



# The Allentown Neighbor

December 2008/January/February 2009  
Volume 44, Number 2

Published quarterly by the Allentown Association Inc., 14 Allen St., Buffalo, New York 14202  
(716) 881-1024. E-mail, allentown@bfn.org. Website, www.allentown.org

## Volunteers dig it: Allentown gets reforested

By *Wayne Parry*

With volunteers doing most of the work, 42 trees were planted throughout Allentown this fall.

More than 25 volunteers hand-planted 28 bare-root trees of various species — including horse chestnut, crabapple, oak, cherry, serviceberry, hawthorn and dogwood — on residential streets in Allentown and on city property adjacent to Grace Manor Home on Nov. 8.

The trees were provided free of charge by Re-Tree of Western New York, which is spearheading a five-year plan to replace thousands that were lost in the October 2006 storm. Re-Tree's funding also relies solely on donations.

The Allentown Association, the Kleinhans Community Association, and Heart of the City Neighborhoods worked together with residents, Re-Tree and the city to coordinate a large West Side planting which included over 60 trees.

Earlier, professional nurserymen planted 14 larger trees on Allen and North Sts., and Elmwood and Delaware Aves. The Allentown Association coordinated with the Buffalo Green Fund and Gleason's Nursery to have the two-and-a-half inch-wide, balled and burlapped trees — beautiful green vase zelkovas, homestead elms and Cleveland select pear trees — were planted Oct. 27. Funding for these trees was provided by the Buffalo Green Fund and was part of a 48-tree planting which also included the Elmwood Village and Delaware District.

A special thank you goes to Stephanie Simeon and Susan Peters of Heart of the City Neighborhoods, who provided a secure staging area for the trees at their Plymouth Ave. office. They also recruited and organized numerous volunteers and generously provided refreshments and lunch for all who helped with this rewarding and valuable project.

*Please turn to Page 4*

## New officers and directors take charge

Allentown Association members elected 21 directors — believed to be a record — at the annual meeting in the Allendale Theater.

Matthew Ryan was later elected president, succeeding Wayne Parry. Other new officers are: Lura Bechtel, first vice president; Tim Riordan, second vice president; Matthew Moscati, treasurer; and Gina Maramag, re-elected as secretary.

The slate of officers was announced at the annual meeting Oct. 21 and elected by the Board of Directors Nov. 18.

Matt Ryan is a senior financial advisor with Merrill Lynch, a Park St. resident, and active in the Buffalo State College Alumni Association. He became a director of the Association in 2006 and as head of the Business Relations Committee has focused on improving communication with Allentown business owners and implemented the semiannual business mixer to foster dialog.

*Please turn to Page 3*

### *Inside this issue*

<i>Elmwood Park</i>	<i>Page 2</i>
<i>Almanac</i>	<i>Page 4</i>
<i>Business News</i>	<i>Pages 5, 7</i>
<i>Calendar</i>	<i>Page 6</i>
<i>North St. apartments</i>	<i>Page 8</i>
<i>Car sharing</i>	<i>Page 11</i>



**New president: Matthew Ryan**



## Elmwood Park, School 46 named local historic landmark

School 46 ( the Adult Learning Center) and the adjacent Elmwood Park have been designated a local historic landmark by the Common Council, granting additional protection to the historic school building and the green space which together occupy the block bounded by South Elmwood Ave. and Virginia and Edward Sts.

The site, entirely owned by the city, already had protection as part of the Allentown Historic Preservation District, as do all properties in the district with Preservation Board authorization needed for external changes. The landmark designation, granted Oct. 28, will give increased assurance that the building and the green space will be preserved.

The designation caps a 10-year effort by the Allentown Association to restore and beautify the park which had been covered with asphalt and enclosed by a chain-link fence. The Association moved for the landmark status and won the support of the city Preservation Board.

Elmwood Park, the site of the Buffalo Orphan Asylum from 1852 to 1912, came about when South Elmwood Ave. was created south of Virginia St. about 1918.

Construction of School 46 began in 1888 and was completed in 1889. It is designed in Romanesque Revival style, by H. H. Little. James F. Crocker was superintendent of schools and Arthur Demers was its first principal.

It is the oldest public school building still in use for education in Buffalo and is a fine example of urban school architecture in the late 19th century, when imposing size, materials and construction were being made available for public education.

In the late 1930s it became an annex to School 36. After World War II it became Veterans High School, subsequently the Reading Center, and finally the Adult Learning Center, headquarters of the adult education division the Buffalo Public Schools. The division offers courses here and at 30 other locations.

Dave Adam, building engineer of School 46, is responsible for the fine condition of the green space, maintaining



**Elmwood Park and the Adult Learning Center are now a local historic landmark.**

the lawn, vacuuming leaves, trimming trees and picking up trash, according to Lester Leopold, director of adult education.

About 10 years ago, the Allentown Association set a goal of improving and beautifying Elmwood Park. Roger Schroeder, then a College St. resident, prepared a plan to restore the park. In 2001 city crews removed the chain-link fence surrounding the park, leaving the original stone pillars. Asphalt pavement was replaced with top soil, grass and plantings, and mature trees were retained. The park's centerpiece, a windmill of contemporary design symbolizing environmentally friendly power, was installed as part of a University at Buffalo architecture students' program to bring public art in Allentown in 2001. A fountain occupied the spot when the park was created, according to early photographs.



*Continued from Page 1*

He hopes to strengthen the functioning of Association committees.

The new directors are: Ed Castine, co-owner of Sample restaurant at Allen and College Sts.; Caitlin Crowell of Trinity Place, Nichols School teacher; Joseph Fell of Trinity Place, who works for ArtVoice; Donald Kinsman, of Elmwood Ave., home-repair contractor; Mark McGovern of North Pearl St., Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus project manager; Jim Rhoades of North Pearl St., a real-estate agent with Metro Polis of Allentown; Adam Sokol of North Pearl St., an architect and University at Buffalo faculty member; Keith R. Vona, a lawyer with Lipsitz & Ponteiro and Edward St. resident.

Re-elected directors, in addition to the slate of officers, are Eric Arzola, Melissa Dayton, Deborah Ellis, Sarah Gilewicz, Holly Holdaway, Elizabeth Licata, and LaVerne Peaks.

Pete Carroll, a former director, was elected to a new term. All positions are for one year. Retiring members of the Board of Directors are Wayne Parry; Anthony Armstrong, outgoing treasurer, and Ed Hogle.

Elected as *ex officio* non-voting directors were Anthony Armstrong, Robert Fink, Peter Grin, Gretchan Grobe, Wayne Parry and Jonathan White.

Holly Holdaway headed the Nominating Committee which presented the slate.

Wayne Parry, who served as president since June, presided at the annual meeting and noted that the Allendale Theater, site of the meeting, was saved from demolition by its purchase by the Allentown Association for the city in 1985. The Theater of Youth leases the Allendale from the city.

He and Christopher Brown, who served as president from November, 2006 until June, were presented framed prints of Allen St. in the early 1900s. In a tribute to Chris Brown, Wayne Parry said: "nobody works harder for the Association than Chris," citing his "passion, knowledge, and commitment."

Andrew Eisenhardt, Association office manager, gave a financial report in the absence of the treasurer, Anthony Armstrong. The Association has about \$20,000 in its savings and checking accounts, and \$20,000 in certificates of deposit, as well as a restricted fund of about \$120,000, of which about \$100,000 is proceeds from the sale of the Coit House, in three-month certificates of deposit. The fund is restricted by Association bylaws to use in a financial emergency, as investment in revenue producing property, or as pay for the sole employee. The Association also has about \$20,000 in gas-meter mitigation grant funds.

Tim Riordan and Gina Maramag, co-chairpersons of the Crime and Safety Committee, reported that police have stepped up patrols and arrests and reduced "quality of life" crimes in Allentown. B District Police Chief Donna Barry attended the meeting and was introduced.

LaVerne Peaks, co-chairperson of the Secrets of Allentown tour of homes, and Andrew Eisenhardt reported on the success-

ful Sept. 14 tour which drew 1,140 visitors and turned a profit of \$7,300. Revenue totaled \$13,384. Expenses of \$6,076 included \$1,200 paid to the D.A.R.

Pen and ink drawings by Donald J. Mayer of each property made available for the tour, and a bottle of wine, were presented to the property owners: Dan and Karen Kinsman, Dinah Gamin and Lynn James, Matt Moscati, Ginger Schröder, Gerhard Yaskell, Tim Riordan, Buffalo Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Jung Institute. Don Mayer also made his home available for the tour.

Matt Moscati, Housing and Historic Preservation Committee chairman, said concern continues about several threatened historic structures including First Presbyterian Church and the Bosche Building at 918-920 Main St.

Peter Grine reported on the success of the Buffalo ReUse program, salvaging materials from house to be demolished, and the program of grants to mitigate gas meters in front of properties in historic districts.

"We're looking for someone to take the message to other historic districts," where grants are also available. "I challenge the new board members; I want to see what you're going to do," he said.

Jonathan White, a former Association president who has served as Allentown representative of the Medical Campus board for six years, reported that "the campus is growing," with four major projects underway. He is being succeeded by Lura Bechtel as the Association's representative on the board.

Sarah Gilewicz is the new membership chairperson, it was announced.

Gretchan Grobe reported that the Allen West Festival in June netted a \$14,849 profit for the Association.

Wadsworth St. is undergoing a renaissance, with all vacant houses recently purchased or rehabilitated, Daniel Culross, chairman of the Wadsworth St. Committee, reported.

"We're still working on the city component," seeking new, historically appropriate street lights and traffic calming measures, with some improvements expected in 2009, he said.

At its reorganization meeting, the board retitled Andrew Eisenhardt's position to executive director from office manager, resuming the title held until two years ago when he was appointed to the part-time job, as the Association's only employee. His job description was increased to include grant applications and his hourly pay rate was raised \$2. He is an Allentown resident and owner of Antiques Allentown and a former board member. He has brought stability to the position after a period of high turnover, Matt Ryan said, in presenting the recommendation of the Executive Committee for the upgrade.

The board set its monthly meeting for the second Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Association office, 14 Allen St., a change from the third Tuesday.

A minute of silence was held in respect for Donald and Victoria Hess, parents of Lura Hess, who perished in a plane accident Nov. 13.



# Over 100 trees planted in Allentown since 2006 storm

*Continued from Page 1*

Tim Riordan and Walter Constantine provided trucks to pick up trees from the city that were reserved by the Allentown Association and Kleinhans Community Association. Russell Higgins used his roto-tiller to loosen up the soil and make digging easier.

We would like to thank the following volunteers for making this planting a huge success: Chris Brown, Daniel Culross, Carl Buzak, Gina Maramag, LaVerne Peakes, Gretchan Grobe, Matt Moscati, Matt Ryan, Don Kinsman, Anthony Armstrong, Lori Robinson, David Granville, Mary Anne Cassidy, Beth Kauffman, Dottie Costisick, Jeff Kruszka, Willow Greene, John Beyer, Elizabeth Shatzel, Nelson Stafford, Walter Constantine, Tim Riordan, Russell Higgins, Karen Parry and Wayne Parry

The Buffalo Green Fund, which has been helping to beautify city property since 1973, and Re-Tree Western New York are always in need of tax-exempt donations to continue their important work. Please send donations to: Buffalo Green Fund, 1 Mayfair Lane Buffalo 14201, [www.buffalogreenfund.org](http://www.buffalogreenfund.org); and Re-Tree Western New York, 144 Heritage Court, Tonawanda, N.Y 14150, [www.re-treewny.org](http://www.re-treewny.org).

The planting this fall, with those of last spring and the fall of 2007, bring to over 100 the number of trees planted in Allentown with the help of the Green Fund and Re-Tree WNY and neighborhood volunteers since the disastrous 2006 storm.



**Tree planting by volunteers, left to right, Gretchan Grobe, Paula Mercado, Dotti Costisick, Charles Moses, Chris Brown, Jeff Kruszka. Photo by David Granville.**

## *An Allentown Almanac*

The Allentown community extends its sincere condolences to Lura Bechtel, Allentown Association first vice president, on the loss of her parents, Donald A. and Victoria Hess, who died Nov. 13 in a tragic plane crash in Florida. Donald Hess was chairman of the Hauptmann-Woodward Medical Research Institute on the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus.

The Theater of Youth, based at the Allendale Theater, has announced that Independent Health has entered into an unprecedented relationship as sponsor with significant support over the next five years.

Best wishes to Matthew P. Moscati and the former Erin

Elizabeth Cala who were married Sept. 28 at Sheldon Hall on Lake Chautauqua. He is an architect in Allentown and new Allentown Association treasurer.

A welcome sight: police have been seen walking the beat on Allen St.

A businessman contemplating application for a liquor license and music permit for 189 Allen St., next door to Steel Crazy, has been advised by the Preservation Board to confer with Allentown Association representatives. A meeting with the Business Relations Committee is planned.

The Kleinhans Community Association Halloween ghost tours Oct. 24 and 25 drew 50 people and raised \$400 for Heart of the City neighborhood programs.

Volunteers are ready to hang Christmas wreaths on Allen St. poles on Nov. 29.



## *A guide to Allentown coffee shops*

By *Matthew Ryan*

A cup of coffee can be appreciated in many ways. Such as Monday morning coffee: needed to get you to work. Thursday night: let's catch up over coffee. Friday night: Irish coffee to keep you going from happy hour to closing time. Saturday morning: hangover coffee. Then there is my favorite, Sunday: breakfast with a newspaper coffee.

Despite my taste for the brew, I've always avoided owning a coffee maker. My theory is that living in the city you should interact, truly living in the neighborhood rather than just staying inside your home. Not having a coffee maker forces me to get off the couch and out of the house.

Ironically, for years now I've been leaving Allentown for all these coffee needs. Tim Horton's, in the lobby of my office building, gets me by during the week. On the weekends my habit is to wander to Ambrosia or Spot. Well, no more. Over the past several months I've made it my mission to hit the neighborhood joints. Here is my take on coffee in Allentown.

**Café 59:** plenty of room to meet to chat or kick back with a paper or lap top. I drink simple coffee, with cream and sugar. If you need chai, latte, etc., this place has some of that menu. I found it best as a weekday morning stop on the way to the office. Located at 59 Allen St. Hours Monday-Friday 8-6 p.m., Saturday 10-5 p.m.

**Café Taza:** coffee on the go. Not big enough inside to lounge and socialize. Get your drink, get moving. That said, I love seeing people just hanging out front there. Good people, great vibe. This is Allentown. Located at 100

Elmwood Ave.

**Steel Crazy Café:** good place for the Sunday morning breakfast. I prefer to read the newspaper (I know, old school), but WiFi is available for those lugging lap tops. The stools and countertop in front of big windows looking out on Allen/Elmwood make a the perfect perch. The mixed use with the retail shop reminds me of one of my past favorites down Elmwood, Off the Wall. Coffee menu includes flavors, latte, etc. Located at : 191 Allen St. Hours: Tuesday-Thursday, 11-4 p.m., Friday and Saturday 11-11 p.m.; Sunday 8:30-3 p.m.

**Towne Restaurant:** It is late night; you are heading home but need a bottomless cup with some anytime food. Stumble on in. This place is a staple in our neighborhood. Coffee is coffee here folks. If you ordered a 'one shot, caramel, chai, whatever', it isn't coming. Located at 186 Allen St. Hours: Monday – Saturday 7 a.m.-5:30 a.m.; Sunday, 7 a.m.-11 p.m.

**Gabriel's Gate:** wonder why this place is on my coffee list? Irish coffee. Allentown boasts a mix of bars and restaurants for all social times: happy hour, prime time to all-nighter. If you plan to make the trifecta you'll be better prepared by mixing in an Irish coffee. Red Bull is not the answer. An Irish coffee provides the caffeine you need while slowing you down for a moment so you can truly prepare yourself for the remaining hours. Right in the heart of it all, Gabriel's Gate is the perfect place to take this pause to refresh. Located at 145 Allen St.

*Matt Ryan is new president of the Allentown Association.*

## Business News

**Just Vino,** a wine bar at 826 Main St., at Virginia St., opened Nov. 1, the first commercial establishment in the Granite Works redevelopment. Proprietor Jeff Borsuk offers 80 wines by the glass and 10 beers, as well as snack food items appropriate with wine. Open from 3 p.m. to midnight Monday –Thursday, 3 p.m. to 1 a.m. Friday and Saturday, noon to 10 p.m. or so Sunday. Call 725-0166.

**Steel Crazy Café,** 191 Allen St. at Elmwood Ave., has been acquired by Shayna Raichilson-Zadak, who is leasing the premises from Ed Hogle. She also operates Bohemian Hostess, a catering service. Call 348-6136 or check [www.steelcrazycafe.com](http://www.steelcrazycafe.com) or [www.behohemianhostess.com](http://www.behohemianhostess.com).

Custom designed blow-up dolls created by 35 artists are on sale through Dec. 23 at **Hero Design Studio & Boutique,** 93 Allen St. The designs were shown at an opening reception Oct. 24 at El Museo, 95 Allen St. A book featuring the custom toys and the artists who created them is also available.

**Indigo,** a gallery at 74 Allen St., was opened in Oct. 17 by Elizabeth Samuels, featuring contemporary art in all media. See Calendar of Events entry on page. 6.

**PriceRite** plans to open a supermarket in March after renovating the Stuyvesant Plaza premises formerly occupied by Lastina's Foodland and earlier by Quality, Bells and Loblaws chains. Welcome, and good luck!



## Calendar of Events

**Allendale Theater**, 203 Allen St. Theater of Youth presents "Madeline's Christmas", a musical filled with miracles set in Paris at Christmas, for ages 4 and up, Dec. 12, 7 p.m., Dec. 13, 14, 20, 21, "The Secret Life of Girls," by Linda Daugherty, a look at cyber bullying, for ages 12 and up, Jan. 30, 7 p.m., Jan. 31, Feb. 1, 7, 8, 2 p.m. For information and tickets, call 884-4400.

**Allentown Association**, 14 Allen St., Board of Directors meets Dec. 9, Jan. 13, Feb. 10, 7 p.m., For information call 881-1024 or email [allentown@bfn.org](mailto:allentown@bfn.org).

**Art Dialogue Gallery**, 1 Linwood Ave., Tuesday to Friday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Artful Gifts exhibition and sale, through Dec. 30. Think Green, environmentally related works by Western New York Artists Group members, Jan. 3 to 30. Trilogies XIX, works of three artists, Feb. 6 to March 13. For information call 885-2251.

**Betty's restaurant**, 370 Virginia St. at Cottage St.. "Birdland", paintings and sculpture by Mary Weig, through Jan. 4. Works of Ari Hoover, Jan. 5 to March 8.

**Buffalo Big Print Gallery**, 78 Allen St., "Dance," paintings of Gustavo Glorioso, Dec. 5-9, reception Dec 5, 6 to 9 p.m.

**College Street Gallery**, 244 Allen St., Wednesday, 6 to 8 p.m., Thursday, 5 to 8 p.m.; Friday, 4 to 8 p.m. Exhibit s of works by nine photographers, four painters and a sculptor, with different works each month. Opening night receptions, Dec. 5, Jan. 2 and Feb. 6, 8 to 10 p.m. For information call, 882-9727.

**El Museo**, 91 Allen St., Thursday through Saturday, noon to 5, and by appointment. For information call 884-9693.

**First Presbyterian Church**, Symphony Circle, **St. Louis Catholic Church**, Main and Edward Sts., and **St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral**, Church and Franklin Sts., free guided tours of the three churches Dec. 13, Jan. 10, Feb. 14., beginning at St. Paul's at 10 a.m., transportation not provided.

**Homeownership Center of Buffalo**, 560 Delaware Ave., suite 101. Free orientation for prospective home buyers, Dec. 2, 8, 16, Jan. 6, 12, 21, Feb. 2, 10, m18, 6 to 7 p.m. Home-buyer education classes (fees charged), Jan. 10, Feb. 7, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.; free homeowners' seminars, Jan. 15, Feb. 19, 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. For more information, [www.homefrontbflo.org](http://www.homefrontbflo.org) or call 856-2952.

**Indigo gallery**, 74 Allen St., Tuesday to Friday, noon to 5, Saturday, noon to 3. "Winter," exhibition of works of 15 artists, Dec. 5 to Jan. 4. Exhibition of fibers, Jan. 9 to Feb. 9. For information call 984-9572.

**Karpeles Manuscript Library Museum**, 220 North St. Exhibit on the abolition of the slave trade, through Dec. 31; Florence Nightengale, Jan. 7 through April. Thursday through Saturdays, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. For information call 886-3656.

**Kleinhans Community Association**, holiday potluck social, Dec. 15 6 to 8:30 p.m., First Presbyterian Church Blue Room; monthly meeting: Jan. 17, 10:15 a.m., Heart of the City Neighborhoods, 42 Plymouth Ave.

**Kleinhans Music Hall**, Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, classical series: "A Classical Christmas," Dec. 12, 10:30 a.m., Dec. 13, 8 p.m. "Mozart's Birthday Celebration", Jan. 24, 8 p.m., Jan. 25, 2:30 p.m. "Concerto for Orchestra", Feb. 6, 10:30 a.m., Feb. 7, 8 p.m. Pops series: "Holiday Pops", Dec. 19 and 20, 8 p.m., Dec. 21, 2:30 p.m., The Lettermen, Jan. 31, 8 p.m., "A Valentine Special", Feb. 14, 8 p.m., "Marvin Hamlisch Salutes Jerome Kern", Feb. 28, 8 p.m. Family series: "A Visit from St. Nick" with Greater Buffalo Youth Ballet, Dec. 14, 2:30 p.m. "The Little Dragon", Feb. 8, 2:30 p.m. For tickets and information, call 885-5000.

**Nina Freudenheim Gallery**, Hotel Lenox, 140 North St. "Cage Pieces", sculpture by Rebecca Smith, through Jan. 13; "Areography", paintings by Peter Stephens, Jan. 17 through Feb. 28. Tuesday through Friday, 10 to 5; Saturday, by appointment. For information call 882-5777.

**Quaker Bonnet Eatery**, 175 Allen St., paintings by Bill Hutchinson, through Dec. 31.

**Rust Belt Books**, 202 Allen St. Robin Brox birthday poetry, Dec, 7, 3 to 6 p.m. Book signing for "Sun Will Rise" by Ntare Ali Gault, Dec. 12, 7 p.m. Release of book by Rich Royer, Dec. 14, 7:30 p.m., Unified Theory physics presentation, Dec. 28, 3 p.m. For information call 885-9535.

**Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Site (Wilcox Mansion)**, 641 Delaware Ave. Closed for renovation and expansion, reopening planned for spring. Victorian Christmas reception and silent auction, Fables Café, Central Library, Lafayette Square, Dec. 5, 6 to 9 p.m. Candlelight dinner and dancing following champagne reception, Fanny's Restaurant, 3500 Sheridan Drive, Amherst, Dec. 11, 6 p.m.. For information call 884-0095.



## “Pay and display” parking extolled to business group

Allentown was one of the first four sites picked for replacing parking meters with new pay stations because it is one of the four busiest business districts in terms of parking turnover.

Leonard G. Sciolino, city parking director, gave this explanation at a business mixer sponsored by the Allentown Association Sept. 24 at Café 59.

The new “pay and display” system is “better for businesses,” turning over business customers faster, he said. Each pay machine replaces 10 to 12 single meters with fewer maintenance problems, especially in cold weather, he added.

The new parking system was installed on Allen St. as well as downtown, Elmwood Ave., and Hertel Ave., the four busiest parking areas, with 121 pay stations replacing 1,700 meters. The pay stations take coins or credit cards — plastic accounts for 40 percent of payments — but no paper currency as yet, because wet bills can freeze in winter.

On Allen St., the new pay stations have replaced parking meters between Franklin and Park Sts.

If the new system continues to perform well it will be expanded in Allentown and will be extended to other areas, Len Sciolino said. He is considering a mixture of short- and long-term parking for Virginia Place., he added.

With the removal of individual parking meters, any

business wishing a free bike rack where a parking meter was located may call the Allentown Association for an application, Matthew Ryan announced. Or, application may be made on the Web at <http://www.city-buffalo.com/applications/bikestandreq/default.aspx>.

As business relations chairman, Matt Ryan hosted the mixer. The mixers are held semiannually and the next will be in March.

The question of whether Allentown has adequate parking was also raised at the Association’s annual meeting Oct. 21 by Mark Goldman, owner of Allen Street Hardware Store Café.

“I think it’s an important issue. I’m not sure it’s a problem,” he said.

“It’s an ongoing problem, a challenge,” said Robert Brunschmid, Theater of Youth manager. “On Friday nights there are hundreds of people looking for parking. It’s hindering us,” he added.

Justin Azzarella, a former Association vice president now Elmwood Village Association executive director, said the city sold three free, public lots in Allentown a few years ago because they weren’t producing revenue. “We need to put pressure on the city,” he added.

Matt Ryan, incoming Association president, said later he is pursuing possible steps, including discussions with the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority on shuttles.

## *The Allentown Neighbor*

Editor: Pete Carroll, e-mail [bonjoura@localnet.com](mailto:bonjoura@localnet.com)

### Officers of the Allentown Association, Inc.

President: Matthew Ryan  
 Vice presidents: Lura Bechtel,  
 Timothy Riordan  
 Treasurer: Matthew Moscati  
 Secretary: Gina Maramag

Directors:

Eric Arzola  
 Pete Carroll  
 Ed Castine  
 Caitlin Crowell

Melissa Dayton  
 Deborah Ellis  
 Joseph Fell  
 Sarah Gilewicz  
 Holly Holdaway  
 Donald Kinsman  
 Elizabeth Licata  
 Marc McGovern  
 LaVerne Peakes  
 Jim Rhoades  
 Adam Sokol  
 Keith R. Vona

Ex officio directors:

Anthony Amstrong  
 Gretchan Grobe  
 Robert Fink  
 Peter Grine  
 Wayne Parry  
 Jonathan White

Executive director: Andrew Eisenhardt



## 64 senior apartments open in former YWCA North St. Residence

New tenants have begun moving into the Residence on North — the former YWCA residence at 46 North St.— which has undergone an extensive reconstruction.

While little has changed on the historic exterior of the five-story, brick, colonnaded building, the interior has been thoroughly rebuilt with the conversion from single-occupancy rooms to 63 apartments. Tenants must be at least 55 years old, and meet income limits.

The Georgian Revival structure, designed by the architectural firm of Hudson & Hudson, was built in 1926 by the Young Women's Christian Association as a women's residence. Young women from other communities coming to work or attend school in Buffalo then were expected to lodge in well-supervised accommodations. In the 1970s, it became a residence for women with mental-health problems. Later, male residents were admitted as well. In 2005 the YWCA decided to close the institution, and sell the building as well as its headquarters at 190 Franklin St.

E Square Capital bought the building for \$700,000 and undertook the reconstruction, assisted by state historic tax credits and Federal Housing Administration financing. Maximum income for tenants is \$25,560 for one person, \$29,220 for a couple, which is 60 percent of the region's medium household income. The total project cost was \$8-million.

Monthly rents are \$595 for studio apartments, \$651 for a one-bedroom, \$778 for two bedrooms, including heat, water, parking and cable. Free rent is being offered through December for early arrivals.

Irina Shamova and Jesslyn Oswald, E Square rental agents, report that most of the new residents are coming from Allentown and other nearby neighborhoods.

The spacious public rooms on the ground floor have been renovated and provide attractive space for socializing. The building has a wheelchair-accessible rear entrance.

## *Food Bank needs your help for the hungry*

By *LaVerne Peakes*

This Holiday season the Allentown Association is proud to team up with the Food Bank of Western New York to assist with the enormous task of feeding families in need.

The Food Bank has been assisting four counties with their emergency food needs since 1979. It helps 422 member agencies that distribute to over 100,000 people per month including 40,000 children and 20,000 seniors. The Food Bank has several programs including Kids Cafe, Kids Helping Other Kids, Food Express, Emergency Infant Care, Nutritional Education and the Garden Project. With cuts to municipal programs, and the downturn in the economy the Food Bank has seen an 11 percent increase in need and donations are down significantly. In this economy we have all tightened our belts, but could you look into the faces of your children and tell them you can't give them a decent breakfast, lunch, or dinner.

The Association had decided to help with a three-tier approach:

— We have placed barrels at the Quaker Bonnet, the

Towne Restaurant, Elmwood Village Charter School, and at the Allendale Theater for non-perishable food donations.

— The wonderful Theater of Youth staff at the Allendale has sweetened the deal by offering \$5 off their box office ticket prices with a donation of any non-perishable food item.

There will be paper turkeys that you can purchase for a \$1 donation and receive a discount off of your purchases at Sweet Tooth and Destini's Pizzeria.

— We are also asking individuals and businesses to make cash donations so that the Food Bank can make food purchases at a reduced cost. It takes all of us working together to help those that are less fortunate this holiday season. So please consider giving generously in what ever way you can now and throughout the year. Make checks payable to: Food Bank of WNY and send to the Allentown Association at 14 Allen Street, Buffalo, NY 14202, preferably by Dec. 15.

*LaVerne Peakes is an Allentown Association director.*



## “Welcome to Allentown” sign goes up



**Daniel Culross, left, head of the Allentown Association's Wadsworth St. improvement program, stands next to the new two-sided sign. "Welcome to Allentown" is the message facing west.; "Thank You for Visiting Allentown" faces east. The sign was installed in September after the city Preservation Board granted its permission. It joins similar signs at Main and Allen Sts. and Hudson St. and Plymouth Ave.**

After two years of brainstorming, fundraising, and grant writing, the saga of the third “Welcome To Allentown” sign has finally come to a successful end.

The 100 percent funding came through the 2007-2008 Mayor's Livable Communities Grant to help support neighborhood signage and beautification projects. The grant paid for the manufacture of the sign and its installation.

After numerous meetings with the City of Buffalo's Department of Public Works and the Buffalo Preservation Board, a site was approved at the northwest edge of Kleinhans Music Hall property. The installation occurred in September over two days, one for the sign, and the next for some minor cosmetic improvements. Now, people entering and leaving the historic district along Porter Ave. will be greeted just before they approach Kleinhans and Symphony Circle. It should be noted that the original placement of the sign was proposed for the intersection of Wadsworth and

Pennsylvania Sts.

We now have a fantastic sign that should help educate visitors and improve way finding. It is important for people to know they've entered one of Buffalo's great historic districts. The Association will maintain the sign as part of its agreement with the city for these types of signs.

Thanks to Daniel Culross and Holly Holdaway for grant writing and overall project management, outgoing Association President Wayne Parry, Andrew Eisenhardt, the Association's Board of Directors and the First Presbyterian Church for their unwavering support, Sign Language, Inc. for a wonderful sign, Harvey Garrett and other members of the Buffalo Preservation Board, and the City of Buffalo's Division of Citizen Services for its financial support.



## Allen West offers a special rate for 2009; act fast

By *Gretchan Grobe*

It's hard to believe that 2009 is the Allen West Festival's 10th year.

The dates are the weekend of June 13 and 14.

The planning has already started. If you would like to help plan or just volunteer for the days of the event please contact me or Andrew Eisenhardt at the Allentown Association office, (716) 881-1024.

We are looking for sponsors for the 2009 festival. There are several different levels and Andrew and I would love to discuss different exciting opportunities with you.

For the artists and vendors, we are raising our price this year for a 10' by 10' space. The new price is \$225 and goes into effect Jan. 30.

The good news is we are running a special offer for the space, \$175, unchanged from 2008, if your mem-

bership is current as of Jan. 30, 2009, and we receive a paid application postmarked by Jan. 30. The application form is on our website, [mwww.allentown.org](http://mwww.allentown.org). We hope people will take advantage of this early bird offer. We look forward to seeing everyone at the festival.

The Allen West Festival was initiated by the Allentown Association with the cooperation of the Allentown Village Society and is held in conjunction with the Allentown Art Festival, operated by the Allentown Village Society. Allen West was begun to keep the area of Allen St. west of Elmwood Ave. safe during the art festival and to eliminate disorderliness with unregulated vendors. It has become the Allentown Association's biggest fund raiser; 147 vendors participated in 2008.

*Gretchan Grobe, a former Allentown Association president, chaired the Allen West Festival in 2008 and is chairing it in 2009.*

### *Miriam Banka, Park St. resident*

Miriam E. Banka, a Park St. resident for 18 years, died Oct. 18 in St. John Baptist Church Hospice. She was 86.

She and her husband, Theodore Banka, who died in 1998, came to Buffalo to be near their daughter, Dayna Banka-Slone and her family who lived next door.

Miriam Banka was a familiar figure to neighbors, en-

joying her garden and front porch in good weather.

A native of Brooklyn, she grew up on her parents' farm in Canterbury, Conn., and she and her husband operated the farm, raising chicken and beef cattle, before moving to Buffalo in 1990.

The Allentown community extends condolences to her family.

### **Gerald Bell, director of social work and health care**

Gerald J. Bell, a Mariner St. resident, died Oct. 24 in Buffalo General Hospital. He was 68.

He was director of social work with U.S. Ethicare Corp. from 1977 to 1981, then managed a heart program for Coordinated Care Management Corp. until 1991.

He was a longtime trustee of the Buffalo Society of Artists. His twin brother, Larry Bell, who predeceased him,

was an artist and president of the society. A native of Niagara Falls, Jerry Bell was a graduate of the University at Buffalo and did graduate study there and at Cornell and the University of Michigan.

The Allentown community extends condolences to Ron Concilla, his companion of 40 years.



## Car-sharing plan eyes Allentown

Allentowners may soon be able to rent cars at reasonable rates from a non-profit group offering an alternative to private car ownership.

Buffalo CarShare, organized by an all-volunteer group of graduate students and other young adults, hopes to begin operations by late March and with an operating base in or near Allentown.

Car sharing is a service that offers the convenience of a car without the up-front costs, hassles or environmental impacts of owning a private vehicle, said Creighton Randall, one of the organizers of Buffalo CarShare.

Members could rent vehicles on an hourly basis for errands and occasional trips, while relying on other modes of transportation — such as walking, transit, carpooling or bicycling — for commuting.

In January, Buffalo CarShare hopes to name an executive director and begin accepting members with an initial charge of between \$150 and \$300, and to place eight fuel-efficient cars in locations in Allentown, the Medical Campus and the Elmwood Village. Members will visit the organization's website or telephone to check the availability and location of cars.

"Philadelphia is our model," Creighton Randall said. Philly CarShare has been in successful operations since 2002 and has 50,000 members and 500 vehicles, he said. He is a graduate of the University at Buffalo School of Management and now is in his second year at the UB School of Architecture and Urban Planning, studying planning.

He is one of eight young organizers of the initiative which has received support of the Wellness Institute of Greater Buffalo and a contribution from Rondinelli Construction. Other financial support is being sought, as well as parking spaces and window space for advertising, and volunteers to help.

The number and location of cars will depend on membership enrollment. Organizers are looking for office space in the Allentown-Elmwood area.

The Allentown Association has given a letter of support for the concept. Buffalo CarShare has also approached the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus, the Elmwood Village Association and other organizations.

"It's a neat idea," said Matthew Ryan, Allentown Association president. "It's something I'd like to see take hold."

## Days Park plans holiday "illuminaria" Dec. 10

By Dolores Murphy

An "illuminaria" with residents holding lighted candles will take place at the east-end circle of Days Park Wednesday, Dec. 10 at 5 p.m., sponsored by the Days Park Block Club.

Caroling will take place at the circle after the lighting and will be followed by a party in Staples, Allen St. Reservations are necessary. Call Debbie Grine by Dec. 3 at 882-1002 with the number of adults and children, and the dish you wish to bring. Everyone is welcome. This will be the second annual illuminaria after a 20-year lapse since the first illuminaria. In 1986 neighbors outlined the park perimeter with more than 200 candles to celebrate the holidays and light a flame of hope in a neighborhood filled with dilapidated and vacant housing, slumlords, drug dealers and a neglected, almost treeless park.

Since 1987, the restoration of Days Park through the efforts of the community has been recognized nationally and locally and served as an inspiration for other neighborhoods. Flower gardens and trees have been planted, historic street lights installed and a wrought iron fountain now splashes and gurgles in the center. The block club has also reclaimed the lost heritage of Days Park, since discovering its design by Frederick Law Olmsted.

The positive effect of the park restoration is reflected in a dramatic decrease in crime and a huge jump in housing values. The intangible is a quality of life that accepts a diverse income community and attracts young families.

This year's event will be held at the east end of the park to make it shorter than last year's time-consuming circling of the entire park.

*Dolores Murphy is Days Park Block Club president*



# Trimmed parking plan approved for Nazareth

Catholic Health Systems has received permission to expand its parking lot at the rear of the former Nazareth Nursing Home, 279 North St. after the project was trimmed from 41 to 25 additional spaces. The original plan drew neighbors' complaints.

The applicant also modified the project by eliminating less green space and preserving a mature tree. The modified plan was approved by the city Planning and Preservation Boards. Catholic Health has used the building for of-

fices since the nursing home closed in late 2007 and plans additional offices there at least for a couple of years. It may eventually be used for a program of nursing day care for the elderly.

Friends of the Night People is seeking permission to pave its rear lot for parking at 394 Hudson St. at Wadsworth St. The Preservation Board has asked the applicant to discuss the plan with the Allentown Association and Kleinhans Community Association and tabled the matter until Dec. 11.

## ALLENTOWN ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please select a membership level:

- Benefactor \$1,000
- Patron \$500
- Contributing \$250
- Sustaining \$100
- Business \$50
- Family \$40
- Individual \$35
- Student/Senior \$20
- A generous gift \$\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

If business, name of manager \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to: Allentown Association, Inc.  
Mail to: Allentown Association, 14 Allen St., Buffalo NY 14202

### OPTIONAL VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES (Please check the committee of interest to you):

- Allen West Festival
- Beautification
- Membership/PR
- Secrets of Allentown tour of homes
- Crime Reduction
- Fundraising
- Hot Dog Stand
- Volunteer Office Staff
- Board of Directors

*The purpose of the Allentown Association, Inc. is to serve its community. It does that through efforts to beautify the neighborhood; to encourage historic preservation and property maintenance; to promote appropriate business development; to fight crime and to protect and enhance Allentown's unique urban ambiance.*



**THE ALLENTOWN ASSOCIATION, INC.**  
14 Allen Street  
Buffalo, New York 14202  
Visit on the web: [www.allentown.org](http://www.allentown.org)

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
BUFFALO, N.Y.  
PERMIT NO. 266