are to improve the lives of the city's outdoor cats and help the people who care for them," Gretchen Ettlie, an artist, RIT adjunct art professor and RockKats fundraiser organizer, said. "This is a true community city event."

Michael Saffran
msaffran@swpc.org

CATOBERFEST
FUNDRAISER FOR ROCKKATS
ART SHOW // VENDORS // RAFFLES

JOY GALLERY 498 W Main Street

Friday	OCT 11th	5-7pm
Saturday	OCT 12th	10-2pm
Saturday	OCT 19th	10-2pm
Friday	OCT 25th	5-7pm

Thank you to our sponsors:
JOY GALLERY, Archimage, 100% NATURAL PET FOODS, KASA, ROCKKATS

RockKats is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to improving the lives of stray cats through spay/neuter, adoption, support, and community education.
ROCKKATS www.rockkats.org

Go the extra smile.

Adopt. Foster. Sponsor. Donate.

Pet Adoption Network

Open Sundays 12 p.m. - 4 p.m.
4261 Culver Rd., Rochester, NY 14622
(P) 585-338-9175 (E) info@petadoptionnetwork.org
www.petadoptionnetwork.org

WEDGE RESIDENT RELEASES NEW BOOK, HOSTS TALK ON DYING

Longtime South Wedge resident and local author and end-of-life educator Jennifer Sanfilippo recently published her book, *Our Last Walk Home: Love, Cancer, and the Agony of Letting Go*, featuring the story about her husband Jim Barbero's battle with cancer during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Barbero, who died in 2020, was treated at the University of Rochester's James P. Wilmot Cancer Center.

"All references are from our life together here in our Rochester neighborhood," said Sanfilippo, of Laburnam Crescent. The paperback book is available at jennifer-sanfilippo.com or amzn.to/3J5Q7wz.

Sanfilippo will host "Dying (to) Talk," an end-of-life symposium presenting "real conversations about death and dying," 12:30-5:30 p.m. Oct. 18 at First Unitarian Church of Rochester, 220 S. Winton Road.

"The purpose is to elevate conversations about death and dying," Sanfilippo said. "My aim is to bring the taboo subject of death out of the closet."

The event will feature keynote speaker Dr. Rob Horowitz, former chief (2015-2023) of the URM Palliative Care Division and cur-

rent URM palliative-care consultant, and other speakers.

"Not too long ago, death and dying were recognized and accepted as a natural part of life," Sanfilippo said. "Over the course of my lifetime, the process of dying in America has become medicalized, with discussions around dying tending to focus on legal checklists. Any deeper, psycho-emotional conversations about dying have been compartmentalized behind a curtain of fear and denial. Creating the space for people to bring their hearts, minds and spirits to conversations about legacy, purpose, fears and hope, as they relate to end-of-life, is my small way of normalizing an important dialogue and building community around what has become a lonely place for many."

For more information or for tickets, go to jennifer-sanfilippo.com/events/dying-to-talk or bit.ly/3MfnfUU.



Jennifer Sanfilippo

Michael Saffran
msaffran@swpc.org

For Halloween: Something Old ... Something New — and a Tad Scary

As a kid, planning for Halloween started in the summer. My sister and our best friends conjured up costumes that would impress the adults (fully wrapped mummy anybody?), but maximized mobility so we could trick-or-treat at as many houses as possible. We knew the houses that gave out apples and toothbrushes (*skip those!*), and the houses that gave out the prized king-sized candy bars (*get there early!*).

Halloween stimulated our creative side that grew out of the waning daylight hours and changing foliage. Longer shadows could be hiding ghosts or other unworldly creatures, but the books we read made us confident that our savviness would outwit them! My love of the macabre is still intact. I'd like to share a couple titles that the young horror-lover in your life may enjoy.

Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark (HarperCollins), a compilation of folktales by Alvin Schwartz and illustrated by Stephen Gammell, was originally published in 1981 and reissued in 2017.

A deliciously frightening book for fourth graders on up, this book has just the right amount of supernatural terror to uncomfortably delight a young reader. Schwartz compiled some of the scariest folk tales, which included witches, shapeshifters and jumpscare stories. They make the hairs on your arms stand up, and even as an adult re-reading them in my dimly lit living room on an October evening, I'll admit to glancing over my shoulder once or twice. Gammell's illustrations add to the horror, with ghostly, ghostly images on every page.

Scary books for kids delight today, and *The Cursed Moon* by Angela Cervantes

(Scholastic, 2023), available in English and Spanish, doesn't disappoint. Intended for fourth graders and up, Cervantes addresses issues that trouble many kids, including incarceration of a parent and the insecurity

of life changes. However a book like this can give children a place to exert their own control over their fears through imagination. The main character, Rafa, ends up with more things to worry about than his family situation. Rafa is a writer of horror and ghost stories and loves to scare his friends with them. But this boy accidentally brings to life the creatures of his imagination. Now he is the only one who can stop it!

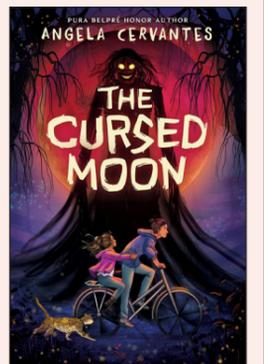
One of the great joys of a scary book is that it can bring lingering fears and worries out of the darkness and into the light, allowing us to enjoy them rather than let them silently torment us. In essence, they give us a sense of control in a world that often feels out of our hands.

For many young people, the world is an uncomfortable, unpredictable place. Reading and writing scary stories can help to express some of those fears in a way that conversing straightforwardly can't achieve. Scary stories are not for everyone! And I would never suggest reading these books to someone who doesn't enjoy them. But for those of us for whom a scary story is a must during the season of falling leaves and jack-o'-lanterns, well, as the book jacket of *Scary Stories* says, "Read ... if you dare!"

Pamela Bailie is co-owner of *Hipocampo Children's Books*, 638 South Ave. A women/Latine-run independent bookstore, its mission is to reflect the cultures and languages that make up our diverse region.



Book Notes
Henry Padrón-Morales and Pamela Bailie



Firehouse Renovations



A groundbreaking ceremony on Sept. 12 marked the start of extensive renovation projects at two Rochester Fire Department firehouses. \$17.6 million in upgrades to the Goodman Street and Allen Street stations, funded through the American Rescue Plan Act and city bonds, include structural renovations to accommodate advanced apparatus and equipment, protect firefighters from health risks and provide higher levels of privacy. The two firehouses will be closed during renovations, lasting about a year, and fire-fighting equipment will be housed at other RFD stations. "These firehouses were on their way to functional obsolescence because they no longer fully meet the needs of a modern fire service," Mayor Malik Evans said. Above, Evans speaks at the groundbreaking ceremony, in front of Reserve Truck 5 at the Goodman Street station, 740 N. Goodman St., which was constructed in 1960. The other firehouse, at 272 Allen St., was built in 1955. (Photo provided by City of Rochester.)



Swillburg Shoutout

Mike Henry
swillburg1@aol.com

Swillburg neighbors 'roll up their shirt sleeves,' beautify park signage

Keeping busy, as usual, the Swillburg Neighborhood Association has stayed engaged with various projects and planning.

Eleven neighbors met July 23 at Otto Henderberg Park to replace a retaining wall surrounding a garden plot centered by a Swillburg neighborhood sign. Out came the old, rotting lumber border — replaced by a stone retaining wall. After a few hours, the pleasing results of our back-straining efforts were apparent. Two large crates of stone were assembled and carefully piled about the garden, giving the plot a whole new natural appearance. The stone was purchased using grant funds from the Rochester Area Community Foundation. Volunteers enjoyed a pizza dinner and visiting.

On Aug. 29, Swillburg neighbors had a booth at School 35's Back to School Bash. This was a busy and fun few hours interacting with new students and their parents, as well as school personnel and representatives of many community-service agencies. All kinds of informational activities were offered, and I was delighted with the giant bounce house inflated outside the school. The kids appeared to have a fun time during their introductory visit prior to classes beginning the next week. Swillburg reps Joyce Nakada, Judy Hay and yours truly handed out neighborhood brochures and cool pink pencils with the neighborhood

little-pig logo.

Swillburg Lunch Bunch events continued with get-togethers at Georgie's Bakery and Cafe, in July, and Crepe and Go, in August. Announcements for these events are posted on Nextdoor.com and sent via email. Please email me at Swillburg1@aol.com if you'd like to receive future email announcements.

We're now busy organizing our annual Harvest Dinner, to be held Nov. 7 at Artisan Church, 1235 S. Clinton Ave. Mayor Malik Evens is scheduled to join us. We'll have food and a raffle of donations from various community businesses.

Further announcements and information will be provided on Nextdoor and via neighborhood email and on our neighborhood website at Swillburg.org.

Also, our popular Swillburg Swag will soon be available on our Swillburg.org website. Just go to Shop Swillburg. We'll also have our full line of swag at the Nov. 7 annual Harvest Dinner.

I hope you're pleased to see what the Swillburg community is up to and will join us to make city living more communal and joyful! Once again, thanks to *The WEDGE* for giving our column space here! ▲

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.



FOR RENT

1 & 2 Bedroom Apartments

HIGHLAND MANOR APARTMENTS

905 South Avenue 271-0949

ALL UTILITIES INCLUDED

- * 1 and 2 bedroom units
- * Right across from Highland Hospital and a quick commute to U of R and Strong Memorial Hospital

IT'S YOUR HOME. WE JUST TAKE CARE OF IT FOR YOU.



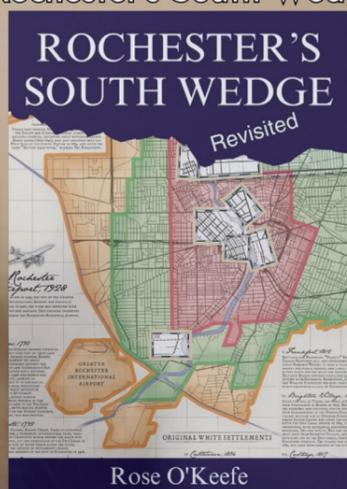
From left, Morgan Knapp, Forest Hurlbut, Mike Henry, Dave Hurlbut (kneeling), Elliot Spengler, Judy Hay, Ameer Owens, Megan Critelli, Collin Henry and Shane O'Malley (kneeling). (Photo by Bob Palmer.)



Rochester's South Wedge Revisited

Also available at:

Hipocampo
Children's Books,
638 South Ave.



Rose O'Keefe

Contact Info
rokecfhistory@gmail.com

New Available On
amazon



The rich picture history of Rochester's South Wedge, first shared in 2005, is expanded with new insights and stories.

Wildebeest Publishing Co.

Viewpoints



Guest Essay

Monroe County Sheriff Todd K. Baxter
Sheriff@monroecounty.gov

Officer to Kids (Back in the Day): 'Do You Want to Go Downtown?'

“Do you want to go downtown?” While I was not a terrible kid growing up in the Otis Street neighborhood of the City of Rochester, I clearly understood what “downtown” meant when a cop said it. It meant booking in the Monroe County Jail.

My teenage friends and I occasionally encountered Officer Jesse Eason, our neighborhood RPD cop. Most often, it took just his presence and his personality to get us to do what he wanted: leave a street corner, stop hanging on the docks of the massive warehouse on Rogers Avenue or, simply, “go home” — because it was late.

Like any other cop, Officer Eason wore a belt with several tools to protect himself and others. A tool he didn't wear was “downtown.” Once in a while, if my friends and I didn't follow his direction as fast as we should have, Officer Eason would simply say, “Do you want to go downtown?” As a teenager never involved in a criminal justice system, there was no doubt in my mind what he meant; downtown was booking ... and jail. *No one* wanted to be *there*.

We lost “downtown” with Raise the Age, Bail Reform and a culture shaped by all of the criminal-justice reforms. Today, adolescents pushing the criminal-behavior envelope face no immediate consequences from society. There's no “downtown” that will make a defiant teenager think twice — and they know it. Teenagers are rebellious by nature and, at times, need tools to keep them from committing dangerous activities. *Fear of repercussions helps control stupidity.*

As I've said so many times, I am not asking to lock up every poor kid who does something stupid. However, we clearly need the same tool Officer Eason had for people who refuse to comply with our laws when simple instructions don't work: “Downtown.”

Monroe County Sheriff Todd K. Baxter is a 36-year veteran of law enforcement. Prior to being elected in 2017 as the county's 49th sheriff, he served 22 years with the Rochester Police Department and four years as police chief of the Greece Police Department. He also serves on the board of directors of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Rochester.



Mary Lupien

Rochester City Council, East District
Mary.Lupien@cityofrochester.gov

Overdose Prevention Centers Are Key to a Safer Rochester

The opioid epidemic has deeply impacted our community, from individuals privately struggling with addiction to needles left in doorways and on sidewalks. We can't afford to tip-toe around the issue, it's clear that we need to take action. Last year, Monroe County reported over 1,233 opioid overdoses, nearly 10% of which were fatal. These are not just numbers — they represent our neighbors, friends and loved ones. This crisis is happening right here, in our neighborhoods, and it's impacting every corner of our community.

Stigma often pushes those battling addiction to the margins, stripping them of their humanity and isolating them from the support they need. Addiction is not a personal failing; it's a public health issue that is a symptom of wider social challenges. Many people struggling with addiction already face unstable housing, financial hardships, and limited access to essential services. The so-called “war on drugs” has only made matters worse by criminalizing those in need rather than addressing the underlying issues.

The question is, how do we tackle this crisis in a way that prioritizes care and compassion? Those closest to a situation are often the first ones to make an effort to address it. For example, the Monroe Avenue Revitalization Coalition, made up of residents, merchants, property owners and community partners, has been collaborating and taking a care-centered approach to challenges in their neighborhood like public drug use and homelessness. We have so many in our community who are willing to work together to build stronger, safer neighborhoods; however, there is only so much support neighbors and merchants can provide. Their neighbor-to-neighbor approach will soon be supplemented by formal neighborhood outreach ambassadors who will continue to build connections with our homeless neighbors while actively connecting them to services that can help, if they exist. This is where both the county and the city have the obligation to step up. While much of the addiction-treatment infrastructure is managed at the county level, the

City of Rochester has the power to work with our partners to create supportive environments that can make a real difference.

Overdose Prevention Centers, also known as Harm Reduction Centers, are already making an impact in cities across the country. OnPoint NYC, the first to operate recognized centers in the U.S., has shown how these facilities save lives by providing a safe space for individuals to use under medical supervision. These centers connect people with critical health services, reduce public drug use and lower the risks of infectious diseases and violence.

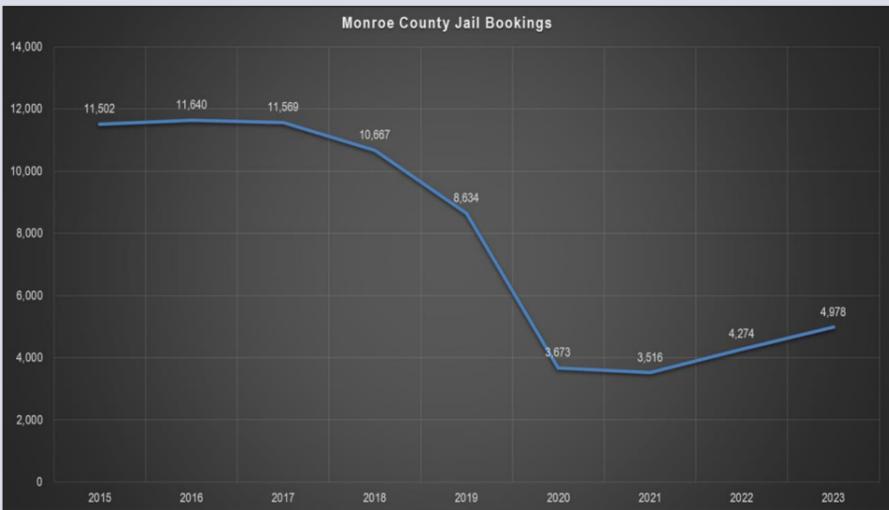
Research shows that Overdose Prevention Centers are an effective tool in the fight against the opioid epidemic. They don't just reduce overdose deaths; they also make communities safer by cutting down on public drug use and discarded syringes. These centers are designed to meet people where they are, offering judgment-free support that traditional services often fail to provide. They are a vital link in a broader network of care, helping to stabilize individuals and guide them toward recovery.

But Overdose Prevention Centers are just one piece of the puzzle. To truly address the opioid crisis, we must also expand access to other harm reduction measures, affordable housing and mental-health support. Continuing to ignore and failing to address these needs won't make our problems go away. If we want to build a Rochester that we're proud of — where people can live full, balanced and healthy lives — we need to tackle the root causes of addiction head-on.

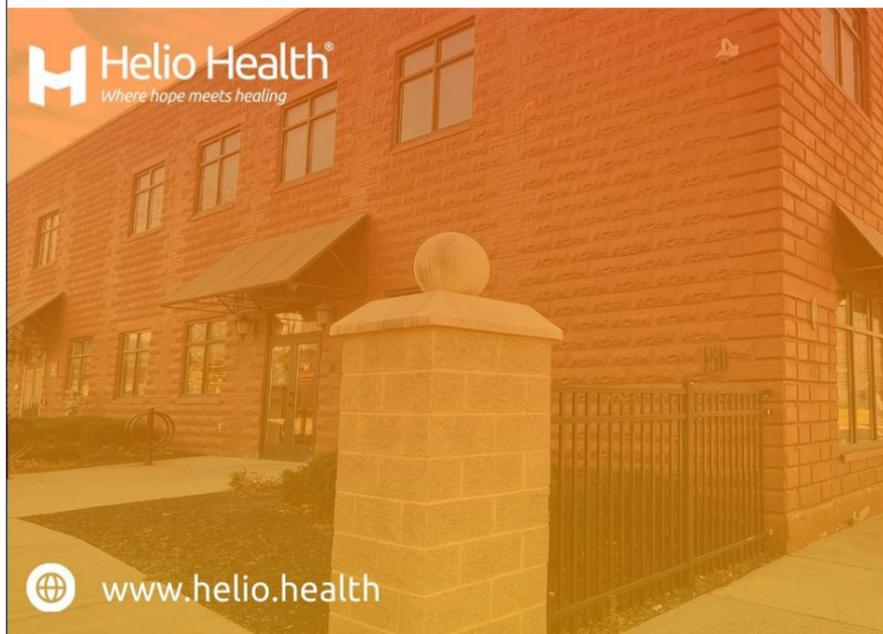
The challenges we face are interconnected. Housing instability, economic hardship and lack of access to mental-health services contribute to the cycles of addiction that plague our city. Addressing these issues isn't just about helping those in crisis; it's about creating a healthier, more resilient community for everyone. Investing in supportive services is an investment in the future of our city — one where every resident has the opportunity to thrive.

Lupien, p. 8

.....
“The so-called ‘war on drugs’ has only made matters worse by criminalizing those in need.”
.....



The WEDGE invites readers to submit guest essays. Essays should be civil in tone, concise, timely and signed by the author. Contact Michael Saffran at msaffran@swpc.org.



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

www.helio.health

Perspectives



Sparklin' in the Wedge

Michele H. Martell
MHMartell@outlook.com



From the Editor's Desk

Michael Saffran
msaffran@swpc.org

Believe in Great New Beginnings ...

"When one door closes another door opens; but we so often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door, that we do not see the ones which open for us." — Alexander Graham Bell

Many of us lament the end of sunny days that might've included sitting poolside, playing outside and enjoying summer parties and lakeside views. The end of summer can lend to feelings of sadness, with apprehension about shorter days and colder weather approaching.

My summer was filled with graduation season and kids' sports, a period filled with celebrations and time with my children, a life chapter which is also getting shorter. A new school year will be starting soon, and one child will be moving to the West Coast. I went through a stage of denial regarding this cross-country move, and I found myself moving through all the phases of grieving, until I am finally reaching a state of acceptance.

While we may be sad to see summer over, this can also be a time of great new beginnings. We're entering a time of shedding the old to begin the new. In the business world, some organizations are about to kick off a new fiscal year. For children, it's an exciting time of beginning a new school year filled with new opportunities. And in nature, our land and wildlife are preparing for a term of rest and hibernation, in anticipation of the newness that will begin again in a matter of months.

In my personal world, as I've struggled to accept that my oldest child is moving far away, I strive to think of this move in a new way: what a golden opportunity for her to actualize some of her life goals as a young adult, to embrace advanced academic opportunities, to develop even more friendships and to enjoy sparkling Pacific Coast beaches. This life decision most definitely solidifies the end of her childhood; yet in the bigger picture of life, this is a great new beginning for a life experience that many only dream of. It's a bittersweet job, as parents, to raise our children to one day confidently grow into adults who make decisions (no matter how much we wish they could remain under our protective wings).

It's the way of life — when one thing ends, it opens the door for other great new beginnings. How dull life would be if everything always stayed the same. After all,

we're meant to continuously evolve and grow throughout our entire lives. Yes, we have wonderful moments and chapters that we wish would never end; but if they never ended, how our appreciation of those stages could be diminished. If summer or any of our favorite seasons were never to end, would we cherish them as much while they are here?

As I mourn the loss of our treasured beagle Trooper, I think back to when I had first met this dear friend and family member. The day he came into our home, Trooper displayed obvious distress, sadly lunging at my door and windows in efforts to re-attach

.....
"It's the way of life....
How dull life would be
if everything always
stayed the same."
.....

to his exiting, previous human who could no longer care for him. To sweet Trooper, that separation was the end of life as he had known for almost 10 years. Little did he know, there were great new beginnings to come. Trooper's life

with us involved inclusive holiday and birthday celebrations, camaraderie with kids and other dogs, a yard for exercise and hunting, puppuccinos, car rides, loads of treats and hugs, lazy time in bed as often as he wanted and much more. With his sudden passing, I like to think that his final earthly transition was also a great new beginning for him to be liberated from a failed heart, so he could move on to his heavenly home where he can run freely and hunt again. After all, all dogs go to Heaven. My kids and I are immensely grateful to North Paw Rescue (northpawrescue.com) for bringing Trooper into our lives and for the amazing, selfless work it does for precious "fur-babies" in need.

As difficult as it is to accept the end of seasons, whether in nature or with life in general, I aspire to remember that a great new beginning is just around the corner — if I only make the intentional choice to believe. Wishing you a beautiful new season of great new beginnings! In the words of American novelist, poet and short-story writer Louisa May Alcott, "I make so many beginnings there will never be an end." ▲

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.



Michele and Trooper.

The Line Between the Mundane and the Miraculous — Eye of the Beholder?

In my past few columns, I've been sharing with you my path, last year, to the editor's role at *The WEDGE* ... along with my return, a couple years earlier, to regularly attending church (after a number of years away). I see all of it — everything before and since — as connected and part of the "thread" of a life's journey.

So, getting back to the day I went to church: Aug. 14, 2021, a Saturday, had been one of those picture-perfect western New York pleasant late-summer days. Back home afterwards, under a sunny, blue sky, it was the kind of comfortably warm evening I often liked to spend reading (possibly with a glass of wine in hand) on my backyard patio (sometimes joined by visiting neighborhood deer). Upon returning home from church, that's where I was headed ... until email, social media or some other inane distraction got ahold of me. Fortunately, though, the lure to get outside before the sun went down (together with other forces, perhaps) had a stronger pull. So, closing the lid on my laptop, I was patio bound, at last.

Within a couple minutes of settling into my cushioned, outdoor rocking chair, I glanced up at the sky. That's when I saw it: Floating overhead was a cloud formation ... in the shape of a cross. Visible for only a few minutes before wafting away, it remained long enough, fortunately, for me to retrieve my digital camera. Only minutes beforehand, had I lingered inside over email or social media for even another five minutes, I might've missed it all together. Instead, on the day I attended Mass for the first time in more than 20 years (not counting a couple funeral Masses), and confession for the first time in even longer, a cloud formation like none I'd ever before seen in my life appeared overhead.

Now, I'm not suggesting it was some kind of miracle ... but neither am I saying it wasn't — for as with much (possibly all) in life, the

line between the mundane (to some) and the miraculous (to enlightened others) often may be a simple (or complex) matter of personal perspective (this is kind of in the same spirit as *Nihil Obstate*).

Initially interpreted as a singular experience, lofty as the symbol was (which is to say, high in the sky and, thus, presumably visible, too, to other people), I wondered if anyone else had seen it. Well, lo and behold, I later saw in a friend's Facebook post that he, too, had marveled it.

If, by now, you might be wondering, "What does all this have to do with the South Wedge?" ... I'm getting there, I promise.

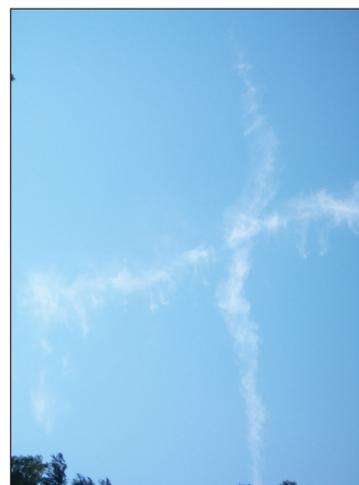
After that day, I kept attending Mass every week ... and enthusiastically — not, as I had feared, with any reluctance. Instead, I wanted to keep going.

I went to a few different Rochester-area Catholic churches, eventually choosing the Southeast Rochester Catholic Community cluster: Blessed Sacrament (in the Park Avenue neighborhood), St. Mary's (downtown) and St. Boniface (here in the South Wedge). I liked each of the churches' ornate, historic and traditional settings; moreover, the congregations seemed most welcoming to this old, slightly fallen-away "cradle-Catholic" (I sometimes hear people use the term "revert," but I never thought it applies to me ... because I never left).

At St. Boniface and St. Mary's, I volunteered and was accepted to become a lector (I was partially motivated, originally, out of a desire for a formal participatory service role as incentive to keep going). So, there I was, by early 2022, regularly attending Mass and occasionally serving as a lector ... right here in the South 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.

PART FOUR



The Greater Rochester sky, over my house, Aug. 14, 2021.



The WEDGE
ADS GET RESULTS
585-256-1740, ext. 4 ▲ thewedge@swpc.org

'Smart' Parking Meters



Motorists can now make payments at select city parking meters and pay stations using the Flowbird pay-by-app/pay-by-text feature on a mobile device. The app offers users a simple and convenient way to pay for on-street parking from inside a vehicle. Parking meters and pay stations will display a blue decal with information on how to pay by app or text. Drivers can still pay for parking using a credit card or coins. (Photo provided by City of Rochester.)

Somewhere in the Wedge...



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

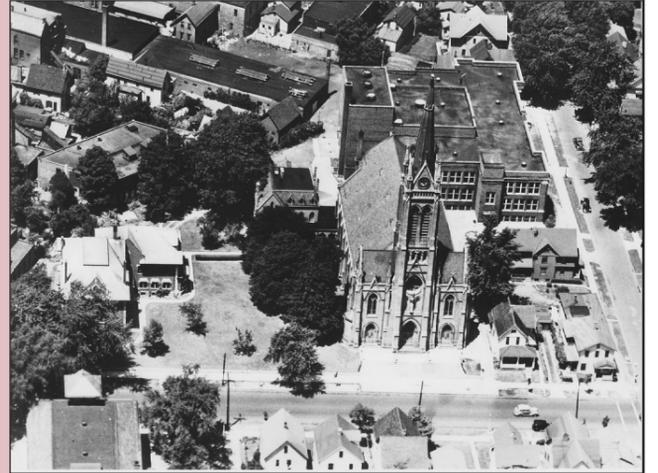
August/September photo:

Last issue's "Somewhere in the Wedge ..." (below) featured an undated aerial shot of the former St. Boniface Church and school at 330 Gregory St.

The picture also shows the convent (to the left of the church), houses along Gregory Street (foreground) and Whalin Street (to the right of the church). The houses seen at the corner of Gregory and Whalin streets are where the church and Nativity Preparatory Academy, 15 Whalin St., parking lot is now.

The church was destroyed by fire in 1957; a replacement structure was completed in 1960.

Photo source: Rochester Public Library.



Lupien (from p. 6)

By embracing a comprehensive approach that prioritizes care over punishment, we can turn the tide on this crisis. It's time for us to step up, come together and ensure that Rochester becomes a place where every person has the chance to live with dignity and purpose. Supporting those struggling with addiction isn't just the compassionate choice; it's the smart choice for the safety and well-being of our entire community.▲

Mary Lupien serves on the Public Safety and the People, Parks & Public Works committees. She is passionate about fighting poverty, institutional racism and climate change; and advocating for housing rights and improving the quality of life for all Rochesterians.

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



REACH

Get **REACH** & **IMPACT** from advertising targeting **your neighbors** in **The WEDGE!**

The WEDGE

"The WEDGE Gets Read!"



Attention Business Owners:

- ▶ Get the **most impact** from your advertising dollars.
- ▶ Reach a **highly targeted audience** of prospective customers living and working in the South Wedge.
- ▶ For advertising rates and opportunities, contact **The WEDGE** at 585-256-1740, ext. 4, or email: thewedge@swpc.org.

Get in **The WEDGE!**

IMPACT

Everyone says, 'I read it in **The WEDGE!**'