
ALLEGHENY WEST GAZETTE

February 2018

President's Message

So what are you doing on Tuesday evening?

Join your neighbors on **Tuesday, February 13 at 7:30 PM** at Calvary Church for the February meeting of the Allegheny West Civic Council. Each month this is where we make decisions about our neighborhood—decisions that in ways both small and large will affect you. And we always have a good time socializing and enjoying refreshments. Everyone is welcome—second Tuesday of each month, 7:30PM, in the Calvary Church social hall, corner of Beech and Allegheny (use the Beech Avenue entrance).. The meeting is usually over by 9. It's also a great way for newer folks to meet your neighbors and get involved! We hope to see you on Tuesday evening!

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Since its founding in 1962, the Allegheny West Civic Council has seen plenty of challenges. The simple fact is that our tiny neighborhood is geographically located right at the heart of the region. Of course this means that we all live and work in an exciting, vibrant, and incredibly convenient spot. But it also means that there are plenty of other folks who can think of something “better” to do with such prime real estate. Where we see comfortable homes and small businesses, they see “opportunity” and “easy money.”

Looking back, the decade of the 1980s was our most dramatic period of growth. We entered it as a fledgling, and we began to explore both community planning and political advocacy, as well as our own large-scale brick-and-mortar developments.

But that same decade was by far our most challenging because all of that growth meant confronting those who had other plans for the place we now call home. Obsolete zoning classifications offered little or no protection from often horrendous incompatible uses. And none of our historic buildings were protected in any way against insensitive alteration or even demolition. Above all, there was a prevailing perception that because this was “just the Northside,” it was understood that we should be happy with whatever the rest of the world was willing to toss our way.

When we arduously managed to have the City down-zone all of Allegheny West, it established a land-use plan that encouraged residents and neighborhood-serving businesses to thrive in close but comfortable proximity. And those who wanted to build giant warehouses, box stores, high-rise apartment towers, nightclubs, and factories, and open-air industrial storage lots (all real proposals right in our neighborhood!) slowly began to look elsewhere.

When we became aggressive toward absentee slumlords who managed to consistently escape enforcement of City occupancy and safety standards, the availability of squalid and dangerous apartments began to dry up. And residents stopped dying in firetrap rooming houses (Yes,also real.)

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When we said that the Community College campus plan to expand all the way to Western Avenue was unacceptable—and backed that with years of successful litigation up and down the court systems—we literally saved half of the neighborhood. And CCAC would go on to work amicably with AWCC in developing a jointly beneficial plan that permanently focuses the college on Ridge Avenue and Monument Hill.

When we overcame bitter dissent in establishing the Allegheny West City Historic District, the demolitions that had claimed at least one building a year finally came to a screeching halt. And those whose ideas for “development plans” were actually asphalt parking lots had to find someplace else to destroy.

The real estate speculators who had been counting on “buy low, sell high” were furious. Those who saw an opportunity to exploit this place and the people who called it home were angry. Those who had bought into “it’s just the Northside and that’s all it’ll ever be” refused to accept what was happening right before their eyes.

By 1990, we had survived a decade of acrimony by being tough and fighting for what we knew to be important. We achieved every milestone because we were willing to confront those who couldn’t see past their own selfish interests. And we had placed Allegheny West on a firm path that it has been following to this day.

Because of where this piece of geography sits, there will never be a time when we don’t need to be vigilant. But the hard work has been done by a great many good neighbors who have gone before us.

- John DeSantis, AWCC President

Allegheny Commons Initiative Presentation Save the Date!

The Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy is excited to work alongside our partners at the City of Pittsburgh, Allegheny Commons Initiative, Northside Leadership Conference and the greater community to restore Allegheny Commons Park. Please join your fellow park users on **March 8th from 6–7:30 PM** for our final presentation of the action plan we need for implementing the master plan. The professional team is led by LaQuatra Bonci Associates, and includes eDesign Dynamics, Cleo Consulting, and Fourth Economy.

Please remember to register for the free event.

(<https://www.showclix.com/event/allegheny-commons-map-final-presentation>) Looking forward to seeing you there!

CoLab18 Open House

CoLab 18 is a 4,600 square foot space that will serve as the epicenter for creativity, collaboration and technology. This space was created for Northside residents, businesses and community partners, and it includes conference rooms, a classroom space and state-of-the art technology. Please RSVP at www.colab18opening.com.

Please note: There’s on-street parking around Nova Place (formerly Allegheny Center Mall). If you choose to park in the garage, enter through Gate #4. Once you enter Gate #4, you will take the CENTRAL elevator bank to the PLAZA and make a left upon exiting. We will not reimburse for parking.

Wrap Up of the 36th Annual Christmas Tour

Was it smell of fresh pine from the recently hung swags in the neighborhood? Was it the bright blue skies contrasting with the chill in the air? Was it the sound of Dr. Dan's leaf blower wiping out every trace of fall on Beech Ave? It was that and so much more which marked the coming of the 36th Annual Christmas Tour. This year, almost 1,600 people ushered in their Christmas season by walking through the lovingly decorated homes of Allegheny West. The weather was perfect, the glitches were few, and—if I dare say—by all accounts, the tour was a great success. As my first time managing the Christmas tour, I cannot thank everyone who stepped in and stepped up to make daunting tasks seem easy and the unintentionally overlooked details, a non-issue. It is truly because of you that the tour was such a success.

A very special thank you goes to the homeowners. I received a lot of feedback a how impressed the guests were with the homes this year. One guest, who has taken the tour over 15 times, actually took the time to email me directly to share that she thought 2017 was the best selection of homes she has visited to date. No doubt this guest and others came to this conclusion in no small way by the decorations at the Flashlight Factory. The re-purposing of flashlight pieces and parts was beyond ingenious, and such a tremendous addition to the tour. Congratulations to John Engle and Tom Cihil on tackling the after party. A lot of people needed some extra sleep on Sunday, so it was a great success! I would be completely remiss if I didn't thank Tony and Diane Caruso. You both seem to always be there to jump in whenever needed and for whatever needs done. The list of how you both helped on this tour is too long to write, but beyond appreciated. Thank you.

I have to share that this tour was not without its challenges. It was the first time a service dog was on the tour. The homeowners were made aware in advance and all agreed they would accommodate. However, none of us expected a Great Dane! I should have taken pictures.

There are so many stories from the tour. Two are from the 'Great Beech Ave Clean Up of 2017'. I'll never forget Dr. Dan leaping through Beech Ave. (with the greatest of ease), wielding his leaf blower like a warrior's sword going into battle. Those leaves didn't have a chance! OK, I'm using some dramatic license, but I'll never be able to convince my mind's eye from seeing a cape flowing behind him as he valiantly traveled up and down Beech Ave! My fondest

memory is also from that day (not just because of Dr. Dan). Many saw Gloria Raymond and myself chipping away and cursing at the leaves stuck to the street. Trying to remove them was a formidable task. One by one, people stopped their cars, opened their front doors and came out with shovels, spades and whatever was needed to get the street cleaned and we did. The spirit of Christmas and the spirit of this neighborhood shined brightly that day. It will be forever etched in my memory as to what made this tour and what makes this neighborhood so special.

I hope you all enjoyed the holidays and I wish the blessings of the season to carry through for you in 2018.

Please contact me with any feedback for how to improve the tour for 2018. (carolgomrick@gmail.com)

—Carol Gomrick

Thank
You

2018 Wine Tour and Tasting : *A Toast to the Central Coast*

You may be thinking, “Wait, didn’t I just finish an article about the Christmas tour?” Well, as hard as it is to believe, now is the time to start preparing again for our annual tour and tasting event. This year, we’ll feature California wines, specifically from the Central Coast of California. I lived in San Luis Obispo and is in ‘SLO’ where I was first introduced to these amazing wines and this beautiful region.

Paso Robles, north of San Luis Obispo, is an incredible wine region. The award-winning wines and my fond memories are minor reasons why I’m focusing on this region. The primary reason is the pioneer (Godfather) of Paso wines—Gary Eberle—is a Penn State graduate and Pittsburgh native. Gary co-founded the appellation in Paso and introduced Syrah grape vines into the US, using cuttings he brought over from France. At one point, his vineyard was the only source of US Syrah. His amazing story doesn’t stop there. I’ve included addresses to some articles below. (Or, get the electronic version of the Gazette at our website—allegHENYwest.org—and click on the links.) I just had to share his story, and the indelible connection of Pittsburgh to CA wines.

I’ve been to the Eberle Winery many times, but never met Gary until I went to one of his events in Pittsburgh. He is incredibly personable, and is fascinating to talk with, as he imparts his vast knowledge about what it takes to get the grape to the glass. Listening to Gary talk through the science behind wine-making inspired me to put a twist on the wine tour this year. I’m introducing showcase event that I’m calling “Ground to Glass.” This will be an exclusive event at Holmes Hall, pouring only higher-end Eberle wines. The ticket will also include a lovely food pairing and a host talking with the guests on how the particular wines they’re drinking got from the ground to their glass. Eberle is also providing wine to be served at one of the homes on the tour. Gary will not be able to come to the event, but I’m working with him to ensure guests have a memorable evening.

Details about this year’s tour:

- Price and dates: \$75 pp. / Friday night 6/22 5–9 PM and Saturday 6/23 1–5PM and 5–9 PM.
- Showcase Event at Holmes Hall: \$150 (max 50 tickets available) / Saturday 6/23 7–9 PM.
- Note that the dates are later in the month than normal due to competing events in Pgh and other calendar conflicts, but good for the gardens to thrive!

How can you help? Please email me directly (carolgomrick@gmail.com) if you are interested in any of the following:

- **Homes:** If you would like your home on the tour (focus on the garden). A total of 6 properties needed. The home must have a garden space.
- **Advertising and Social Media:** Work with local media outlets, promote through social media and help secure program advertisers.
- **Food Committee:** Work with friends to confirm the pairing menu and prep food for the event.
- **Tour Guide Lead:** Make sure the docents know the route, their shifts and neighborhood history to lead the guests.
- **Volunteers Lead:** Oversight of tour volunteers (help for the homeowners). We will need additional volunteers for the Showcase event.
- **After Party Planners:** Always one of the most fun volunteer opportunities!

So many of you made last year exceptional, I hope you’ll consider pitching in again this year. If you haven’t volunteered for a tour before, this is a really great opportunity to join the fun. Looking forward to getting this going and working with you!

Don’t forget to read more about the ‘Godfather of Paso’, Gary Eberle. www.eberlewinery.com

http://napavalleyregister.com/gary-eberle-paso-robles-pioneer/article_312f76ea-958a-5bc1-a6bf-be57a817dfab.html

Alleys, Axles & Ales

This year's Alleys, Axles & Ales tour will be held on **September 29th**. Tom Barbush and Cecile Canales will be leading this year's tour. They're looking for garages and cars to feature, as well as volunteers to help with the tour. Please contact Cecile (ccanales13@icloud.com) if you're willing to help with the tour!

Neighbor-to-Neighbor

All of our AW residents are cognizant of observing the Design Guidelines for the Allegheny West Historic District, enforced by the City's Historic Review Commission. Perhaps what I am going to share with you might not be anything new, but it still strikes me how closely some people adhere to these guidelines. Here are the examples.:

- My new neighbor, Mr. Greg Kobulnicky, used the very old historically authentic mortars, a special order, of course, in restoration of his apartment building in the back of his residence. In fact, his mason even conferred with me (behind Greg's back), saying, "This old stuff wasn't as strong as new one."
- Our AWCC Housing and Planning Committee Chair, Mr. Timothy Zinn, brought new life into my half-moon shaped, 147 year-old, third-floor attic window by using the Abatron products and also old glazing for window glass. Probably no one would notice if replaced by a window company's product because of the location. Tim said pointing the restored window, "Here this window will live for another 100 years."

Both of them carry out their work with scrupulous attention.

- Submitted by Ritsu Shimizu

AWCC Calendar

Tuesday, February 13 @ 4:30 P.M.

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner → Calvary Church: 971 Beech

Tuesday, February 13 @ 7:30 P.M.

General Membership → Calvary Church: 971 Beech

Tuesday, February 20 @ 7:30 P.M.

Housing & Planning Committee → Office: 806 Western

Tuesday, February 27 @ 7:30 P.M.

Executive Committee → AWCC Office: 806 Western

AW Bowling every Wednesday at the Elks Lodge @ 7:30 P.M.

Young Neighbor Hits the Airwaves

Tune in to the Saturday Light Brigade on 88.3 FM, on February 24th from 10:00 - 10:30 AM to hear your neighbor, Amelia Beer, playing the violin. Eight-year-old Amelia will be featured with two fellow Northside students from the Givi School of Music, alongside their teacher. The girls will be playing fiddle music, and will be interviewed about their music instruction. The broadcast can also be downloaded at <https://slbradio.org/>. (Disclaimer: This is, in fact, shameless promotion of the editor's daughter, but several neighbors have asked where they can hear her play, so I figured I'd share!)

The Allegheny West Gazette

Editor: Karen Haller Beer

The monthly newsletter of the Allegheny West Civic Council. Letters, submissions, advertising and other notices by the first of the month to: gazette@alleghenywest.org. Submission does not guarantee publication.



A publication of the Allegheny West Civic Council 806 Western Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15233
www.alleghenywest.org ~ info@alleghenywest.org ~ (412) 323 - 8884

DRAFT Agenda: AWCC Membership Meeting

Tuesday, February 13 @ 7:30 P.M.

Calvary United Methodist Church, 971 Beech Ave

- **Visitors:** Councilwoman Harris' office
Mayor Peduto's office
Pittsburgh Police Zone 1
Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy - Allegheny Commons
- New neighbors & guests
- Reading of last month's minutes
- **Treasurer's report**
- **Committee Reports**

Membership:

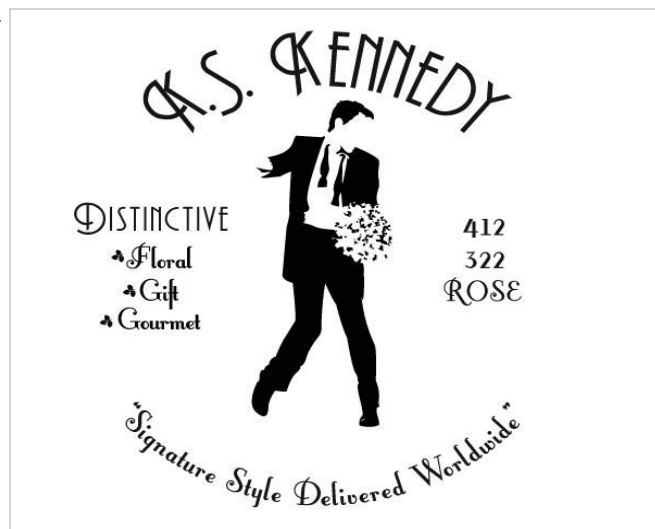
- Bowling at the Elks
- Volunteers for the Memorial Day Picnic

Ways & Means:

- 2018 Upcoming Tour Dates
- 2018 Wine & Garden Tour (June 22 and 23)
- Update on five-year Calvary Contract

Friends of Allegheny West: Green Space**Property****Housing & Planning:****Updates:**

- Parking and traffic issues, Galveston
- North Avenue lighting
- Western Avenue revitalization
- Light of Life Ridge Avenue project
- Allegheny Commons Update of 2002 Master Plan
- Expansion of Historic District (LRC report)
- Historic District enforcement issues – old cases
- ZBA Appeal, new City zoning: Medical Marijuana Dispensary
- Air BnB issues/impacts on AW
- Comprehensive guidelines for new construction on vacant sites
- Revised AW Film guidelines
- Railroad bridge replacements
- Allegheny Center Master Plan
- North Shore impacts
- **Nominating Committee – still need 2018 Membership chairperson**
- **Northside Leadership Conference**
- **Other business (Old & New)**
- **Adjournment**

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