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Jun26

[Mike](#)

[Summertime ruminations...](#)

Ah, summertime, an' the livin' is easy! That's a line from a 1966 [pop hit](#) by R&B artist Billy Stewart (and, with summer upon us, I recommend playing it loud :-)

I hope your summer is off to a good start. If you've been taking life easy—perhaps by not even setting foot on campus for five weeks—here's some of what you missed:

The Henrietta deer are not pleased

Been down John Street just south of Jefferson Road lately? The heavy equipment has moved in—and it has cleared out mature trees and nascent plants, underbrush and overgrowth (and forced the local deer population to relocate...yet again).

It's all part of a private-development [student-housing project](#)—tentatively named The Province—slated for 29 acres on the east side of John Street, opposite Perkins Green Apartments and [Park Point](#). Ohio-based developer [Edwards Communities Development](#) plans to build a baker's dozen or so three-story complexes housing 800-some residents, along with a fitness facility, walkways and, of course, parking lots (where would the world be without more parking lots?).

In the crosshairs next: nine quaint single-family homes—and a barn—each presumably sold to the developer and recently vacated.

It's all in the name of progress, of course—and the long-term investment of private dollars in this project reflects confidence in RIT's future prospects. So, as the saying goes, *it's all good*, right? Not so fast, because one thing (so far) irks me....

The first days of tree felling and earth moving revealed a hidden gem: Right there, tucked away from street view all these years, was a little stone structure of some kind, complete with a gable-style roof. It appeared, from a distance, to be no more than 5 to 6 feet or so tall and no more than a few feet wide. Was it an old unused well, or some other artifact, before now visible only to the homeowner?

Whatever it was, it was heartening to see that while destruction was happening all around, workers appeared to be working around it—preserving a small piece of history (or so it seemed).

And it was dismaying the next day to see it gone.

God forbid someone should actually build something having a little character, I thought, sarcastically, after the little stone structure had disappeared. (Plus, so much for my naming idea: Wishing Well Apartments at The Province.)

For RIT's sake, I hope The Province is a fruitful venture for all concerned (particularly students who will live there). But shame on the developer for displaying an apparent lack of sensitivity and appreciation for what came before.

Lamentably, that which many developers might need more than bulldozers is a little more sensitivity and a lot more creativity.

On a sunnier note...

Heading to my car at the end of the workday one evening this week, I was struck by some stunning natural beauty right here in our little pocket of Henrietta. It was one of those rare times that had it been another day and hour, the moment would've passed by imperceptibly.

As I was one of the last to leave campus, the parking lot was nearly deserted...the surroundings were calm and peaceful...the sun was still shining brightly. And before me...off in the distance, beyond the edge of what is by day a sea of cars...was a spectacular sea of sparkling yellow.

The sight made me pause. We suburbanites love our lush green lawns, I pondered, and those dazzling yellow beauties are likely considered "weeds" up close (in fact, they were mowed a couple days later)...but...

...Not even Solomon in all his splendor was arrayed like one of these, occurred to me at that moment.

Wishing you a weekend filled with splendid visions and easy livin'!

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1. [Kathy Lindsley](#)

Jun26

Hey Mike —

Billy Stewart's rendition of Summertime stands out among the hundreds of recordings of the soprano aria George Gerswin wrote for Porgy and Bess (1935). I've got to mention a personal favorite by Eva Cassidy. Check it out on YouTube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=d29Vfh1hpUo.

BTW — I share your sentiments about the "progress" on John Street. Hated to see that old stone building go — not to mention all those trees.

2. [Mike Saffran](#)

Jun26

Thanks for the bit of "Summertime" history, Kathy :-)

If memory serves, I was introduced to the Billy Stewart version by my ol' buddy Tom Noonan 'round about the summer of '95. I recall driving to Syracuse to visit an old college buddy...all the while listening to my friend Tom on WKLY (because he was hilarious and, like all radio types, I wanted to see how far I could go before the station faded out). Because the song wasn't part of our normal rotation (though that never stopped Tom—or me), I had never before heard it. The next time I saw him, I said, "Hey, last Sunday, at like 5:35, you played a song...something to do with summertime—what was that?"

From that point forward, Billy Stewart became a Saturday night staple on my all-request oldies show on Oldies 98-9 WKLY and, later, 99BBF.

3. [char](#)

Jul01

I noticed the small stone structure as well. I was hoping it got moved somewhere. I will miss driving by the houses as I have for many years, I'll miss seeing the flowers and trees bloom along the way (especially the lilac bushes)

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