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# ALLEGHENY WEST GAZETTE

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July 2017

## President's Message

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So what are you doing on Tuesday evening?\*

\* See suggestions below

In both July and August there will be no AWCC Membership Meeting on the second Tuesday of the month. Attendance always drops off because of vacations in these months, and everyone deserves a little break anyway. The monthly Membership Meetings will resume on Tuesday, September 12, and each second Tuesday in the month that follow.

During this summer hiatus, the Civic Council's committees will continue to meet on their regularly scheduled days. And during this time, if you have an issue that requires action please feel free to let us know by emailing [president@alleghenywest.org](mailto:president@alleghenywest.org).

Now back to that question about Tuesday evening...

**\*If you're in town on the second Tuesday of July or August and find yourself longing for the excitement, friendly faces, fun, and refreshments of your regularly scheduled Civic Council meeting, don't despair. Here are a few suggestions to get you through the night:**

1. Grab a cool refreshing beverage and sit out on the front steps. In no time at all, you'll have an impromptu block party underway.
2. Stroll to the Allegheny Commons for an iceball from Gus & Yia Yia's. Have a seat on a park bench, and in no time at all you'll have an impromptu picnic underway.
3. Head to the corner of Western and Galveston and order a cool refreshing beverage while seated at an outdoor café table. In no time at all,...
4. Call a friend who has the misfortune of not living in Allegheny West. Invite them to visit you. Then do #1, #2, or #3. Try really hard to be kind and understanding when they keep telling you that there's nothing like this where they live.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Summer of 1962 was cause for ongoing concern in the community that would one day be called "Allegheny West." The almost daily front page headlines touting the "urban redevelopment" of the entire lower North Side brought new – and dismaying – details with every edition. The familiar amenities and landmarks that this generation had known all their lives were being added to the growing list of sites that would "make way for the new North Side." *(Continued on next page.)*

(Continued from front.)

Far beyond the initial pronouncements of some new shopping, office, and housing structures, as the specifics began to arrive it was clear that the entire of Allegheny’s central business district was to be leveled. More than 300 buildings in total would be razed. The project was so Herculean that at the outset it was viewed as pie-in-the-sky.

But ridicule turned to shock as the “take zone” expanded to include churches, schools, theaters, houses, stores, hotels, the railroad station, Boggs & Buhl Department Store, and the revered Allegheny Market House. All of these were fully functioning every day destinations, where thousands of residents lived, worked, played, and did their weekly shopping.

But an equally horrific scourge had also arrived: real estate speculators. In the free-for-all of redevelopment, outside money began to pour in, acquiring whatever was available in the hope of being bought out at an inflated price by government acquisition. Across the lower North Side – and especially in the neighborhoods abutting the Commons – properties were being snapped up by owners who had no interest in maintaining or improving. Some in fact found it more cost effective to empty and board a building rather than deal with day-to-day operation. And they competed for properties against those who would locate their business or residence there. Prices were going up, and both the appearance and the viability of neighborhoods was going down.

Of course, for neighboring owners who lived or operated businesses in the vicinity this was disastrous. Everyone could only guess at which rumors were or weren’t true, and worry about whether the next sale would hit even closer to home. Along Ridge Avenue, the acquisitions by Allegheny County for a proposed college had begun. Had the neighbors been privy to the original site plans, they’d have had even more to be concerned about: an extended build-out across 20 years that would take the campus north to Western Avenue and east and west to Brighton Road and Allegheny Avenue.

On the 800 block of Brighton Road and the 900 block of North Lincoln Avenue, entire block faces of houses had already fallen to the wrecking ball – intended for “future developments” that were never to come.

Just as the neighborhood was beginning to organize itself, the immensity of the task actually was expanding dramatically. And while some were resigned to their fate, others were convinced that by banding together there was a different outcome available – although imagining what that outcome might be was becoming increasingly difficult.

- John DeSantis, AWCC President

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# PechaKucha Night Pittsburgh Vol 27

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Co-organized by Greg Coll with AIGA Pittsburgh, AIA Pittsburgh and Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council

PechaKucha Nights are informal, fun gatherings held in more than 900 cities worldwide, where creative people share their ideas, works and thoughts in a 20x20 format; a presentation style with 20 images that advance automatically for 20 seconds each, as the presenter talks along with the images.

Among the 11 local presenters will be Allegheny West's own Brian O'Neill, author of the 2009 book "The Paris of Appalachia: Pittsburgh in the 21st Century." Brian will talk about the inadvertent plug his book just got from Donald Trump and what has changed about the city since the book was written.

Arrive early for dinner or drinks at Casellua. Enjoy great food, wine, and artfully curated cheese plates.

Shop and browse City of Asylum Books, an independent bookstore specializing in works in translation and world literature.

If you have questions about PechaKucha Night or how to pronounce "PechaKucha", please contact Greg Coll at [gregcollcreative@gmail.com](mailto:gregcollcreative@gmail.com). We look forward to packing the house!

PechaKucha Night Pittsburgh Vol 27

Tuesday, July 18 at 7 PM - 9:30 PM

[City of Asylum](#), 40 W. North Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15212

Doors open at 5 P.M. / PechaKucha Presentations start at 7 P.M.

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## Alleys, Axles, & Ales Tour: Volunteers Needed

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We're seeking neighbors who are willing to open their homes (and garages) for the Alleys, Axles, and Ales tour. The target date is September 23. We also need volunteers who are willing to work in preparing and executing the tour. Please contact Carol Gomrick at [carolgomrick@gmail.com](mailto:carolgomrick@gmail.com) if you are able to help.

### AWCC Calendar

**Tuesday, July 18 @ 7:30 P.M.**

Housing & Planning Committee → Office: 806 Western

**Tuesday, July 25, @ 7:30 P.M.**

Executive Committee → AWCC Office: 806 Western

See neighborhood happenings in the e-newsletter and at [www.alleghenywest.org](http://www.alleghenywest.org).

# 2017 2nd Annual 4th of July Rib Cookoff

We'd like to thank all the participants in this year's Rib Cookoff. Once again their efforts made this annual picnic a great success and one of the best foodie events in town!

This year's participants included Tom Barbush, John Burton, Clayton Harris, Scott Mosser, John Tingue, Mariana Whitmer, and Tony Caruso.

While all the ribs were fantastic, bragging rights go to Scott Mosser for 2017. Scott will be holding onto the trophy for 12 months but will bring it back for 2018's winner! If you have a great recipe that you'd like to enter next year, please remember that the neighborhood will provide the ribs! What have you got to lose?

**Reminders:** Street Sweeping July 10 & 11. Please be sure to move your car!

Bocce happens at 6:30 on Wednesday evenings throughout the summer, at the Western Avenue Bocce court (across from the Allegheny Sandwich Shop).

Summer office hours: M/F 12:00 - 3:00. **NOTE:** There are no more T/H office hours.

## 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](mailto:gazette@alleghenywest.org). Submission does not guarantee publication.

### A publication of the Allegheny West Civic Council

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