

Rivers Run Cottage Connections

VOLUME 11–ISSUE 8 AUGUST 2026

WHAT'S INSIDE

- RIT & Rivers Run ... 1
- Woman's Lunch..... 2
- Dining Out. 2
- Book Club..... 3
- Julian Thomas..... 4
- PND Pics..... 4
- Fairwood 5
- Rivers Run 6
- To Do in Roch..... 7
- Calendar..... 8



History of RIT and Rivers Run

Rivers Run is Rochester's first and foremost university-based independent living community, developed in tandem with the Rochester Institute of Technology . Situated on the banks of the Genesee River, our 55+ community was established in the mid-2000s to provide active senior living alongside lifelong learning.

It took me a few weeks, but I was eventually able to piece together a brief history of the development of Rivers Run and the surrounding area. Later in this newsletter, you will find a more detailed account of how the area evolved over time—including what was developed, where it happened, and when those changes took place.

Historical Timeline

1829 – Rochester Athenaeum founded.
1885 – Mechanics Institute founded.
1891 – Athenaeum and Mechanics Institute merge.
1944 – Institution renamed Rochester Institute of Technology.
1961 – RIT announces move to Henrietta farmland.
1964 – Construction begins on Henrietta campus.
1968 – Henrietta campus opens.
1970s–1990s – Residential growth expands around campus.
1990s–2000s – Athenaeum adult-learning programs operate at Fairwood Drive.
2000s – Rivers Run and additional residential developments constructed



Third Monday of each month, 6:30 PM
For more information Contact Jim Galvin

August's book is
All the Beauty in the World
by Patrick Bringley



REMINDER
Woman's Luncheon
Flaherty's
In Honeoye Falls
Friday, August 28 @ 1:00 PM

For more information
Contact Claire Gnazzo

Dining Out
Hedges

Thursday, August 13
1290 Lake Road, Webster
585-265-3850



Back by popular demand, I have decided to schedule another trip to Hedges. It is such a beautiful place on the lake and has outstanding food. We want to be out there when the weather is delightful but always have the option of dining inside should the weather be less than desirable.

If you are interested in joining us, please contact Barbara DeOca at 813-892-1219 or bdeoca@aol.com

Women's Lunch
Flaherty's

Friday, August 28 @ 1:00 PM
60 W. Main St., Honeoye Falls
585-497-7010

For more than 50 years Flaherty's Three Flags Inn has been your friendly neighborhood gathering spot. Flaherty's started with their Webster location in 1970, followed by adding their Macedon location in 1989 and finally the Honeoye Falls location in 2011. They offer both indoor and outdoor seating along with a fully-stocked bar and delicious food.



Please contact Claire Gnazzo at 585-287-6009 or cgnazzo@outlook.com if you would like to join us.

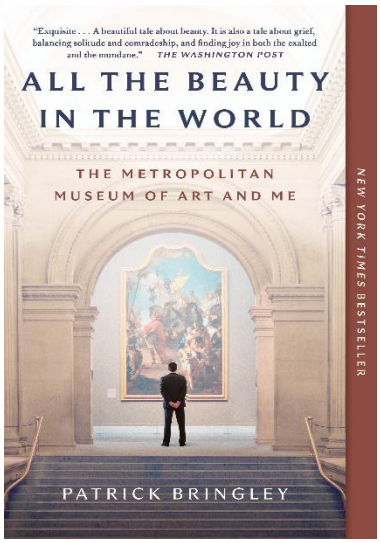


We had another successful dinner out with our RR residents at the Avon Inn.

Everyone is invited to join us. We welcome new people.



BOOK CLUB



All the Beauty in the World: The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Me is a memoir by Patrick Bringley about his decade as a security guard at the Met, a job he took after his brother's cancer diagnosis to find solace and a new perspective on life, grief, and art. The book explores the museum's hidden corners, its diverse staff, and the profound connection between art and the human experience, becoming a critically acclaimed work praised for its accessible prose and moving insights.

The Book Club will be meeting in the sunroom of Jim Galvin's house at 1303 Rivers Run on Monday, August 17 at 6:30 PM

We are always looking for an RR resident to highlight each month. You may think your life has not been that interesting, but I bet the rest of us will. Please let me or Carol Blank know if you are willing to share your past life with the rest of us. She can be reached at carolblank@gmail.com or 603-373-5021.



★ of the Month
Julian Thomas

Julian Thomas was born in 1933 and spent his early years in Exeter, NH, where he attended Phillips Exeter Academy, and where his father taught. His family also enjoyed summers on Penobscot Bay in Maine. He grew up with two brothers. After graduating from Exeter, he attended Harvard University, earning his bachelor's degree in mathematics in 1954. Julian spent a year at Bell Labs in Manhattan before returning to Harvard for his master's degree. His next position was with Honeywell in Boston.

Over the course of his long career, he has worked in and studied mathematics, computer programming, and system engineering design and architecture—including cryptography, time synchronization, hardware-software interfaces, and distributed computing. He holds eight patents, all assigned to IBM. He has also led courses at Osher for many years, teaching a wide range of scientific, technical, and mathematical subjects.

In 1973, Julian married Mary Jane Burt whom he met as a result of a colleague's spouse's matchmaking. Julian has three children, 5 grandchildren, and 3 great-grandchildren. Julian and Mary Jane live at 1401 Rivers Run with their two cats, Honey (Wanda Fischer's cat) and Bianca, and moved here to be closer to Mary Jane's family. Julian has been active in the Rivers Run community since moving here in 2008 from Seneca County and served as the first president of the Rivers Run HOA.

He loves classical music and tinkering with electronics. One of his favorite mottos is from Michelangelo, who, at age 87, said: "I am still learning."

Pay Nothing Day

Last month we decided to give our RR residents a chance to weed out some of the items they have been hiding away in their closets, garage or storage units. We all have a collection of items that we no longer use and just have a hard time parting with. So, out in the garage, driveway or lawn they went for anyone to stop by and take it..... free! I personally think it was quite successful. At least I got rid of a few items, but then again, I brought home a few as well. 😐



From Farmland to Fairwood
The Historical Development of the Fairwood Drive Area

Executive Summary
The area surrounding Fairwood Drive, Rivers Run, and the western side of Henrietta was rural farmland for most of its history. The most significant event in the area's modern development was Rochester Institute of Technology's decision in 1961 to relocate from downtown Rochester to Henrietta. That decision transformed more than 1,300 acres of agricultural land into a university campus and helped drive decades of residential and commercial growth around East River Road, Jefferson Road, and Fairwood Drive. The Rochester Athenaeum, founded in 1829, was one of the institutions that eventually evolved into RIT, providing a historical connection to the area through the university rather than through direct land development

1. Henrietta Before Development
Henrietta was primarily an agricultural community throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Farms, orchards, woodlots, and wetlands dominated the landscape, particularly west of East River Road and near the Genesee River corridor. The Fairwood Drive area was part of this rural environment rather than a distinct neighborhood.

2. The Rochester Athenaeum
Founded in 1829, the Rochester Athenaeum served as a cultural and educational institution. In 1891 it merged with the Mechanics Institute, and in 1944 the institution adopted the name Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT). While the Athenaeum never developed land in Henrietta, it became part of the institutional lineage that eventually brought RIT to the town.

3. Why RIT Left Downtown Rochester
By the late 1950s, RIT had outgrown its downtown campus. Enrollment growth and urban redevelopment pressures encouraged the search for a larger location. A major turning point came in 1961 when Grace Watson's bequest enabled the purchase of approximately 1,300 acres of farmland in Henrietta.

4. The Transformation of Henrietta
Construction of the new Henrietta campus began in the 1960s and the campus opened in 1968. The conversion of farmland into a major university created demand for housing, roads, utilities, and commercial services, accelerating suburban growth throughout western Henrietta.

5. The Development of the Fairwood Drive Area
Before RIT's arrival, roads in the area largely served farms and rural properties. Following the opening of the campus, residential subdivisions became economically viable, and Fairwood Drive gradually evolved into a residential corridor serving university employees, students, and other residents.

6. The Athenaeum at 30 Fairwood Drive
A later organization known as The Athenaeum, associated with RIT's adult-learning and continuing-education programs, operated from a building at 30 Fairwood Drive. This organization occupied an existing facility and did not create the surrounding neighborhood.

7. Rivers Run and Modern Development
By the early 2000s, Henrietta had completed its transition from an agricultural town into a suburban community. Developments such as Rivers Run represent the continuing evolution of land once used for farming into residential neighborhoods connected to the university and greater Rochester region.

And Now We Have Rivers Run

Rivers Run opened on September 17, 2009, in partnership with Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at RIT.

Before the Rivers Run independent and senior living community was developed on Fairwood Drive in Henrietta, NY, the site was known simply as the Athenaeum property.
The land and original building were utilized by the Rochester Institute of Technology . It served as a program and classroom facility primarily used for The Athenaeum, which was the early iteration of RIT's lifelong learning program before it became the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at RIT.

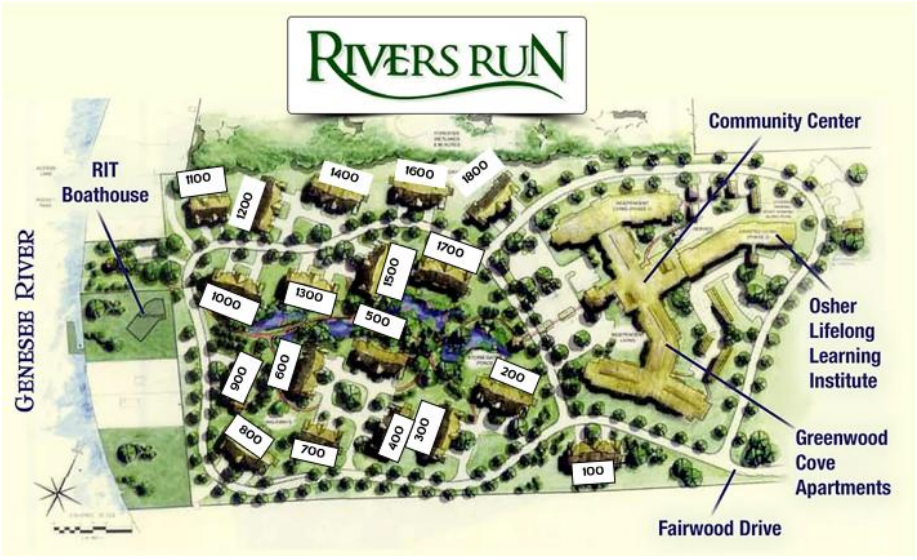
In the 1970s, Fairwood Drive in Henrietta, NY, was primarily the site of rural land and agricultural fields just south of the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) campus.
The street name was used for newer RIT-related residential developments, which expanded as the university settled into its Henrietta campus during that decade

In the 1980s, the Fairwood Drive area off East River Road in Henrietta was primarily the site of expanding residential townhome and apartment developments, alongside undeveloped farmland. The land along Fairwood Drive underwent significant expansion during this decade as developers continued to build out multiple-family complexes, such as the Racquet Club Apartments (later Greenwood Cove and The Feywild).

In the 1980s, the area on and around Fairwood Drive in Henrietta transitioned heavily into educational, recreational, and residential spaces. Notably, it served as the home for the Athenaeum (founded in 1987), which is known today as the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at RIT. The street was also home to the RIT Gosnell Boathouse, which has supported the university's crew teams for decades.

In the 1990s, the primary facility on Fairwood Drive in Henrietta was the Eastman Kodak Company's Manufacturing Education Center (MEC) and Kodak Education and Development Center (KEDC). This corporate campus served as a major training and education hub for Kodak employees, complete with its own cafeteria and a widely known, heavily discounted company store. The property has since transitioned into general office space, primarily housing IT companies.

In 2000, the property on Fairwood Drive in Henrietta (now home to the Rivers Run 55+ residential community) was primarily utilized as undeveloped/vacant land or a low-value agricultural parcel. The address later became known as 50 Fairwood Drive.



To Do in Rochester, August 2026

Festivals

Aug 1-2:	Puerto Rican Festival, 285 E. Main Street, Rochester
Aug 1 & 3:	Polish Arts Festival, St. Stanislaus Kostka Church
Aug 3:	Pan Afrikan Festival, Highland Bowl
Aug 8:	Victor Music & Food Festival, Mead Square
Aug 8-9:	Brockport Arts Festival
Aug 13-16:	Rochester Ukrainian Festival, St. Josaphat's Ukrainian Church
Aug 16-17:	Fiddle & Fok Festival, Genesee Country Village & Museum
Aug 21:	Barry's Irish Festival, Webster Fireman's Field
Aug 22-23:	Fairport Music Festival, Fairport
Aug 29:	M&T Bank Clothesline Art & Fine Craft Festiva, 500 University Ave.

Arts, Music & Culture

Aug 1:	Skycoasters, Eagle Vale Golf Club, Fairport
Aug 1, 8 & 15:	Bands on the Bricks, Rochester Public Market
Aug 1-2:	Angela Ingersoll Sings Judy Garland, GEVA
Aug 3, 4 & 6:	Buffalo Bills Training Camp, St. John Fisher
Aug 4:	Center Stage Pops Symphony Orchestra, Perinton
Aug 7:	Finger Lakes Garden Party at Lookout Point, Fairport
Aug 7:	Nitro Circus Live, ESL Ballpark, 333 Plymouth Ave. N
Aug 8:	Damon Wayans Jr., Comedy at the Carlson, 50 Carlson Rd.
Aug 8-9:	Rochester International Airs Show, Rochester Airport
Aug 10:	Gardening with Native Plants by John Nelson, JCC, 1138 Edgewood Ave.
Aug 12:	Peter Antoniou, Comedy at the Carlson, 50 Carlson Rd.
Aug 16:	"Regals and Runways" fashion and car show, Roch. Public Market
Aug 20:	Josh Turner at Kodak Center, 200 W. Ridge Rd.



August 2026
Cottage Calendar

- **8/7, 14, 21, & 28, FRIDAY, Friday in the Park:** 4-6 PM; located by the 401-703 Cottages
- **8/11, TUESDAY, Craft & Chat Group:** 1:00-3:00 PM, at the Cove
- **8/12, WEDNESDAY, Men's Breakfast:** 8:30 AM, Peppermints Restaurant
- **8/13, THURSDAY, Dining Out:** 4:30 PM, Hedges; contact Barbara DeOca at 813-892-1219 or bdeoca@aol.com
- **8/17, MONDAY, Book Club:** 6:30 PM, Cottage 1303; Contact Jim Galvin at 585-270-8145; *All the Beauty in the World* by Patrick Bringley
- **8/25, TUESDAY, Craft & Chat Group:** 1:00-3:00 PM, at the Cove
- **8/26, WEDNESDAY, Men's Breakfast:** 8:30 AM, Peppermints Restaurant
- **8/28, FRIDAY, Ladies Lunch:** 1:00 PM at Flaherty's in Honeoye Falls; Contact Claire Gnazzo at 585-287-6009

Newsletter

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