the Wilkinsburg Sun

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VOL. 12 NO. 1 September 2018 A Free Community Newsletter Bringing You Good News About Wilkinsburg

Artist Produces Sacred Spaces Tour for October



photo by Jason Cohn

Artist Jennifer Chenoweth is organizing a Sacred Spaces Tour on October 13 from 11 a.m.–6 p.m. to celebrate community and highlight Wilkinsburg's historic architecture and arts programming.

This family-friendly event will include a tour of historic churches, mosques, historic buildings and feature music and arts programming at each stop. Participants can visit each of the locations throughout the day.

Volunteer docents will answer questions and assist with navigating the tour. A free shuttle will travel between locations. Information will be available at each tour stop.

A reception will be held from 6–8 p.m. at the Pittsburgh Urban Christian School Auditorium located at 809 Center Street.

The Sacred Spaces Tour is part of Come Over, Come Eat, Come Play, Chenoweth's temporary public art project begun in 2017 in collaboration with the Wilkinsburg Arts Commission and the Wilkinsburg Community Development Corporation. This tour is a result of the Temporary Public Art and Placemaking Program by the Office of Public Art and Neighborhood Allies, funded by the Hillman Foundation and The Heinz Endowments.

"There are over 40 churches in Wilkinsburg, with 21 of them located in historic buildings. Within two square miles, there are hidden gems that include remarkable stained glass, pipe organs, carved wood, intricate stone detailing, and handcrafted details on every surface," said Chenoweth.

"These historic buildings shape the visual fabric of Wilkinsburg. At the same time, what is happening in Wilkinsburg is representative of changes we are seeing across the country. Change is happening in our communities, but we all need meaningful connection in order to thrive. Some of us find our path in a spiritual congregation, and some through the arts, but we continue to move forward together toward love in action, and against fear and despair."

The arts programming that will be presented as part of the Sacred Spaces Tour includes a one-act play about the story of Job, an installation by FlowerHouse, a steel drum performance, an African dance performance, a knitting group, a photography exhibit of historic churches; a poetry reading, pipe organ performance, a human dignity talk, and a musical about the story of Mayor Marita Garrett written and performed by preparatory students from Carnegie Mellon University.

Jennifer Chenoweth is an artist based in Austin, Texas. She works in whatever medium best fits the idea, from large steel sculpture to interactive technology, utilizing visual art as a tool for social change through inspiration and connection.

She recently gave a TEDMED talk about how she worked with people to visualize belonging to a place.

School Board Lowers Taxes for 2019

In July, the Wilkinsburg school board voted 8-1 to reduce taxes for 2019.

"With careful planning, many meetings and keeping a tight watch on the finances, Wilkinsburg has reduced taxes by 3.13 mills," said LaTonya Washington, school board president.

To understand the impact of the 3.13 millage reduction: If your home has a taxable value of $60,000, you would pay $60 per mill, thus saving $187.80 in the next school year. (One mill is equal to

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Block Party And Youth Talent Show

On Saturday, September 22, the Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf (WPSD) will host its annual Community Block Party from 1-4 p.m. The party is free and open to the public. It takes place on the WPSD campus at the corner of Walnut Street and Swissvale Avenue in Edgewood.

The family event includes games, a train ride for kids, a petting zoo, hearing screenings, a youth talent show, food, and more. This event is an opportunity for our local communities to come together and strengthen relationships.

Free vendor space is available to local businesses and organizations. For more information about the event or obtaining vendor space, contact Sarah Bartlebaugh at 412.244.4207 or sbartlebaugh@wpsd.org.

Youth interested in the talent show should email Alyia Paulding at apaulding@wpsd.org or call 412.244.3116. Participation is for kindergartners through 12th graders who reside in Swissvale, Edgewood, Wilkinsburg, Forest Hills, and Braddock Hills. Winners receive cash prizes.

Community Block Party!

Hilltop Block Watch invites the community to celebrate its 5th Annual Block Party.

Party goers may bring a dish to share to Eastridge Library and Community Center, 1900 Graham Blvd, 15235, Saturday, September 15, 12 p.m.–3 p.m.

For more information, call Linda Atkins at 412.880.8253.

Steelpan Orchestra for Youth

The Wilkinsburg Youth Steel Orchestra is launching this fall. This program of Barrels to Beethoven will provide music, culture, and arts education to children in Wilkinsburg and surrounding communities. developing young musicians' technical ability, music theory, and performance. Interested participants should contact barrelspgh@gmail.com or 412.573.1870.



Wake Up the Vote Wilkinsburg

Wake Up the Vote Wilkinsburg is working to bring the community together to increase voter turnout. Their goal is for Wilkinsburg to have the highest voter turnout in Allegheny County. Their premise is that communities that vote get more resources and politicians will listen to their issues. Wake Up the Vote Wilkinsburg is asking all residents to vote on November 6 and to encourage at least 10 other people to vote. They will be hosting two events in September: National Voter Registration Day, Tuesday, September 25, and a candidates forum, Friday, September 28. For further information contact Elaine at 412.727.1812 or at E_Harris_Fulton@yahoo.com.



Nine Mile Run Watershed Association invites all residents to their next stream sweep on October 6 to help make Nine Mile Run stream a cleaner, healthier place both for the animals who call it home and the people who love to visit. For more information and to register for the stream sweep go to ninemilerun.org/events.

the Wilkinsburg Sun

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Please submit all articles and calendar events to: *editor@wilkinsburgsun.com*, or by mail, P.O. Box 86064, Wilkinsburg, PA 15221. ***Please submit articles 5 weeks before publication and calendar events 3 weeks before publication.*** To advertise, e-mail *adsales@wilkinsburgsun.com*, or call 412.680.1381. The Sun accepts submitted articles provided they are related to Wilkinsburg and are civic-minded. *The Sun* reserves the right to withhold articles from print. Please note that *The Sun* does not publish political or opinion pieces.

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A Top Ten List of Property Codes

Last year, Wilkinsburg issued many citations for property code violations throughout the Borough. Many of these stem from the fact that homeowners may not be aware of all the property codes that apply to them. To help minimize the number of citations in the future, here are the top ten most common code violations.

Tall grass and weeds are not to exceed 12 inches in height.

Rubbish, debris and garbage should not accumulate on a property.

Trash needs to be stored properly, with garbage cans having proper lids.

Garbage cans must be placed out of sight or public view on non-collection days.

Waste for pick-up by refuse collection cannot be placed at the curb before 6 p.m. the night before pickup.

Address numbers must be at least two inches tall, to be placed or affixed so as to be visible from the street.

Exterior sidewalks, driveways, and walking surfaces shall be maintained and free from tripping hazards.

Rain downspouts cannot discharge water in a manner that creates a nuisance.

Exterior surfaces of a structure must be maintained to provide a proper weatherproof barrier from the elements.

Garages, fences, decks, and sheds need to be maintained in good condition.

5 Important Things for Wilkinsburg Business Owners to Know

1 A zoning permit is required for the use and occupancy of any structure or lot.

2 An occupancy permit is required before any structure can be re-occupied after being vacated by a previous tenant.

3 A building permit is required for any structural work on a lot or structure besides flooring and painting.

4 A sign permit is required for all signage on the exterior of a structure or building.

5 All businesses are required to sign a garbage contract with a private collection company. The operation of the business will determine the needs of the contract. Storage of refuse and garbage must be in appropriate container devices and picked up on a regular basis.

UPCOMING MEETINGS		
9/4 (Tues.)	6 P.M.	Planning Commission, 2nd floor
9/5 (Wed.)	7 P.M.	Council Work Session, 2nd floor
9/10 (Mon.)	4:30 P.M.	Budget and Finance Committee, 1st floor
9/10 (Mon.)	6 P.M.	Library Board, 2nd floor
9/12 (Wed.)	6 P.M.	Business Outreach and Jobs Development, 2nd floor
9/13 (Thurs.)	1 P.M.	Constituent Service & Special Events Comm., 2nd floor
9/13 (Thurs.)	6 P.M.	Wilkinsburg Arts Commission, 2nd floor
9/17 (Mon.)	9 A.M.	Public Safety Committee, 2nd floor
9/19 (Wed.)	7 P.M.	Council Legislative Session, 2nd floor
9/20 (Thurs.)	5:30 P.M.	Parks & Recreation Advisory Board, 1st floor
9/24 (Mon.)	5:30 P.M.	Joint Tax Committee, 2nd floor
9/26 (Wed.)	5:30 P.M.	Blight and Capital Planning Committee, 2nd floor
9/26 (Wed.)	6:30 P.M.	Shade Tree Advisory Committee, 1st floor
9/27 (Thurs.)	9 A.M.	Personnel, Policy & Procedure Committee, 1st floor



Meter Feeder App Comes to Town

Wilkinsburg has partnered with Pittsburgh-based startup MeterFeeder to make parking easier for everyone in the borough.

MeterFeeder lets you pay for parking in Wilkinsburg with your phone by simply:

- entering your license plate number and a debit/credit card.
- selecting whether you are parking on the street or in a parking lot.
- choosing the amount of time you need.
- tapping to pay.

If you have a parking ticket, you can pay it by scanning it into the app, or paying online on www.meterfeeder.com.

The system is already live in Wilkinsburg for any space that has an old coin-operated parking meter.

2018 Senior Fun Days

Many fun and interesting activities are planned for Wilkinsburg seniors.

The next Senior Fun Day is Tuesday, September 11, from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the Wilkinsburg Council Chambers at 605 Ross Avenue.

The next Senior Fun Day will be Tuesday, October 9, at the same time and place, and the last one of 2018 will fall on November 13.

Neighborhood Allies Grants WCDC $75,000 to Support Food Entrepreneurship

The WCDC is excited to announce a big step forward in revitalizing food entrepreneurship in Wilkinsburg's business district thanks to a $75,000 Catalytic Grant from Neighborhood Allies.

With this funding secured, the WCDC aims to establish a food cluster in Wilkinsburg, supporting existing and new food-based businesses throughout the business district. Specifically, the WCDC will use grant funds to support these five key initiatives:

- Host business workshops to help develop ideas for starting and expanding businesses.
- Consult with individual businesses, specifically focusing on accounting and marketing.
- Provide real estate feasibility and technical assistance.
- Match storefront improvement grants to help existing property owners implement necessary improvements to their buildings to allow for more occupancy.
- Develop a rental assistance program to provide up to 50% of the monthly rent for a business owner who graduates from the business workshops.

The WCDC is grateful to Neighborhood Allies for providing this support to Wilkinsburg's growing business community.

Learn more about Neighborhood Allies and the other grant recipients at bit.ly/CatalyticGrant.

The WCDC will kick off the next free eight-week business planning workshop series this fall. If you are interested, please plan to attend the registration and info session on Thursday, September 20, 6 p.m. at Hosanna House.

Classes will begin Thursday, September 27. To learn more, call 412.727.7855 or email gordon@wilkinsburgcdc.org.



Save the Dates!

Thursday, September 20, 6 p.m.: Business Planning Workshop Registration & Info Session; 807 Wallace Ave.

Monday, September 24, 5-6:30 p.m.: WCDC Board of Directors Meeting; 1001 Wood St.

Saturday, November 10, 6-9 p.m.: Big Birthday Bash—Celebrating 10 Years of the WCDC;1300 Wood St.

Save the Date for the WCDC's Big Birthday Bash

Officially incorporated in 2008, the WCDC is celebrating 10 years of revitalization work in Wilkinsburg this year! Join in the fun on Saturday, November 10 at the Big Birthday Bash—Celebrating 10 Years of the WCDC, a gala fundraiser that will take place at the Yingling Mansion on Wood Street.

Guests will enjoy live music, performances, food, open bar, silent auction, raffle prizes, and more! Save the date. More details and ticket information will be available soon.

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LOWER TAXES, from page 1

$1 in taxes per $1,000 in taxable value.) Property owners in Wilkinsburg will now pay school taxes of 29.5 mills for school taxes, in addition to the 14 mills for the borough and 4.73 mills for the county.

"While other school districts are looking to raise taxes to meet educational and financial obligations within their districts, Wilkinsburg is doing just the opposite," said Washington.

"Based on the new school building configurations and the success of the PPS partnership, the district was in a position financially to lower taxes without taking away from the kids," explained Michael Johnson, school board member.

"In fact, the district has increased opportunities for the students of Wilkinsburg by adding programs," added Johnson.

The 2018-19 school year will be the first time that Kelly will be a primary school for grades Pre-K–2 only and Turner an intermediate school for grades 3–6. This reconfiguration is an endeavor to consolidate and maximize resources for each age group.

"With the reconfiguration of the district to better focus on student achievement, providing transportation throughout the district and, of course, reducing taxes, this is a very exciting time for the school district," said Washington.

"We have embarked on some things that have not happened in this district for a very long time or even at all," explained Washington. "The board had considered reducing taxes in the past but, could not garner enough support."

The new $30 million budget reportedly includes about $98,000 in donations for items like a community garden, STEAM learning and the district's new after-school dinner program.

While the property taxes in Wilkinsburg have been comparatively high in recent years, the earned income tax rate has remained at 1%, on the lower side. City of Pittsburgh residents pay 3%, for instance.

A Letter from the Superintendent of Schools

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Welcome to the 2018-2019 school year! I hope that you had a wonderful summer and we look forward to having your children back in our classrooms. Since school let out, we have been seriously planning for the new school year, and I am thrilled to say that we have many great things in store for you and our students.

First, I want to thank all the parents who attended the Parent Meetings held in March on the District Reconfiguration. They were well attended, and I was able to address many of the questions and concerns of parents.

Wilkinsburg is bouncing back! We believe that every child every day matters in our schools. We are committed to providing our students with a quality educational experience that is rich in rigor, challenging and exciting. Central to our vision is to develop and maintain a learning experience that creates a community of self-aware learners that are college and career ready to be productive members of society.

We have reconfigured the district into Kelly Primary School for grades Pre K -2 and Turner Intermediate School for grades 3-6 to create better environments—academically, socially and emotionally—for our students to learn and grow.

We have accomplished so much in the past year that we plan to continue and to expand this year such as our STEAM Program, our after-school dinner program and our music program. I am thrilled to say by reconfiguring our schools, we are able to continue to improve our school district and have more great things in store for you and our students such as:

- Additional K and Pre K Classes
- Balance the size of each school
- Preserve our small class sizes
- Provide more wrap–around services
- Offer additional course programming such as band, chorus and foreign language
- Provide district transportation

At the heart of our improvements are our strong ties and partnerships with the community. Our partnership with residents and local businesses is growing. Last year, we were able to bring additional revenue to the district in grant funds and in-kind support and are in conversations daily with other potential partners who have contacted us with the hopes of seeking ways to collaborate and support our efforts.

We have hired six new teachers for our Pre K, K, Grade One, Emotional Support and Autistic Support classes. We had a very strong pool of applicants from which to choose and could afford to be very selective to ensure that we hired the most qualified candidates for our students. I know that you will assist them in every way possible to transition smoothly into the district and school.

Sincerely,

Linda J. Iverson, Ph.D.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

9/18 (Tues.)	7 P.M.	Board Planning Session
9/25 (Tues.)	5:30 P.M.	Policy & Procedures Committee
9/25 (Tues.)	7 P.M.	Board Legislative Session
10/16 (Tues.)	7 P.M.	Board Planning Session
10/23 (Tues.)	5:30 P.M.	Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Committee
10/23 (Tues.)	7P.M.	Board Legislative Session

All meetings held at Wilkinsburg School Administration Building, 718 Wallace Avenue, 15221

Wilkinsburg Ministry Celebrates 50 Years

Wilkinsburg Community Ministry (WCM) celebrates its 50th anniversary this fall: 50 years of collaboration to improve conditions in Wilkinsburg.

Over the years, WCM has sponsored soup kitchens, children's service programs, children's catering services, Meals on Wheels, access to public assistance programs, job training, and more. They have taken children and teens on ski trips, summer camp, and hikes in the park—and they have supported educational projects.

Today, WCM offers services that address food insecurity in Wilkinsburg, including a food pantry providing emergency food, a walk-through shop, and a children's food program that caters summer and after-school meals.

Member congregations provide hygiene kits and backpacks for children. WCM also collects new uniforms, underwear and socks.

On October 14, WCM is participating in the annual Crop Walk, which starts at the South Avenue Methodist church, 733 South Avenue.

An anniversary dinner will be held on October 20 at the South Avenue United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall. Community Kitchen will cater. Advertisements for the program are being sold by WCM directors and at the office. Tickets will be available later in September.

Donate to WCM by visiting wcm15221.org/donate/ or sending a check to 702/704 Wood Street, Wilkinsburg, PA 15221, attn: Executive Director. You can also choose WCM as your charity when you make purchases at smile.amazon.com. For more information, contact Ruth Kittner, executive director, at ruthk@wcm15221.org or call 412.241.8072.





Left: slip 'n slide fun. Right: Making soda bottle rockets.

Summer Recreation Program Recognizes Teamwork and Success

Wilkinsburg's first full time recreation program in many years kicked off this summer at Ferguson Park on the corner of Center and South. It ran Monday-Friday with a free lunch at noon and bag dinners in the evening.

Besides activities like arts 'n crafts and ball games, science programs were offered by the Carnegie Science Center, Citizens Science Lab, the University of Pittsburgh, and Alcosan, including chess, drawing, visits from Xpogo at Community Forge, Wilkinsburg's Children's Library, the Fire Departmet, soccer instruction, a local Native American history presentation, and art from The Shop—Homewood.

Funding was supplied by the borough council and the school board. Additional financial assistance was received from borough attorneys Maiello Brungo & Maiello, Eat'n Park, and a personal donation from Representative Ed Gainey.

Other in-kind contributions were received from Wilkinsburg Beverage, First National Bank, Challenge Printing, Pittsburgh Soccer in the Community, and the Ahmadiyya Mosque, which supplied water access. The Wilkinsburg Community Ministry provided free lunches and dinners.

The borough and school district staff provided email and social media updates and notifications.

Mike Milberger, who orchestated this summer's program, said he wants to thank all for their help in making summer fun and educational for our kids.



Greater Wilkinsburg Chamber of Commerce
900 Wood Street, 2nd Fl., Wilkinsburg, PA 15221 412.242.0234
wilkinsburgchamber.com



A Wilkinsburg Tradition for 42 Years

Where can you find hot foods, fresh baked goods, homemade preserves, locally grown produce, corn, fruit, honey and eggs, meet your friends and neighbors AND support local business? The Wilkinsburg Thursday Open Market!

The Market has been operating since 1976 and is now open from 3–6:30 p.m. at the corner of South Trenton and Penn Avenue every Thursday through November 15. SNAP benefits are accepted.

A big "thank you" to LifeCare Hospital, Just Harvest, The Wilkinsburg Farmers' Market Association and the Farmers Market Coalition for their continued support.



Business Networking Events

Monthly "Business After Hours," hosted by Chamber members, provide a relaxed environment for meeting new people, sharing knowledge, contacts and experiences. Light refreshments are provided.

Business After Hours are open to the community.

Join us on October 16th from 5–7 p.m. at Pittsburgh FIT located at 710 Thomas Street (behind LifeCare Hospital) to learn more about Wilkinsburg's newest fitness center.

Interested in showcasing your business by hosting a networking event? Contact the Chamber office at 412.242.0234 or email info@wilkinsburgchamber.com

Join the Chamber. Get Involved. Make an Impact.

The Greater Wilkinsburg Chamber of Commerce has served the community for 125 years and continues to grow with increased membership, resources and opportunities

To see your ad here, e-mail adsales@wilkinsburgsun.com or call 412.680.1381.

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Wilkinsburg Public Library September Events

Library programs are free and open to all. Make reservations in advance at the circulation desk or by calling 412.244.2940. (M=Main Library; E=Eastridge branch).

Adult Programs

Love Your Library Month—Donate to your library during September and your gift of any amount will receive a match from the Jack Buncher Foundation! Your donation helps to make your library services possible.

Senior Fun Day, Tuesday, Sept. 11, 9:30 a.m.—A day of fun and learning activities and lunch. (M)

Bag Book Sale, Friday & Saturday, Sept. 14 and 15, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.—Bring bags and stock up! $3 a bag or $5 for a library tote. All sales help the Love Your Library drive. (M)

CareerLink Job Assistance, Tuesday, Sept. 21, 10 a.m.–3 p.m.—Let Rachelle help you search for your new job. Morning—mini-workshop (10-Noon); afternoon—one-on-one help sessions. Registration requested. (M)

Movie Mondays, Monday, Sept. 17, 1:30 p.m.—Take a break and relax. Movie TBA. (M)

Quilting Class, Wednesday, Sept. 19, 1–4 p.m.—Learn the basics of quilting and rotary cutting; make a practice quilt block. Call for details. Registration required. (E)

National Voter Registration Day, Tuesday, Sept. 25, 10 a.m.–1 p.m.—The League of Women Voters will help you to register to vote as well as check your registration status or voting location. (M)

Drug Crisis, Saturday, Sept. 29, 2 p.m.—The discussion continues with Vince Neal. What can be done? (M)

Wilkinsburg Yarners, Wednesdays, 10 a.m.—Stitch, knit or crochet with friends and spin a yarn or two. (M)

Chess, 2nd and 4th Tuesdays, 6 p.m., 2nd and 4th Saturdays, 11 a.m.–All ages. **(E)**

Crochet, Saturdays, 11 a.m.—Join Frankie to get tips and help with your projects. **(E)**

Children's Programs

Back to School Bash, Saturday, Sept. 8, 11 a.m.—Celebrate a new school year with resource information and snacks: in partnership with Second Saturday Moms & Grandmothers. (M)

Destination Moon, Friday, Sept. 14, 3:30 p.m.—Learn the basics and build your own working air rocket! (M)

Queen's Gambit Chess Club, Saturday, Sept. 15 & 29, 1 p.m.—Learn how to play chess or improve your skills. All ages. (M)

Acting Workshop, Wednesday, Sept. 26, 4 p.m.—Learn all about the theater and acting from our Pittsburgh Public Theater friends thanks to RAD. Ages 7-13. (M)

Family Story Time, Mondays, 11 a.m. (M) & Thursdays, 11 a.m. (E)—Read stories, play games and sing songs. For babies through preschoolers with an adult.

Art Club, Mondays, 3:30 p.m.—Let your creative juices flow! All ages (M)

Lego Club, Tuesdays, 3:30 p.m.—Build your own creation or take a challenge. (M)

Dance Explorers, Thursdays, 4:30 p.m.—Explore different dance styles including hip hop and ballet thanks to Courdance. (M)

Science Fridays, 3:30 p.m.—Explore the wide world of science with weekly activities. All ages. (M)



Calling all gardeners! Interested in making Wilkinsburg beautiful?

These people pictured worked with 60 others with Covenant Fellowship RP Church to clean brush from Glenn and Montier and board up homes on August 4 in the Park Triangle area.

There is a group forming, with the Sierra Club's help, to do more in September. Email Suzbrandt@aol.com.





FREE HOME BUYING WORKSHOP

PHLF

Monday, September 17, 2018 @ 6:00 PM
Landmarks Housing Resource Center
744 Rebecca Avenue, Wilkinsburg, PA 15221
Sponsors: Pittsburgh Housing Development Association
Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation

FREE

We'll show you how you can own your own home, including information about:

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- Grant money for closing costs*
- Affordable mortgage and down payment options
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