"TO GET A CREW OF 120 PEOPLE TO HELP CLEAN THE CONNOQUENESSING, THAT TAKES YOUR BREATH AWAY."

120 aid creek

Chamber group draws volunteers to Conno

By William V. Foley
For The Chamber

NORTH SEWICKLEY TOWNSHIP — Only the sloshing footsteps of 12 Butler County residents seeking stability on the silt-blanketed shallows of the Connoquenessing Creek interrupted an otherwise still August afternoon, when a chorus of crickets hidden in weed-covered banks greeted the party as it rounded a final bend in North Sewickley Township.

Volunteers with Allegheny Aquatic Alliance, a new member of the Ellwood City Area Chamber of Commerce, clean the Connoquenessing Creek in North Sewickley Township on Aug. 19.
It just seemed like the right thing to do, to come out and clean the creek. We kayak on the upper Connoqueenessing, near Butler. We haven't been down this way yet but we are going to change that.

Volunteers with Allegheny Aquatic Alliance clean a 1.2-mile section of the Connoqueenessing Creek in North Sewickley Township on Aug. 19.

Chamber member, 120 clean Conno

Conno, From Page 1

It is here, off Jackson Way, where Mark Gerson, Kevin Schorr, Lindsey Hayes, Johnathan Grady, Laurie Grady and seven others got their feet wet, literally and figuratively, as first-time volunteers charged with cleaning a 1.2-mile stretch of the Connoqueenessing Creek. They were among the 120 who Aug. 19 sloshed, bent, pulled and threw debris into canoes and johnboats and helped the Allegheny Aquatic Alliance — among the scores of new Ellwood City Area Chamber of Commerce members — clean an 18-mile stretch of the Connoqueenessing.

“For them to get out and get a crew of 120 people to help clean the Connoqueenessing, that takes your breath away,” said Raymond Santillo, executive director of the Ellwood City Area Chamber of Commerce. “It just shows you how generous people are in our area. The Connoqueenessing is as much Ellwood City as anything else.”

Gerson, of Mars, said only in the past year has he took up kayaking, a popular sport along the 50-mile Connoqueenessing Creek that begins near Butler, approaches Ellwood City from the south, wraps around Ellport like a horseshoe, then races toward its discharge into the Beaver River.

“It just seemed like the right thing to do, to come out and clean the creek,” he said. “We kayak on the upper Connoqueenessing, near Butler. We haven't been down this way yet but we are going to change that.”

The Allegheny Aquatic Alliance, based in Cranberry Township, formed in February 2012. Christina Handley is president of the nonprofit alliance, which has collected trash from 45 of the Connoqueenessing’s 50 miles. The organization plans a second 2017 cleanup Sept. 9.

“We are doing the same stretch,” Handley said, “but skipping the middle sections that are clean now.”
FALL FEST AND CAR CRUISE SET FOR SEPT. 30!

Another fair day in Ellwood City!

DON'T MISS THESE VENDORS!

Vendors registered for the 2017 Ellwood City Fall Fest and Car Cruise as of Aug. 9:
- Pink Zebra
- Studio P
- Complete Travel Service
- Blocher Jewelers
- Hip Little Prints
- Oak Hill Kettle Corn
- AIR Physical Therapy
- LulaRoe
- Thirty-One Gifts
- Elisa Blue Acres, LLC
- AR Construction
- GlitzBox21
- EC Relay for Life
- Pappy Rick's Kettle Corn
- D's Apple Dumpings
- Leaps & Bounds
- Gymnastics
- Smokin' Dave's BBQ
- Tupperware
- Roaming Mouse
- Travel Agency
- Operation Escape Mobile
- Sherwin Williams
- Health Markets Agency
- Ellwood City Art Club
- H & D's Daily Dose WXED 107.3 FM
- Farmers Insurance
- First Baptist Church
- Sarin Grill
- Plexus Worldwide
- Vintage Grace Boutique
- Riverside Aqua Club of Ellwood
- First United Methodist Church

A portion of the crowd of 4,400 at the 2016 Ellwood City Fall Fest and Car Cruise.

Musicians, vendors, crowds expected to jam Lawrence Ave.

By William V. Foley
For The Chamber

ELLWOOD CITY - The newfound vibrancy along Lawrence Avenue was punctuated at the 2016 Ellwood City Fall Fest and Car Cruise with an exclamation point in Caroline Golmic's mind as she recalled the 4,400 residents and visitors walking shoulder-to-shoulder, east and west, along seven blocks during the second annual fair.

"The level of activity happening on each block of Lawrence Avenue is something that sticks with me," said Golmic, president of the Ellwood City Area Chamber of Commerce. "Businesses were busy, vendors were busy, and families were excited to spend the day in town. That excitement has lingered long after the event and has created momentum that continues in each event our town hosts."

That momentum - heralded in the comments from those in a crowd double the size of the 2015 event, felt in the vibrations of 450 engines as part of the event's Car Cruise - is expected to continue at the 2017 festival, hosted by the Ellwood City Area Chamber of Commerce.

Thirty-three vendors had already registered for the Sept. 30 event as of Aug. 9, and more are likely to do so this month. Fall Fest begins at 11 a.m.

See Fall, Page 4

A girl shows an artist where to paint her face at the 2016 Ellwood City Fall Fest and Car Cruise.

"Small Town, Big Living" The Ellwood City Area Chamber of Commerce
FALL FEST AND CAR CRUISE SET FOR SEPT. 30!

A portion of the crowd of 4,400 at the 2016 Ellwood City Fall Fest and Car Cruise makes its way along Lawrence Avenue.

Another fair day in E.C.!

Fall, From Page 3

“We are very pleased with the vendor turnout so far,” Golmic said.

“A little bit of everything for everybody”

Ellwood City residents Joanne Stevens and Cindy Laszlo stood at the intersection of Sixth Street and Lawrence Avenue during the 2016 festival, taking in the sight of horse-drawn carriages, smell of kettle-popped popcorn and sound of a near live broadcast by WXED 107.3 FM.

“It’s nice to see this type of thing going on in Ellwood City,” Stevens said. “Like all towns in America, people are not doing things as a community. It is nice to see everybody coming out and doing things in our community, not taking it to Pittsburgh or Cranberry. Just being here with our hometown people.”

Jen Eller, of Ellwood City, took her two daughters to the 2016 Fall Fest and found a shady spot at the $2.2 million Community Plaza, where on Sept. 30 Ellwood City-born bands Wine & Spirit and Average Jane will perform on the 5-year-old stage.

Fall Fest is a “really good family event,” Jen Eller said. “A little bit of everything for everybody.”

Raymond Santillo agrees. The executive director of the Ellwood City Area Chamber of Commerce said the Fall Fest and Car Cruise mirrors the range of activity found along Lawrence Avenue.

“There is a lot of action,” he said. “That is the most common thing I hear, that they are happy to see the action on Lawrence Avenue. They love it. That’s what we grew up with.”
FALL FEST AND CAR CRUISE SET FOR SEPT. 30!

Another fair day in Ellwood City!

A vendor serves food at the 2016 Ellwood City Fall Fest and Car Cruise.

Fall, From Page 4

Create memories with family, co-chair says

The 2017 Fall Fest and Car Cruise will also showcase new businesses -- and old friends, Santillo said.

"I think people are happy when they get to see others whom they haven't seen in a while," he said.

The "beauty" of the Fall Fest and Car Cruise, Golinic said, is "the nostalgia factor. Being out in your town, looking at amazing cars, supporting local businesses and vendors, and creating memories with your family -- those remain the same each year."

Golinic is joined on the Fall Fest and Car Cruise committee by co-chair Sam Ferrante, Raymond Santillo and Larry Santillo. Bud Kerr, Jillian D'Amico, Dave Hunter and Yvonne Ovial.

Among the sponsors of the 2017 Ellwood City Fall Fest and Car Cruise are McElwain Motors, Pitt Race and the Lawrence County Tourist Promotion Agency.

12TH CHEF, WINE & ALE MAY DRAW 300!

Don't miss cigar bar, lottery tree!

By William V. Foley
For The Chamber

North Sewickley Township — So popular has been the Chef, Wine and Ale event hosted by the Ellwood City Area Chamber of Commerce that it's time to enjoy a victory cigar — right there on the patio of Shakespeare's Restaurant and Pub at Olde Stonewall Golf Club, says co-chairman Dale Thompson.

A cigar bar is among the new features at the 12th annual Chef, Wine and Ale, to be held from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., Sept. 11.

"The event," Thompson said, "has grown every year in all ways, in the number of guests attending, the number of restaurants and the number of auction items."

Chef, Wine and Ale has drawn nearly 300 guests, who sample fine wine and ale, delectable food, and participate in silent auctions and raffles.

A lottery ticket joins the cigar bar as a new attraction. Thompson said, adding that up to 20 food vendors are expected.

Among the items available in the silent auction are car wash coupons, dinner and golf for four at Olde Stonewall Golf Club, to signed Pittsburgh Penguins, Steelers and Pirates memorabilia, Thompson said.

"There are wines that are paired with every food vendor," he said, "so you are able to sample at least 15 different wines as well as complimentary martinis at the martini bar," he said.

"Event that everyone talks about"

Pete's Uptown Beer & Beverage will provide up to 12 different craft beers for sampling. Thompson said.

"I have to say that this has become the event that everyone talks about," Thompson said.

Tickets cost $50 in advance and $65 at the door.

WesBanco is the platinum sponsor for Chef, Wine & Ale, which chamber Executive Director Raymond Santillo said is as popular as it is because of "all the good food that the restaurant people bring to a beautiful setting at Shakespeare's, the golf course and all the fine wines. It is so entertaining to get out and be a part of that."

The cigar bar, Santillo said, may get guests out on the patio.

"That is something that is different this year," he said. "It will be outdoors and will get people moving around. I think it will be popular with the guests."

Gold sponsors are ECF/Egi, Ellwood Animal Hospital, Venezie Sporting Goods and Apparel, Seubert & Associates and Good Wheels/PACE.


Don't miss cigar bar, lottery tree!

By William V. Foley
For The Chamber

North Sewickley Township — So popular has been the Chef, Wine and Ale event hosted by the Ellwood City Area Chamber of Commerce that it's time to enjoy a victory cigar — right there on the patio of Shakespeare's Restaurant and Pub at Olde Stonewall Golf Club, says co-chairman Dale Thompson.

A cigar bar is among the new features at the 12th annual Chef, Wine and Ale, to be held from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., Sept. 11.

"The event," Thompson said, "has grown every year in all ways, in the number of guests attending, the number of restaurants and the number of auction items."

Chef, Wine and Ale has drawn nearly 300 guests, who sample fine wine and ale, delectable food, and participate in silent auctions and raffles.

A lottery ticket joins the cigar bar as a new attraction. Thompson said, adding that up to 20 food vendors are expected.

Among the items available in the silent auction are car wash coupons, dinner and golf for four at Olde Stonewall Golf Club, to signed Pittsburgh Penguins, Steelers and Pirates memorabilia, Thompson said.

"There are wines that are paired with every food vendor," he said, "so you are able to sample at least 15 different wines as well as complimentary martinis at the martini bar," he said.

"Event that everyone talks about"

Pete's Uptown Beer & Beverage will provide up to 12 different craft beers for sampling. Thompson said.

"I have to say that this has become the event that everyone talks about," Thompson said.

Tickets cost $50 in advance and $65 at the door.

WesBanco is the platinum sponsor for Chef, Wine & Ale, which chamber Executive Director Raymond Santillo said is as popular as it is because of "all the good food that the restaurant people bring to a beautiful setting at Shakespeare's, the golf course and all the fine wines. It is so entertaining to get out and be a part of that."

The cigar bar, Santillo said, may get guests out on the patio.

"That is something that is different this year," he said. "It will be outdoors and will get people moving around. I think it will be popular with the guests."

Gold sponsors are ECF/Egi, Ellwood Animal Hospital, Venezie Sporting Goods and Apparel, Seubert & Associates and Good Wheels/PACE.


Don't miss cigar bar, lottery tree!

By William V. Foley
For The Chamber

North Sewickley Township — So popular has been the Chef, Wine and Ale event hosted by the Ellwood City Area Chamber of Commerce that it's time to enjoy a victory cigar — right there on the patio of Shakespeare's Restaurant and Pub at Olde Stonewall Golf Club, says co-chairman Dale Thompson.

A cigar bar is among the new features at the 12th annual Chef, Wine and Ale, to be held from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., Sept. 11.

"The event," Thompson said, "has grown every year in all ways, in the number of guests attending, the number of restaurants and the number of auction items."

Chef, Wine and Ale has drawn nearly 300 guests, who sample fine wine and ale, delectable food, and participate in silent auctions and raffles.

A lottery ticket joins the cigar bar as a new attraction. Thompson said, adding that up to 20 food vendors are expected.

Among the items available in the silent auction are car wash coupons, dinner and golf for four at Olde Stonewall Golf Club, to signed Pittsburgh Penguins, Steelers and Pirates memorabilia, Thompson said.

"There are wines that are paired with every food vendor," he said, "so you are able to sample at least 15 different wines as well as complimentary martinis at the martini bar," he said.

"Event that everyone talks about"

Pete's Uptown Beer & Beverage will provide up to 12 different craft beers for sampling. Thompson said.

"I have to say that this has become the event that everyone talks about," Thompson said.

Tickets cost $50 in advance and $65 at the door.

WesBanco is the platinum sponsor for Chef, Wine & Ale, which chamber Executive Director Raymond Santillo said is as popular as it is because of "all the good food that the restaurant people bring to a beautiful setting at Shakespeare's, the golf course and all the fine wines. It is so entertaining to get out and be a part of that."

The cigar bar, Santillo said, may get guests out on the patio.

"That is something that is different this year," he said. "It will be outdoors and will get people moving around. I think it will be popular with the guests."

Gold sponsors are ECF/Egi, Ellwood Animal Hospital, Venezie Sporting Goods and Apparel, Seubert & Associates and Good Wheels/PACE.

"We like our area to be environmentally pure"

The Allegheny Aquatic Alliance schedules two cleanups per year to double our chances of getting out all the garbage," Handley said. "Since a lot of garbage and tires are stuck in the creek bed, we need ideal water and weather conditions to be able to see and remove the garbage."

The Allegheny Aquatic Alliance has had to postpone cleanups in past years because of dangerous water conditions, Handley said, so "scheduling two cleanups is easier than postponing. If both days are good than we have more opportunity to remove more garbage."

A cleanup of the final five miles of the Connoquenessing Creek, from Ellwood City to the waterway’s discharge into the Beaver River at Rock Point, may follow in 2018.

Allegheny Aquatic Alliance’s efforts are of paramount importance to the environment, Santillo said.

"That water is moving all the time," Santillo said of the Connoquenessing. "Everyone wants it to be pure. People in our area use the creek for boating and for fishing. Clean, to me, means purity, and we like that. We like our area to be environmentally pure."

**Alliance chief:** community key to success

Prior to Aug. 19, volunteers had collected 270,000 pounds of garbage, 2,615 tires, political signs, car batteries and an unoccupied coffin vault.

"That," Handley said, "speaks volumes."

Handley said she is awaiting totals from the Aug. 19 cleanup.

"The more volunteers we have the more garbage we can remove," Handley said.

Prior to Aug. 19, volunteers had collected 270,000 pounds of garbage, 2,615 tires, political signs, car batteries and an unoccupied coffin vault.

"This project wouldn’t be as successful if it wasn’t for the support of the entire community. It’s also about prevention. When people put their time and energy into removing garbage, they will want to keep the creek clean. Seeing the enormous amount of garbage in the creek can inspire the volunteers to take more action for litter prevention.

"Each year is getting easier for recruitment. Word of mouth has been an important source for obtaining volunteers."

Among those volunteers was kayaker Lindsey Hayes, 17, of Mars, who said she and relatives on the team are active in helping others, including those who clean the Connoquenessing.

"It is healthy for the environment," she said.

"We had to reorganize"

Gerson and his group were surprised to pull from the Connoquenessing Creek and its banks a portion of a manual typewriter, the bottom of a hot tub or Jacuzzi, a car door, numerous lengths of steel piping, a 6-foot plate of steel and a silt-filled plastic playground "that sank the boat," he said.

"So we had to reorganize.

For more information, contact the alliance at (724) 371-0416 or visit alleghenyaquaticalliance.com.