Improving Allen St. sounds good, but where’s the money?

The Allentown Association is pursuing ideas to improve Allen St. after receiving support at a public meeting in December, but financing remains a question mark.

Major improvements such as reconstructing the street and sewer lines will require government funding, not easy to obtain in this era of a state budget crisis and disappearing federal earmarks. Making Allen St. distinctive will require funds to be raised by the Allentown Association, said Adam Sokol, chairman of the Association’s Allen Street Community Committee.

“This is a very ambitious project for the Allentown Association. While the public sector at various levels can take on much of the responsibility, our direct involvement will mean the difference between a typical street and a unique destination,” he said, adding:

“Our next step is to develop a strategy for fund raising. The current political climate has made public financing somewhat more difficult to obtain. We have had some discussion about attempting to increase our grant writing, and that may turn out to be the best option to develop funding for street improvements.”

The Association hopes to apply for grants to pay for smaller infrastructure improvements to enhance the street’s esthetics, said Tim Riordan, Association president. These could include trees, other plantings, and public seating.

If grant writers can be found willing to help on a volunteer or reduced-fee basis, that would provide a big boost to the project, he added.

A public meeting on the future of Allen St. drew about 70 people to the Allendale Theater Dec. 7 and many offered comments.

Adam Sokol outlined a report, “Allen Street Reimagined,” which assessed the strengths and weaknesses of the thoroughfare and offered several proposals for improvements.

Strengths cited in the report include a variety of businesses, restaurants, galleries, bars and residences, varied architectural styles and convenient location.

Please turn to Page 3

Spring dinner is April 12 at Hamlin House

April is the month that Buffalo really comes out of the gray doldrums of winter. With the smell of hyacinths wafting through the air comes the time for our annual Spring Dinner on Tuesday, April 12. We are happy to be hosted by the terrific staff at the Hamlin House, the Italianate Mansion built 1865, now the home to the American Legion Troop I, at 432 Franklin St.

A scrumptious buffet dinner will be presented at 7 p.m., preceded by cocktails at 6. We again have door prizes and Chinese auction items generously donated by our Allentown merchants and longtime supporters. The event is open to members and non-members alike at a cost of $20 per person. Please RSVP on Facebook or by calling 881-1024 by April 1, no foolin'.
Medical tenant planned for Grace Manor’s ground floor

Ellicott Development Co. has a tentative agreement to lease the ground floor of the former Grace Manor Nursing Home on Symphony Circle to a “medical tenant” and is talking to other prospective tenants for the upper three stories, William Paladino said.

Bill Paladino, a principal in the development firm headed by his father, Carl, said he expected renovations to be underway by late spring with the possibility of occupancy by late summer.

“It’s a complex project, to split it up for three or four different tenants, requiring separate mechanical systems for each tenants,” he said.

The ground-floor medical tenant will not be a nursing home but will be involved in medical treatment, he added. “We did talk to a couple of prospects” for use of the building as a nursing home, but nothing materialized, he said. Also considered was residential use of the building, but that would have required extensive interior work, he added.

Ellicott Development bought the property for $1.6 million at auction Oct. 31, 2009. It was built in the 1950s as the Rosa Coplon Jewish Home & Infirmary. It underwent a $7-million renovation when it reopened in 1998 as the 167-bed Grace Manor which closed in 2009.

In another development in Allentown, Ellicott Development has acquired the Allentown Athleltix property consisting of two structures at 538 Delaware Ave. adjacent to Ellicott Development’s Bellasara apartments at Delaware Ave. and Allen St.. Bill Paladino said plans for the two structures will be disclosed in the future.
Allen St. is a vibrant, commercial strip that thrives on pedestrian traffic. It is important to have adequate seating which can be a tricky issue. Conventional seating provided to the pedestrian is often underused. Trash receptacles, along with other aspects of the newly redeveloped street, have potential to be unique. Designs can range from modern to classic. Like other features on the street they can be designed by local artists and students.—From the report “Allen Street Re-imagined”

Allen St. issues: parking and pedestrian vs. vehicle traffic

Continued from Page 1

The deficiencies: Allen St. is too narrow for its pedestrian and traffic load. Other problems include limited parking, poor condition of the street and sidewalks, and poor accommodation of bicyclists. Snow removal is difficult. Building vacancies at the Main St. end of Allen St.

The report was prepared for the Association by Sebastian Baliva, an intern from the University at Buffalo School of Architecture and Planning.

Balancing pedestrian and vehicular traffic poses a challenge. Most business people present said they need vehicular traffic and parking, and can’t rely on walks-ins from the neighborhood. John Shepherd of the Antique Man, an exception, said he would prefer one-way traffic to increase pedestrian traffic.

“We’re trying to make it accessible to cars and pedestrian-friendly. Pedestrians are important. They contribute to the business environment,” Adam Sokol said.

The study suggested the option of making Allen St. one way, without indicating which direction. But “the majority of businesses are opposed to a one-way street,” Adam Sokol said.

Allen St. now has 22 on-street parking spaces and the number could be increased, even if it remains a two-way street, he added. Bus stops take up what could be nine parking spaces. Diagonal (head-in) parking could be implemented with one-way traffic, but “city engineers are very much against it and I’m not sure one-way would improve parking,” he said.

A central parking lot is needed, said Peter Nicely, a lawyer in Allentown. “Join the Allentown Association and start a committee,” Adam Sokol suggested. Geoff Kelly of Trinity Place proposed forming a special parking district.

Jaime Moses of Days Park said, “Anything to create a lot of car traffic (on Days Park) would be a big negative,” adding that speeding cars have endangered children and hit the park’s fountain. A roundabout (traffic circle) at Allen and Wadsworth Sts.would be acceptable without a connection to Days Park and another roundabout could be built at the Allen-Main intersection, he added.

Tony Kramer, a retired city assessor and owner of an Allen St. boutique in the 1970s, said “This is the bohemian or creative part of town.” Cleanliness is of prime importance, with parking second, he said.

Councilman David Rivera of the Niagara District was applauded when he said an improvement plan is “doable” and community input is important.

Mark Supples, operator of Mother’s restaurant for 27 years, said, most Allentown improvements have been self-funded, adding, “Let’s do it ourselves.”
You can be repaid for camouflaging your outside gas meter

By Caitlin Crowell

March meanders out of doors
Til it stumbles on a crocus…

It seems hard to believe (as this is written), but under all these drifts of snow, the world is preparing for spring. Snowdrops and forsythia will bloom, then the crocus and daffodils and grape hyacinths, and before you know it, you’ll be putting in annuals. And if you find yourself fretting about what you’ll do this year to camouflage the gas meter, here’s your answer: contact the Allentown Association, and we’ll let you know how you can be repaid for your work.

Through an arrangement with National Fuel, if you live in an historic district (and that includes Allentown) you can be reimbursed for plantings or landscaping work you use to address gas meters that have been placed in front of your home. Remember that you may also ask the gas company to place your meter in an alternate location, not in front of your house. However, if there is already a meter there, the grant allows for $200 for a single home, and up to $500 for multiple-unit buildings.

For information, please refer to the Association website, at /www.allentown.org/PressReleases/NationalFuelMeterGuidelinesforHistoricPreservationDistricts.pdf.

Holly Holdaway received a reimbursement of about $250 to pay for this floral landscaping with trellis which she designed and created. Do you see the gas meter it conceals almost totally? This shows the Wadsworth St. side of her home, at the corner of St. John’s Place.

Caitlin Crowell is chairperson of the Allentown Association’s Gas Meters Committee.
First Friday Gallery Tours are March 4, April 1 and May 6

The First Friday Gallery Tour continues to gain momentum as one of the area’s hottest monthly cultural events, and will be held March 4, April 1 and May 6 from 6 to 9 p.m.

Regular participation by some 12 to 19 art galleries provides the stage for local art exhibitions, music, and more. Area restaurants report a definite increase in traffic on these nights, and several businesses have joined the galleries staying open into the early evening. Creative participation by the community is encouraged, and a free web page is offered for listing events. To include your event or special First Friday offer, simply sign up at www.firstfridaysallentown.com. All events listed must occur on the first Friday of the month. Planning meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month at 10:30 a.m. at Cafe 59, 59 Allen St. Positive contributions are welcome!

— Barbara Hart

Association’s finances are “stable,” treasurer reports

By Matthew Moscati

It is amazing to me how much the Allentown Association accomplishes when you realize that all the board members are volunteers without receipt of any compensation, the executive director is only compensated for 15 hours per week and that the Association does not receive any of the federal block grant money that it had existed upon for years. This could only be achievable through the volunteerism of the residents and business owners of the district who are committed to improving the quality of life in our community.

After two years as treasurer of the Association, allow me to begin with stating that the Association could not be where it is today financially without the hard work of our executive director, Andrew Eisenhardt, and the former Association treasurer, Anthony Armstrong.

When I began in late 2008, the accounting activity had been logically organized and data entry codified in such a matter that all financial transactions were easily tracked. In early 2009, the subcommittee structure of the organization was agreed upon and subsequently tied to all revenue and expense accounts of the Association. This allowed all credits and debits to be tied to the standing and ad hoc committees for greater accountability. This has led to subcommittee chairs completing more accurate budget requests and ultimately, an accurate micro and macro view of the financial state of the Association.

As you can see from the chart below, in 2009 the downturn in the economy did not miss the Association. Our revenues were 10 percent less than what was anticipated; however belt-tightening by all subcommittees, decreased our expenses by approximately 20 percent. The surplus was redistributed for our 2010 budget back into the subcommittees.

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<tr>
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<th>Revenues</th>
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<td>2010 Actual</td>
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In 2010, the Association has benefited from generous support for specific projects from the Oshei Foundation and from former City Councilman Curtis Haynes Jr. This added revenue has allowed for the “Faces of Allentown” art installation in vacant storefronts and the First Friday Gallery walk to proceed without significant financial burden to the Association.

The organization is in a stable financial situation. It could benefit from added grant revenue as over 60 percent of the expenses are attributable to improving the quality of life in Allentown through projects which have been funded through grant sources in other parts of the city and the county. The Association should also consider operating with a contribution to its reserve account annually which would lead to the reserve account interest becoming an actual revenue source. Lastly I would encourage everyone to continue to support the Association in anything and everything that they enjoy doing from simply renewing your membership to planting trees with us in the spring and fall, to participating in the Allen West Festival, the Secrets of Allentown tour or any of the many special events that occur throughout the year.
An Allentown Almanac

The 12th annual Allen West Festival, sponsored by the Allentown Association, and the 54th annual Allentown Art Festival, sponsored by the Allentown Village Society, will be June 11 and 12. Gretchen Grobe, a former Allentown Association president, is again chairperson for Allen West. She and Andrew Eisenhardt, Association executive director, are in the midst of preparing for the event. Vendors’ applications may be downloaded at the Association Website, www.allentown.org, or call the Association at 881-1024 and one will be sent to you. If you’d like be part of the Planning Committee, call the Association to receive a schedule of meetings and watch the Website for details.

It’s a boy AND a girl for Sarah and Jared Byer of College St. Twins Lincoln and Adelaide were born Jan. 11. Mom serves the Allentown Association’s membership chairperson.

Chief Brian Patterson of B District Police has named Officers Marcelino Vazquez and Deidra Carswell to serve as liaison with block clubs.

Thanks to Mark and Sandy Sieminski of Park St. for organizing a neighborhood display of luminaria, lights along sidewalks and in front of homes to brighten the holiday season.

LaVerne Peakes is resigning from the Allentown Association Board of Directors and is moving to Watertown. She served ably as co-chairperson of the Secrets of Allentown Tour of Homes in 2010 and the recent first annual appeal of the Association. The appeal raised $1,000 in contributions to help the Association carry out its mission to improve the community through beautification, historic preservation and business development. It’s not too late to help by sending a check to the Allentown Association at 14 Allen St., Buffalo 14202.

One Allentown” effort close to goal

By Andrew Eisenhardt

The Allentown Association is working to correct a 30-year-old anomaly that resulted in two Allentown Historic Districts, one with a National Register designation and one with a local preservation district designation.

The “One Allentown” effort will expand the National Register district to cover all of Allentown so that the national and local districts are identical — One Allentown. This will end confusion and will benefit property owners with the ability to access both federal and state incentives for historic preservation and restoration. The cost of the required property study to make this happen is $16,000.

We are thrilled to announce that through a major donation from the Preservation League of New York of $9,500 and many smaller donations ranging from $10 to $500, we have very nearly raised enough money to fully fund the largest initiative the Allentown Association has undertaken in well over a decade. With one final push we are confident that we will be able to pay the consultants Wachadlo and Associates to prepare the necessary application without having to tap our endowment.

Andrew Eisenhardt is executive director of the Allentown Association.

Defendant pleads guilty in July 5 College St. robbery

By Jonathan White

In the early morning hours of July 5, 2010, two young men returned from a late-night bike ride. As the men loaded their bicycles into their vehicle on College St. a man approached with a loaded shotgun, threatened and robbed them. Eric Iglesias was arrested after a neighborhood resident who witnessed the robbery called the police. After an investigation by the district attorney’s office, the defendant pleaded guilty of robbery in the first degree, a Class B violent felony. Sentencing is set for April 11, with an allowable penalty of 8 to 25 years in jail.

Continued on next page
A Good Neighbor Policy

By Pete Blue

Wasn’t it Robert Frost
Who said,
“Fences make good neighbors”? Just a poetic thought.

Someone else said,
Neighbors should mind
Their own business. Must be folklore.

However both Frost
And that someone
Are in agreement Even in the 21st century.

Neither said
One’s neighbor should
Decide on his neighbor’s fence. That’s just common sense.

When we the people
Allow neighbors to decide
Or run to bureaucracy
To decide for us

That’s called fascist
That’s called ignorant
That’s called mob rule
That’s called un-neighborly

Some find it so much easier
To run to an “official”
Than to talk with their neighbors. They might lose their power.

But let’s admit it,
It’s a faux idea anyway:
Communication prevents Disagreements.

Some neighbors are afraid.
They are law-abiding, Rigid, angry and sad.
Pray for them. Love thy neighbor!

Pete Blue is an Allentown poet

Defendant pleads guilty Continued from Page 6

In a statement to the witnesses, the district attorney indicated that the successful disposition of this case was made possible because the office had the full cooperation of the witnesses.

Allentown residents are reminded to be aware of your surroundings and of activity on your block. If you hear or see something out of the ordinary, call the police. Write down what you witness and provide as much detail as you can. If suspects are apprehended, follow the lead of our College St. neighbors and offer your full cooperation to the police and the district attorney. With alertness, diligence and follow-through, we can all make our neighborhoods safer.

Jonathan White of College St. is a former Allentown Association president.

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Gretchen Grobe
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Executive director: Andrew Eisenhardt
Mundo Images opens with photos, greeting cards

Mundo Images LLC, a retail, wholesale and gallery business featuring photography and greetings cards has moved to Allentown, opening at 500 Franklin St.

Ann Peterson, founder and owner, moved the business from Elmwood Ave. near Bird Ave. and is displaying her photographs, some matted and framed, as well as a selection of 500 greeting cards, some with Buffalo subjects, which she has designed and which are printed at Keller Bros. & Miller, an Allentown print shop. Her greeting cards are sold nationally on the Internet to both wholesale and retail customers. The greeting card are on wood-free paper, also free of acid and elemental chlorine, and are age resistant, recyclable and biodegradable.

Ann Peterson is a member of the Buffalo Society of Artists, and has exhibited in Spain and Costa Rica, as well as the Kenan Center, Castellani Art Museum, Anderson Gallery, Art Dialogue Gallery, Buffalo Arts Studio, Big Orbit Gallery, el Buen Amigo and the Neighborhood Collective in Western New York. In 2004 she was chosen as the Colby Artist at Buffalo Seminary. Many of her photographs recall her experiences living abroad and as a teacher and volunteer leader of trips abroad, including Europe, Costa Rica, Panama, and the Galapagos Islands. She returned to her native Buffalo in 2000.

“This space is a dream come true. I love what I’m doing. I love Buffalo, and I am so excited to have a space to create, work and exhibit,” Ann Peterson says. She expects to participate in First Friday gallery tours and to have an opening reception April 1.

Visit the Web site www.mundoimages.com, or call toll-free at 877 286-8636. Fax, 716-833-8636.

Business news

Duke’s Bohemian Grove offers food, drink, music

By Ed Castine

We are thrilled to welcome Duke’s Bohemian Grove Bar, aka DBGB, to Allentown’s eclectic collection of restaurants and bars. Located at 253 Allen St. in what was previously Staples, next to Spirits of Allentown, DBGB is a nice complement to the popular nightlife establishments at the west end of Allen Street.

The proprietors, Pat Duquin and Gabby Alfieri, are no strangers to the neighborhood. With close ties to neighboring business owners in Allentown, they plan a positive contribution to what makes the community great. Pat and Gabby come from years of successful restaurant experience in Buffalo restaurants including The Stuffed Mushroom, Hutch’s and several others. Their close influences, friends, and family members are like a Who’s Who of Buffalo restaurateurs.

The business plan is a solid mix of love for the neighborhood, good food and drink, and a music scene that could make the block even more famous than it already is. The nightlife crowd reflects and extends the momentum that was already taking hold at Staples as people have been rediscovering the cavernous space that’s been hidden in this classic corner building for years.

All signs are positive for this place to be a huge hit. That said, none of the establishments we love in Allentown would be here without the dedicated patronage of neighbors. Please be sure to stop in and visit. Enjoy some food and drinks, and be sure to check the musical acts that are billing to see some fresh surprises. Visit www.dukesbohemiangrovebar.com.

Ed Castine is chairman of the Allentown Association’s Business Relations Committee.

Lagniappe’s expands, new space and hours

Lagniappe’s restaurant, which successfully introduced New Orleans-style food to Allentown in 2007, has expanded, adding five times the space, with additional hours planned. Proprietor Chris Silverstein has opened Lagniappe’s French Quarter Café at 220 Allen St., now open Tuesdays through Saturday from 4 p.m. to 1 a.m., with live music and plans to serve lunch and weekend brunch soon. Phone 883-3663. Meanwhile the old premises, a short block away at 244 Allen St., will reopen as Lagniappe’s Lucky Dogs, serving light fare from 7 p.m. to 5 a.m. Phone 883-3647.
5,000 maps guide hockey visitors to Allentown restaurants

By Ed Castine

The World Junior Hockey Championship visited Buffalo this winter to meet the open arms of Allentown's restaurant community. Visitors from all over the world came to our city to see teams from ten countries from North America and Europe compete for international bragging rights and to showcase future NHL talent for crowds of cheering fans. With hundreds of thousands of tickets sold for the tournament of games held at HSBC Arena and Dwyer Arena at Niagara University, there was plenty of opportunity for local businesses to snag a piece of the action.

Initially, concerns were raised about the lack of preparedness of the Buffalo community to host this international event that brought a huge contingent of out-of-town visitors. Assemblyman Sam Hoyt issued a call to action. The local media was ringing the bell. Just weeks before the event, the plans made by the hosting organizations became known and it was clear that Allentown did not receive the attention it deserves. When that caught the ear of some of Allentown's restaurateurs, they decided to do something about it.

Bob DiPasquale of Cozumel Grill was the spark behind the initiative to encourage business owners to rally together and raise awareness for what Allentown has to offer. Coincidentally, a couple of weeks earlier, he had initiated a separate initiative along with Adam Goetz from Sample and Deborah Ellis from Artvoice to revisit something they had pulled together over ten years earlier in Allentown, a dining and nightlife guide. In years past the idea had enjoyed some success, but then lost steam and dwindled. Some renewed interest from local businesses and the reality of the hockey tournament visitors coming to town gave the impetus to make it happen again.

Artvoice was a driving force in coordinating the efforts and the content of the dining guide. Deb Ellis pulled out all the stops to make things happen in half the time it should have taken to get over a dozen restaurateurs (not the easiest people to coordinate) to agree on format, content, and all the particulars. It was no small feat.

Another Allentown resident and friend of the community, Betsy Frazer provided the artwork for the piece that has been featured as the back cover of several Artvoice issues. The Allentown Association funded a run of 5,000 copies, thanks to a sweet deal from The Copy Store, for distribution to out-of-town visitors on tournament shuttles, in local hotels, in the arenas and at the Buffalo airport.

Another shortcoming of the tournament plan was the free shuttle route that barely touched the edge of Allentown, despite the fact that several key hotels booked solid with hockey fans are located in the heart of Allentown. This was a case where the squeaky wheel got the grease. Several Allentown Association board members made calls and rallied support to get the routes changed to include Allentown. Board member Matt Moscati passed along evidence of our most avid supporter when he called to urge the changing of the routes and was told the routes would change, and we should please ask Bob DiPasquale to let up on the full court press. Awesome.

Reports from the restaurants in the neighborhood indicated that the end justified the means. Sales were up and the tournament and holiday season were merry.

Insurance agency plans move to 600 Delaware

Alliance Advisory Group, a life-insurance agency, plans to move from Amherst to 600 Delaware Ave., which it has purchased from Benderson Development. The firm expects to increase its employment from 35 to 50. It has three branch offices in the Rochester, Syracuse and Jamestown areas. The city Preservation Board authorized reconstruction of the façade with a new storefront and aluminum windows. The site was formerly occupied Rural-Metro Ambulance.

In other business news, Adam Sokol Architecture Practice PLLC (ASAP) will soon be opening a new office at 23 Allen St.
Calendar of Events

Allendale Theater, 203 Allen St. Theater of Youth presents “Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing” adapted from the book by Judy Blum, recommended for ages 6 and up. March 25, 7 p.m.; March 26, 27: April 2, 3, 2 p.m. “How I Became a Pirate,” based on the book by Melinda Long, recommended for ages 4 and up. May 13, 7 p.m.; May 14, 15, 21, 22, 2 p.m. For information and tickets, call 884-4400.

Allentown Association, 14 Allen St. 2. Board of Directors meets March 8, 8 p.m. Annual dinner, April 12, 7 p.m., preceded by cocktails at 6 p.m., Hamlin House, 432 Franklin St. For information call 881-1024 or email allentown@bfno.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. 15th annual juried members’ exhibition, traditional works, to March 11; modern works, March 18 to April 15, reception March 18, 7:30 to 9 p.m. Buffalo Society of Artists spring exhibition, April 22 to May 27, reception May 6, 7:30 to 9 p.m. For information call 885-2251.

Betty’s restaurant, 370 Virginia St. at College St., "Health and Art” mixed media paintings on paper by Evette Slaughter, through March 20; 6th annual Betty’s staff exhibit, March 21 to May 22; works by Patricia Schwimmer, May 23 to July 17.

Buffalo Big Print gallery, 78 Allen St. Headlines: Collaboration, photographs and poetry by Donna Fierle and Sonja Greckol, March 4 to 28. Project Tandem, photography from a 11,000-mile bicycle Morrigan McCarthy and Alan Winslo, April 1 through May. For information call 884-1777.

Bulk Trash Collection, Niagara District, May 15; Ellicott District, May 22.

College Street Gallery, 244 Allen St., Wednesday to Friday, 5 to 9 p.m. Saturday 4 to 8 p.m., Sunday by appointment. Works by 20 artists in coop. For information call 856-2839.

El Museo, 91 Allen St. Tuesday through Saturday, noon to 5 p.m. For information call 578-3782.

Gallery Tour, About 20 Allentown galleries will have extended evening hours, some with new exhibits and receptions, March 4, April 1, May 6.

Homeownership Center of Buffalo, 560 Delaware Ave., suite 101. Homeownership seminars (fee charged) and free orientation for prospective home buyers. For more information, www.homefrontbflo.org or call 856-2952.

Indigo gallery, 74 Allen St., Tuesday to Friday, noon to 5, Saturday, noon to 3. For information call 984-9572.


Kleinhans Music Hall, Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, classics series, Strauss, Berg, Debussy, with Laura Aiken, soprano, March 4, 10:30 a.m. and March 5, 8 p.m. Tchaikovsky, Mozart, Wojciech Kilar, Shostakovich, March 19, 8 p.m. and March 20, 2:30 p.m. Mozart, Holst, April 2, 8 p.m. and April 3, 2:30 p.m. Gershwin, Miguel del Aguila, Barber, Copland, with Jennifer Koh, violin, April 16, 8 p.m. and April 17, 2:30 p.m. Ravel, Tyberg, Grieg, with Christopher Riley, piano, April 30, 8 p.m., May 1, 2:30 p.m. Gould, Daron Hagen, Beethoven, May 13, 10:30 a.m., May 14, 8 p.m. and May 15, 2:30 p.m. Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus, April 10, 2:30 p.m. Pops series, Cherish The Ladies, March 26, 8 p.m. “Funny Girl” with Michele Ragusa, April 9, 8 p.m. ABBA, May 7, 8 p.m. Star Spangled Spectacular, May 27, 10:30 a.m. and May 28, 8 p.m. For tickets and information, call 885-5000. Buffalo Chamber Music Society series, Tokyo Quartet, March 8, p.m. Altenberg Trio, April 12, 8 p.m. Musicians from Marlboro, May 3, 8 p.m. For tickets call 462-4939 or visit www.bflochambermusic.org.

Nina Freudenheim Gallery, Hotel Lenox, 140 North St. Tuesday through Friday 10 to 5, Saturday by appointment. The Standard Model, new paintings by Peter Stephens, through March 30. New paintings on paper by Kyle William Butler, April 2 through May. For information call 882-5777.

Rust Belt Books, 202 Allen St. “Defiant Monkey” improvisation comedy, March 18, 8 p.m. Tangential, poetryreading, March 24, 7 p.m. and April 28, 7 p.m., April 1, back room book sale, $5 per bag. For information call 885-9535.

Sugar City, 19 Wadsworth St., exhibition and performance space, see www.buffalosugarcity.org.

Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Site (Wilcox Mansion), 641 Delaware Ave. Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday, Sunday, noon to 5 p.m. Lectures, free and open to the public, all at 5:30 p.m., Margaret Wooster, habitat planner, Riverkeepers; Stan Radon, state Environmental Conservation Department geologist, March 7; Paul Fuhrmann, ecologist for invasive species management, May 2. Mother-Daughter Tea and vintage fashion show, April 30 and May 1, 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Behind the Scenes Tours by the site curator, March 5, 1:30 p.m. And May 11, 5:30 p.m. For information call 884-0095 or see www.trsite.org.
Preservationists from across the U.S. to visit Allentown

By Richard Haynes

When the National Trust for Historic Preservation comes to town Oct. 19-22 for its annual conference, the Allentown Association and others will be ready to put our neighborhood in the spotlight.

Association members met Jan. 21 with representatives of the National Trust and Preservation Buffalo Niagara to hash out what we will do during the conference.

Preservation Buffalo Niagara, the lead local agency for the conference along with the Buffalo Niagara Convention & Visitors Bureau, had asked us to come up with a few proposals for tours. In the end, the National Trust accepted our preferred option: A tour of eight varied sites -- single family homes, an apartment building, offices, commercial space and the Allendale -- whose developers overcame significant challenges in their renovation. We would have people at each site -- whether the owner, architect, contractor or knowledgeable Association guides-- to show the property and discuss lessons learned.

We propose this as a one-time afternoon field session of about four hours. The cost to participants would be $45. A small portion of that fee would go to the Association. One busload -- about 50 people -- could be accommodated.

Christopher Brown and Jonathan White, two former Association presidents who remain active in promoting the neighborhood, have agreed to lead the tour.

We still have to finalize plans with the owners of the properties we would like to show off, and there will be a mock walk-through of the tour in May with National Trust staffers to make sure it works without glitches and is interesting and educational enough for the professional preservationists, developers and architects who are likely to take it.

In addition, we will team with the Allentown Village Society, sponsors of the annual Allentown Art Festival, to rent and man a booth in the Buffalo Niagara Convention Center, which is the central headquarters of the conference. The society will split the $500 cost of the booth with us and help provide volunteers to man it. In addition, both the Allentown Association and the Allentown Village Society will be passing out literature that promotes Allentown to the estimated 2,200 conference participants.

The Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Historic Site, 614 Delaware Ave. in Allentown, will also have a booth and will be conducting tours of the neighborhood for conference participants. We and the TR Site had hoped to collaborate on a bid for the Candlelight Tour, which is a highlight of every National Trust annual conference, but that honor is going to Lincoln Parkway.

We would welcome the assistance of any Association member who would like to help during the tour. The National Historic Preservation Awards dinner will be held in Mary Seaton Room in Kleinhans Music Hall during the conference. The National Trust would like to have tours of Kleinhans 1-2 hours before the dinner, so we need volunteers to help with the tours, greet people, etc. Please leave a message at 881-1024 if you’d like to help.

Dick Haynes, a former Allentown Association president, is Association secretary and committee chairman for the Preservation Conference.

Preservation Notes

The city is preparing to hire a contractor for preservation of the façade of the 19th-century Bosche Building, also known as the Summit Building, at 918-920 Main St. with a possible start on the project this spring.

The city Preservation Board has given permission for the demolition of an enclosed porch on the rear (south) side of a house at 176 North St. at Park St. The porch is to be replaced with an enclosed porch covered with clapboard, and 34 windows are to be replaced with double-hung wood windows.
As spring approaches, it’s time to start cleaning up, gardening and checking your home for any necessary repairs. Why not also check to see if you home is as safe and secure as possible. Here are some things to check:

Are all trees and shrubs pruned and well maintained to prevent anyone from hiding unseen?

Do any trees, downspouts or lattice work provide easy access to upper floors?

Can skylights be removed from the outside or easily broken?

Could any ladders or tools kept outside assist a potential intruder?

Do you hide a house key outside where it might easily be found?

Are outside doors and driveway well lighted?

Can your main entrance be seen from the street?

Are exterior doors at least one inch and three quarters thick and made of solid wood or reinforced with metal, and have heavy-duty dead bolts and reinforced door jams?

— Dinah Gamin, Kleinhans Community Association crime watch chairperson.