
ALLEGHENY WEST GAZETTE

May 2019

President's Message

Spring is a wonderful time in Allegheny West, with the bright greens and colorful blooms popping up everywhere. It's also a time for renewal, which fits perfectly with May as National Preservation Month. The Presidential Proclamation of May 1973 establishing National Preservation Week read in part:

“As the pace of change accelerates in the world around us, Americans more than ever need a lively awareness of our roots and origins in the past on which to base our sense of identity in the present and our directions for the future.”

In 2005, the National Trust extended the celebration to the entire month of May and we here in Allegheny West have a number of ways to celebrate our historic past.

As is tradition, the Local Historic Review Committee (LHRC) will present Allegheny West Preservation awards at the membership meeting on Tuesday, May 14th. The LHRC recognizes neighborhood property owners who have “rehabilitated, preserved, and continued use of old buildings consistent with the intent of the Secretary of the Interior's ‘Standard for Rehabilitation’.”

On Friday, May 17th, 5:00 P.M. – 8:00 P.M., Allegheny West Civic Council is hosting an opening reception for the Allegheny West Historic Timeline Exhibition, in collaboration with Community College of Allegheny County. The exhibition will be at the Gallery at West Hall at CCAC and will run through June 9th. Curators Doris Short and Greg Coll describe it as a “celebration of over five decades of rebuilding the smallest neighborhood in Pittsburgh.” The exhibition is free and open to the public.

Those of us fortunate enough to live in Allegheny West owe a debt of gratitude to the early pioneers who built the homes in the neighborhood and the more recent pioneers with the foresight to stop the destruction and focus on preserving and renewing what was here. I recently received an email from John Canning, noted historian and former AW resident, who saw the blooms on the beautiful pink dogwood in the 800 block of Western Ave and forwarded an article he wrote about one of those later pioneers, Jane Johnson. (That article is reprinted with John's permission in this issue of the Gazette.) It serves as a reminder of the beauty of spring and renewal and the power of an individual to make a lasting impact.

There is a lot of Allegheny West business on the agenda for the May membership meeting and I hope you'll make an effort to attend, hear about these important subjects and vote on motions offered at the meeting. Like you'll be hearing at every turn from now until November 2020, Make Your Voice Heard: Vote! (Your membership dues should be paid to Cathy Serventi, AWCC Treasurer, to be eligible to vote. Contact her at Treasurer@alleghenywest.org with any questions.)

-Ann Gilligan, AWCC President

Jane's Tree



While wandering through the Northside during this crazy spring of 2014, it was interesting to see how the sporadic weather shifts affected when trees and bulbs would transform the landscape from winter's last gray days to scenes of green leaves and pastel blossoms. The one tree, that is a sure sign of springtime is the magnificent pink dogwood in the midst of the 800 block of Western Avenue. I know it as "Jane's Tree," and it speaks to me of community revitalization. Every year Jane's tree is more beautiful than ever. It certainly was this year, and it made me think how fortunate it was for that skinny sapling that it came into the hands of Jane Johnson in the summer of 1963. That Dogwood and Jane Johnson are both symbols of survivors in an urban setting that, for many years, was not too friendly to trees at all, nor to urbanists that were committed to city living.

Jane Ford Johnson, presently a resident of the Allegheny apartment complex on the west side of Allegheny Center, has a terrific story to tell about saving trees, helping kids, raising a family, and preserving a congregation and a community. Jane was a tree tender long before it was fashionable. She was a community activist when many of her neighbors in the 1960s were heading out of town. She and a few compatriots managed to hold the Calvary Methodist Church together when other Northside congregations were closing up shop.

A few weeks ago I enjoyed an enlightening and long overdue visit with Jane. She described her many residences in different sections of the Northside. In her lifetime Jane has lived in Brighton Heights, Calbride, Central Northside, and Manchester. When Jane was a youngster, her family lived in the community we now call Perry Hilltop, where she played in and about the windowless remnant of Brashear's original observatory.

In 1936, one of the lowest points of the Great Depression, Jane graduated from Allegheny High School and attended the Pittsburgh Academy, where she met and, shortly thereafter, married Ross Johnson. By the early 1950s, Jane, Ross, and their growing family settled in the community that is now called Allegheny West. With urban redevelopment plans to level large sections of the Northside, Jane played a pivotal role in organizing the community—property owners and tenants alike—to block such stupid initiatives. Jane has always been an activist—a doer.

(Continued on next page.)

I first met Jane in the late 1960s when she was overseeing the hanging of a memorial lamp to honor Cora Allison, a great soul of that congregation, in the altar area of Calvary Methodist church. A year or so later, Jane and I were neighbors and coworkers in the process of community restoration. Jane was the Jane Jacobs of Allegheny West.

Looking back on those decades in Allegheny West, I recall Jane as the tree tender, the keeper of the neighborhood story, the advocate for historic preservation, and the stalwart of a congregation who kept singing as well as flipping pancakes and mashing potatoes. And so, every Spring, when that Dogwood at 833 Western is in full bloom, it is, to me, a wonderful reminder of a great Northside champion.

- John Canning

Get Ready for 2019 Tour and Tasting, featuring the Northside!

Tickets are on sale now for 2019 Tour and Tasting, and can be purchased at www.alleghenywest.org.

This year is shaping up to be one of the most unique and fun tours ever! The tour committee is thrilled to announce that we've been able to partner with local Northside businesses to bring an added taste to the plate this year. The tour is going to be a focus on the tastes of the Northside paired with exceptional wines. Below is a list of contributing businesses. They are supporting the tour, please make sure you support them!

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bier's Pub ● Brugge on North ● Bistro-to-Go | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dreadnought Wines ● Lola Bistro ● Refucilo Winery |
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The tour is Friday June 21st and Saturday June 22nd. We still need one more home to be on the tour. If you are interested in being on the tour, please contact carolgomrick@gmail.com. We will be announcing a sign-up for tour guides, runners and other volunteer opportunities closer to the tour. The Burton's have graciously opened their home again for the after party. Thanks John and Trish!

For all of you savvy social media users, please spread the word via twitter #tourandtasting! Please spread the word about this incredible event! CHEERS!

- Carol Gomrick

Allegheny West Historic Timeline Exhibition

Allegheny West Civic Council is pleased to present the Allegheny West Historic Timeline Exhibition, in collaboration with Community College of Allegheny County. Celebrating over five decades of rebuilding the smallest neighborhood in Pittsburgh.

The opening reception will take place on Friday, May 17, 2019, from 5:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. at the CCAC Gallery at West Hall, on the Allegheny Campus: 826 Ridge Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15233. This event is free and open to the public. Light refreshments will be served, and there will be an after-party at Bier's Pub.

The Allegheny West Historic Timeline Exhibition will be a celebration of the Allegheny West Civic Council's five decades, focusing on struggles and success stories of a small neighborhood that progressed through passionate residents and finding solutions for future improvements. The exhibition will also show how this neighborhood came to be. Learn about the people that have called – and do call – its tree-lined streets and historic houses “home.” The graphic timeline and videos will inform and entertain to help gain a stronger understanding by documenting and archiving significant events and serve as an educational tool for generations to come. The exhibition will be on display from May 17 to June 9, Monday-Friday, 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M and Saturdays 9:00 A.M to noon.

- Doris Short & Greg Coll

Host Families Needed

International Cultural Exchange Services is a non-profit organization that is seeking volunteers to become host families in and around the Pittsburgh area for international students this upcoming academic year! The students come from all over Europe, Asia and South America and would attend the high school in your area. Student will arrive mid-August and have their own spending money, insurance, great English skills and hands-on local support. All family dynamics are welcome and you do not need to have children to host! Make a student's dream come true! For more information, please contact Yazmin Peña at ypena@icesusa.org or visit our website at www.icesusa.org.

REMINDER: It's street sweeping season: Remember to move your cars the second Mon/Tue of the month!

2019 Allegheny West Preservation Awards

The Allegheny West Civic Council along with The Allegheny West Local Review Committee announce the 11th Annual Allegheny West Preservation Awards. These awards are presented to property owners in Allegheny West who have completed projects over the past year, retaining or restoring appropriate elements of historic character, and adhering to the neighborhood guidelines. The success of these projects was attained by doing research, creating well thought-out plans, following neighborhood historic guidelines, and working with the neighborhood LRC and the City HRC to seek advice on the application process and guidelines. The 2019 award recipients are:

- **828 West North Avenue, owner, Q Development**---This structure was built in 1902 as a warp and weavers supply business with carpet cleaning on the second floor. In 1925 it became the Katsafanas Coffee Co. It was purchased by Q Development in 2016 for their offices. The brick was cleaned. Parapets were restored. The 1925 limestone “Katsafanas Coffee Co.” sign on the main façade was restored. Limestone sills were gently cleaned. Windows were restored to match the existing. The one-story hand painted sign on the west façade was restored.
- **847 Western Avenue, owner, Keane George**—Keane and his architect, John Francona, worked with the LRC to select missing façade elements on this building, formerly a laundromat. After much discussion and on-site visits, the final selection of tiles was appropriate in color and material to reflect the existing.
- **The Visual Arts Center, owner, Community College of Allegheny County**

These three projects greatly add to the historic ambience of the neighborhood streets, contribute to the economic development of our neighborhood, and enhance the quality of life in Allegheny West. To celebrate Preservation Month, the awards will be presented at the this month’s membership meeting.

- Carole Malakoff

AWCC Calendar: May 2019

Tuesday, May 14 @ 7:30 p.m.

General Membership Meeting @ Calvary

Friday, May 17 @ 5:00 p.m.

Historic Timeline Exhibition Opening Reception @ CCAC

Tuesday, May 21 @ 7:30 p.m.

Housing & Planning Committee Meeting, @ AWCC Office (806 Western)

Monday, May 27 @ 4:00 p.m.

Memorial Day Block Party

Tuesday, May 28 @ 7:30 p.m.

Executive Committee Meeting, @AWCC Office (806 Western)

Historic Preservation Workshop

Historic tax credits and Keystone grants are vital tools in revitalizing older buildings, neighborhoods, and communities. These financial incentives encourage private investment, create jobs, and return abandoned or underutilized properties to active service. Successful projects balance the building's and neighborhood's historic character with the property's new or continued use by using the National Park Service's Standards for Rehabilitation as guidance.

How can architects, design professionals, communities, and property owners take advantage of these programs? Join Preservation Pittsburgh and the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office (PA SHPO) for this workshop to learn more about these important state and federal incentive programs.

Workshop will be held on Tuesday, May 21, from 1:00 P.M. - 4:00 P.M at the Rodef Shalom Synagogue.

Agenda includes:

- Understanding and applying the National Park Service's Standards for Rehabilitation to historic properties,
- Overview of the federal and state historic tax credit programs including program eligibility, the application & review process, and a best practices case study, and
- Introduction to Pennsylvania's Keystone Historic Preservation Grant program.

Registration is requested by Friday, May 17. For more information, please contact Bill Callahan, PA SHPO's Western Region Community Preservation Coordinator: wcallahan@pa.gov or 412-565-3575.

Draft Agenda: AWCC General Membership Meeting - Tuesday, April 9 @ 7:30 P.M.

7:30: Guests

7:50: LHRC 2019 Allegheny West Preservation Awards

8:15: April Membership Meeting Minutes

8:20: Treasurer's Report & Budget Approval

8:50: Housing and Planning

-Western Avenue Neighborhood Improvement District (WANID) update

- CCAC Workforce Development & Training Center plan review and Letter of Support request

9:30: Committee announcements

9:45: Adjournment



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