



# *The Allentown Neighbor*

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(716) 881-1024 E-mail: [allentown@bufn.org](mailto:allentown@bufn.org). Website: [www.allentown.org](http://www.allentown.org)

## June 9 and 10: The Art Show at 50

In September 1958, a few business people in Allentown sponsored an outdoor art show which stretched for four blocks along Allen St.

"They wanted to promote the neighborhood," said Mary M. Miskiewicz, president of the Allentown Village Society, sponsor of the 50-year-old art show. Her mother, Madeline Benson, was one of the show's founders.

Allentown had long had a concentration of businesses catering to the carriage trade, but by 1958 it was seeing an erosion in its clientele and the number of businesses, Mary Miskiewicz said.

Madeline Benson owned a cloth-weaving business begun in Allentown in 1918. Its last location was the southwest corner of Allen and Franklin Sts., now Fiddleheads restaurant.

Among the art show's other organizers were Jason "Jay" Natowitz, owner of a picture-framing shop; Madeline Benson's sister, Elizabeth Millette, the owner of a drug store at the northwest corner of Delaware and Allen (present site of Colter Bay Grill); Louis Cherenzia, an artist who had his home at studio at 449 Franklin St.; and Eddie Bisone, a painter.

Dominic Trapani, who ran Coffee Encores, a coffee shop at 343 Franklin St., recalls setting up a coffee stand on the north side of Allen near Main St. for the first art show. Mayor Frank A. Sedita stopped by.

**The 50th annual Allentown Art Festival will be held June 9 and 10 from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.**

It has become the defining rite of spring for hundreds of thousands of Buffalonians. It is said to be the largest art show in the country. It has survived unflattering comments by art critics and a 1970 "riot"—misbehaving patrons exiting a bar at the show's closing.

For Allentowners, it is an institution both loved and feared, as the neighborhood plays host to thousands of visitors and the celebratory hubris of the festival, and tolerates the noise, crowds, litter and restrictions on movement.

Colorful banners from light poles along Delaware Ave. from Tupper to North Sts. will proclaim the 50th festival.

The Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Site, also known as the Wilcox Mansion, will exhibit posters of past art festivals. Admission will be \$1 June 9 and 10.

"We have the poster for the seventh. There may have been one for the sixth. I don't think there were any before that," Mary Miskiewicz said. The posters for 1965 through 1968 are missing. "We would like to borrow any copy anyone has. They would be scanned and returned," she added.

Many of the posters were designed by Louis Cherenzia who often depicted himself with a palette and brush. He is now 104 and lived on Franklin St. until about five years ago when he moved to New Jersey where his daughter lives, Mary Miskiewicz said.

The Allentown Association was founded in 1963 and it and the Allentown Village Society, often confused in the public mind, remain separate organizations.

Since 1999, the Allentown Association, with the cooperation of the Allentown Village Society, has sponsored the Allen West Festival on Allen St. west of Elmwood Ave. in conjunction with the Art Festival east of Elmwood. More than 100 vendors have signed up. The emphasis is on locally made crafts and refreshments. (See **Association**, page 4)

Allen West was begun to keep the area west of Elmwood safe during the festival and to eliminate disorderliness with unregulated vendors.

**For the first time since 2002, the 2007 Art Festival will not be held in conjunction with the Music Is Art Festival.**

After a contentious coexistence for four years, the music festival founded by Robbie Takac, bassist with the Goo Goo Dolls, is moving to the Erie County Fair for Aug. 11.

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# An Allentown artist views the Art Show

By Dayna Banka Slone

The writer, a retired art teacher in the Buffalo schools, is a prize-winning exhibitor of jewelry in the Allentown Art Festival.

We began our life in Allentown in February 1969 in a Queen Anne house at 49 Park St., originally built for the J. Woods family in 1881. As transplants from Brooklyn we were immediately attracted to the neighborhood because of its sense of community. We also felt it was much like the Greenwich Village area we loved in New York City.

The spring brought our first exposure to the Allentown Art Festival which we have come to regard as our summer rite of passage. The streets of our Victorian neighborhood come alive with the sound of footsteps, many porch parties, and art, art, art.

Normally quiet streets become outrageously busy and noisy, and the early morning clattering of tent poles is heard through open windows. Parking is a nightmare for those of us without driveways or garages and we plan our schedules carefully so as not to move our cars. But a fine old neighborhood lifts up her skirts to show neatly trimmed lawns and beautifully planted gardens.

We regard the festival as great fun, a time to meet with friends not often seen at other times of the year. As residents of the same house for all this time, people always know where to find us the second weekend of June. My husband Carl's antique shop on Elmwood is a popular stopping spot for many festival-goers.

About 13 years ago I began to participate in the festival as an artist showing my jewelry. The parties continue at our house, often without me because I attend the festival's award ceremony. It has become a point of pride for me to not only live and work here but also to be a part of the festival.

*"A fine old neighborhood lifts up her skirts to show neatly trimmed lawns and beautifully planted gardens."*

The Monday morning after the festival I will awake to a silence broken only by the chirping of birds, and be pleasantly exhausted once again from manning my booth and entertaining friends and family. Next year's festival will seem a world away. I am always a bit sad when the whole thing ends; to me it's Christmas and the Fourth of July rolled into one and I love every minute of it.

We also celebrate the Allentown Festival for another reason. Our daughter Meredith was born about nine months after the 1971 festival.

## An Allentown Almanac

The date of the Allentown Association's annual dinner was incorrect in the last issue after a dinner committee member provided the wrong date. Regrets from all...

Short films will be presented in Days Park at nightfall June 30 and July 21 in Squeaky Wheel's annual Outdoor Animation Festival...

If you can volunteer for the Allen West Festival or the Hot Dog Stand June 9 and 10 please call the Allentown Association at 881-1049...

First Amherst Development Group will receive a preservation award for the Granite Works at Main and Virginia Sts. from several preservation and community organizations at a dinner June 26 in the Mary Seaton Room of Kleinhans Music Hall...

Darren Strickland, former executive director of Friends of the Night People, pleaded guilty May 7 in State Supreme Court in the theft of \$44,244 from the soup kitchen between 2001 and 2005, *The Buffalo News* reported. The investigation began after a donor complained of not receiving acknowledgement of a \$3,000 gift to the Friends of the Night People.

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## Work stops, then proceeds on Coit House

Work was ordered stopped at the Coit House in April and the city Preservation Board's executive secretary was suspended for granting unauthorized permission for repairs.

Permission was granted to replace windows, and relocate two windows vertically on the west side of the house at 414 Virginia St., but the height of the relocated windows is not to be altered. The relocated windows are to be 36 inches apart.

Thomas Marchese, the board's executive secretary, was suspended by Richard Tobe, city development commissioner, for granting permission not authorized by the board. Citing personnel policy Commissioner Tobe declined to confirm the suspension or say how long it would run, or whether the suspension was with or without pay.

The unauthorized permission was not reported promptly to the Preservation Board, and disappeared inexplicably from the city's electronic record.

Work on the house resumed in May. Thomas Chwalinski is serving as executive secretary of the Preservation Board during the suspension.

The Coit House is Buffalo's oldest dwelling.

In other Preservation Board business, permission was given for eight steel posts and a double chain to enclose the Holly Farms parking lot at 235 Allen St. at College St. The lot will be entered from College St. Mark Goldman was the applicant. The lot is owned by Ali Mugali.

## Eisenhardt is new office manager

Andrew Eisenhardt, an Allentown resident, businessman and property owner, has been named office manager of the Allentown Association.

The appointment to the 15-hour-a-week position was approved by the Association's Board of Directors on the recommendation of the Executive Committee at the board's April 17 meeting.

Andrew Eisenhardt has been filling in since January after the resignation of Douglas Levy as Association executive director. The board retitled the job, the Association's only paid position, as office manager.



**Andrew Eisenhardt**

Andrew Eisenhardt, who grew up in Cheektowaga and is a Maryvale High School graduate, has operated Antiques Allentown at 138 Elmwood Ave. for six years. He and his partner, Scott Utke, have bought 146 Elmwood and are renovating the property. They plan to move their home and the antiques business there this summer.

He will work Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons in the Association office, 14 Allen St. To take the position, he resigned from the Board of Directors position which he had filled for two-and-a-half years.

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## Coit House, Kleinhans Hall featured in June seminars

Three free seminars on Allentown's history are scheduled for Thursday evenings in June in the culminating sessions of a highly successful series sponsored by the Allentown Association and the Karpeles Manuscript Museum.

The sessions begin at 6:30 p.m. and end by 7:45 p.m. The schedule:

— June 7, Buffalo's oldest house: the Coit House, by Christopher Brown, Karpeles North Hall, 220 North St.

— June 21, The architecture of Eero and Eliel Saarinen and Kleinhans Music Hall, by Christopher Brown, Karpeles Porter Hall, 453 Porter Ave.

— July 5, Allentown's most famous Victorian-era architect: Richard A. Waite, by Martin Wachadlo, Karpeles North Hall, 220 North St.

The series, which began in February, has already presented seven sessions focusing on Allentown's architectural heritage and information to help homeowners maintain and improve their historic homes.

## Association making financial progress, members told

The Allentown Association is reducing expenses, maximizing revenues and living within its income, "a big accomplishment with no government financial support."

This message from Christopher Brown, Association president, was heard by over 100 people at the annual members' dinner May 16 in the Hamlin House.

The Association has a happy relationship with the Allentown Village Society which is sponsoring the 50th annual Allentown Art Festival June 9 and 10, he said. (See Page 1)

The Allen West Festival, the Allentown Association's biggest fund-raiser, will be held under the chairmanship of Monica Pellegrino in conjunction with the Art Festival, and the Allentown Association will have its usual refreshment stand at Delaware Ave. and Edward St. (See page 1)

Chris Brown also reported that six homes of limited-income ownership on Hudson St. and Plymouth Ave. in Allentown will be painted by Brush Up Buffalo and Heart of the City Neighborhoods.

Mike Ball, planning director for the Buffalo-Niagara Medical Campus said Elicott St. is becoming a parklike focal point of the campus with public art, landscaping and lighting. The physical integration of the campus with Allentown and the Fruit Belt is being improved, with \$150-million in investment in campus facilities, he added.

Beautification awards were presented to Mark DiGiampaolo for 38 N. Pearl St., Eco-Friendly Custom Cleaners of 152 Elmwood Ave., St. Louis Church, Tom and Anne Slowe for 35 Days Park, Anthony Tarquini for 70 Edward St., and Scarlet Restaurant of 26 Virginia Place. Elizabeth Licata, Beautification Committee chairwoman, presented the awards.

Mitch Bechtel gave a demonstration of the Association's new electronic database of Allentown's residential and commercial properties.

Jim Becker, winner of the split-club drawing, donated his share to the Association. Gretchan Grobe was chairwoman for the dinner.

## Rev. Winfield Washington of Park St.

The Rev. Winfield "Woody" Washington Jr., a Baptist pastor and a resident of Park St. for 15 years, was stricken fatally at home April 20. He was 64.

His funeral was held in First Calvary Missionary Baptist Church, 467 William St., where he had been pastor for 34 years.

He had also served as field services director for the Greater Niagara Frontier Boy Scout Council for 22 years.

Surviving are his wife Marcia and five children.

The Allentown community extends sincere condolences to his family.

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## Calendar of Events

**Allendale Theater**, 203 Allen St. Theater of Youth presents “Charlotte’s Web” by Joseph Robinette, based on the book by E.B. White, for ages 4 and up, June 2 and 3 at 2 p.m. For information and tickets, call 884-4400.

**Allentown Association**, 14 Allen St. June 7, 21, July 5, series of educational presentations, Karpeles museum sites, see page 4. Board of Directors meets June 19 and July 17, 7 p.m., 14 Allen St. For information, call 881-1024 or e-mail allentown@bfm.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. Collage exhibition, June 8 to July 13. Photography by Richard Stamps of missionaries in Africa and the Dominican Republic, July 20 to Aug. 24. For information call 885-2251.

**College Street Gallery**, 244 Allen St., Wednesday, 6 to 8 p.m., Thursday, 5 to 8 p.m.; Friday, 4 to 8 p.m., Saturday and Sunday, 2 to 5 p.m. “Images,” paintings by A. Paul Mielcarski of Allentown, June 8 to 30, opening reception June 8 from 5 to 10 p.m. Works by Sean Madden, July 12 to Aug. 1, opening reception July 13, 8 to 11 p.m. For information call 882-9727.

**Days Park**, Squeaky Wheel’s Outdoor Animation Festival, short films at nightfall, June 30 and July 21.

**El Museo**, 91 Allen St., Thursday through Saturday, noon to 5. 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 June 9 and July 14, beginning at St. Paul’s at 10 a.m., transportation not provided.

**Garden Walk**, free tour of home gardens in Allentown and throughout the West Side, July 28 and 29. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Maps available at Allentown Association office, 14 Allen St., Richmond-Summer Senior Center and Buffalo Seminary.

**Karpeles Manuscript Library Museum**, 220 North St., Tuesdays through Sundays, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Historic Turkish maps, through June 30. Series of educational presentations, June 7, 21, July 5, see page 4. For further information call 886-3656.

**Kleinhans Music Hall**, Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra classical concerts, “Tschaikovsky Violin Concerto,” June 2, 8 p.m., June 3, 2:30 p.m. For tickets or information, 885-5000.

**Nina Freudenheim Gallery**, Hotel Lenox, 140 North St. Tuesday through Friday, 10 to 5; Sunday, Monday, by appointment. Small work by several artists, through June 29. For information call 882-5777.

**Rust Belt Books**, 202 Allen St. Cat Venom comedy improv, June 1 and 8, July 6 and 13, 8 p.m. Opening reception for art exhibit, June 3, 6 to 8 p.m. Just Buffalo open reading, June 17, 7 p.m. “Subversive Shorts”, dramatic sketches, June 14 to 16, 21 to 23, and 28 to 30, 8 p.m. Infringement Festival, July 26 to Aug. 5, call for information, 885-9535.

**Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Site (Wilcox Mansion)**, 641 Delaware Ave., Monday to Friday 9 to 5, Saturday, Sunday, noon to 5 p.m. Guided two-hour tours of Allentown Wednesdays in June, July and August at 10 a.m. and June 2, July 7, Aug. 4 and Sept. 1 at 1 p.m. Cost \$4. For information call 884-0095.

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## The Allentown Neighbor

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## 24 maples from Buffalo Green Fund are planted in Allentown

Thanks to Bette Blum and the Buffalo Green Fund, 24 beautiful Armstrong maples have been planted on Elmwood Ave., Allen and Main Sts. Allentown, like all of Buffalo, suffered a huge tree loss in the October storm. The Allentown Association will be working closely with the Green Fund, the city, Re-Tree Western New York and other organizations for the next five years to do everything we can to help restore the tree canopy that has been lost.

Anyone interested in having a tree planted in front of one's house or business should contact Wayne Parry at [wparry@adelphia.net](mailto:wparry@adelphia.net) or 725-3655. We will help you with the process and options available to receive new trees.

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*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.**  
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