



MARKET MATTERS

THE CITY OF ROCHESTER PUBLIC MARKET:
OUR COMMUNITY'S MOST DIVERSE SHOPPING EXPERIENCE

A MARKET REGULAR...SINCE THE 1920s

We learned about Webster's Tom Romano when his daughter Kathy Giunta stopped by the Market Office to get a copy of our history book, The Hands That Feed Us: 100 Years at the Rochester Public Market. Kathy explained that she was buying the book for her 97-year-old father, who has been intimately involved with the Market since the 1920s--as a neighbor, vendor helper, Market District worker, business owner, and regular, loyal customer over the last nearly **ninety** years. Tom ate up the book, poring through every page, recognizing many of the people and places in the old photographs.

And today, Tom is still a Market regular--not only as a shopper, but as an occasional helper at a vendor's stall!

When we learned about Tom, we immediately made an appointment to visit with him and hear his priceless stories about the Market of yesteryear. Tom was eager to tell us his Market tales, and we marveled at the volume and breadth of his recollections.

Tom grew up in the 1920s and 1930s on Wangman Street, just a few hundred feet from the Market grounds off North Union Street. As a teenager in the 1930s, Tom worked as a "wagon puller" at Market, and remembers 50-pound bags of oats selling fast at the Market for \$3, for the hundreds of horses! As a teenager Tom also worked for George West, a farmer at the Market whose farm was actually within the City limits, on Norton Street. In those days, there were many farms in Penfield and Irondequoit. Tom sometimes also would do odd jobs on these farms--and ride his bicycle to them from his center city home! For a day's work at the Market, Tom would earn fifty to seventy-five cents.

Tom's recollections are riveting. He explained how farmers and vendors in their horses and carts lined up all the way back to Bay Street to get on the Market on open days. He also explained colorfully how trains from all over the country would screech to stops right in the Market District to unload a huge array of goods from everywhere directly into warehouses. Today, in the age of trucks, the trains don't deliver directly to the Market, but just zip on by. (How cool would it be to have trains directly deliver to the Market again?) He vividly remembers "Old Lady Stone," an elderly woman who in the 1930s sold hot dogs for a nickel outside the Market from an old trolley car! He also recalled the Muscarella Company



Tom Romano at his home in Webster.

shop on Railroad Street--that was the only banana company in the city.

He also fondly reminisced on his home neighborhood just outside the Market, and that when we was growing up on Wangman Street, there were six small grocery stores on North Union Street just in the short section between the Market and Central Park!

As a young man, Tom worked in the "tomato room" of Rochester Fruit and Vegetable Company on Railroad Street--this company went on to change its name to "Wegmans." After World War 2, Tom owned and ran a gas station at the corner of Union and Pennsylvania--a structure now long gone.

From 1950 to 1971, Tom worked for Wegmans as a truck driver. He worked long, grueling shifts both behind the wheel and in the warehouses. *(continued, page 2)*

APRIL MEANS MARKET SPECIAL EVENTS

It's April, you know what that means! The start of free-admission special events season at the Market! The first of fifty special events days at the Market this year is Sunday, April 23--the first of nineteen Community Garage Sales at the Market! Dozens and dozens of garage sale vendors in one place, at one time. Save yourself the driving all over town, and enjoy breakfast/lunch at one of our Market food stands or District cafes.



And our highly anticipated Food Truck Rodeo season launches on Wednesday, April 26! It's mobile mangia of every imaginable kind, served up fresh to you from a dazzling collection of up to thirty colorful and creative food trucks. There's live local music at every FTR too! As always, Food Truck Rodeos are family friendly, so bring everyone.

For a complete schedule of 2017 free-admission Market special events, go to page: www.cityofrochester.gov/marketevents and stay tuned to our social media!

TOM ROMANO, CONTINUED

Although long retired, Tom is hardly sedentary. He is still very much a "frequent flyer" at the Market, spending quality time here with family and very long time friends; he says it is a big part of his life today. "The Market keeps me alive," he told us. "I really enjoy going there."

As if Tom's Market history isn't amazing enough--there are actually many other nonagenarians and even centenarians among us who have been market-goers for seventy, eighty, even ninety years. Josephine Polli--also age ninety-seven but whom we haven't been able to visit yet--reported that she worked her family's peach stand at the Market at age four. Do the math!

These legacy members of our Market family are truly amazing. If you are one of these, or know of one, we really want to hear from you! Get in touch with us at 585-428-7282 or pmarket@cityofrochester.gov.



MARKET RENOVATION/EXPANSION UPDATE

Progress on the new indoor "B" Shed is still quick despite the Ides of March blizzard. The large bays of glass on the front of the structure are being installed at the time of this writing, and the red brick ends of the shed are taking shape thanks to the work of skilled masons on the job! The interior floors have been poured, and soon, the beautiful interior work will begin. The result of all this work will be a bright, spacious, welcoming, state of the art new indoor shed that will provide better amenities and comfort for both vendors and customers--and will include a brand new restroom facility!

City of Rochester Public Market

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Tuesday, Thursday, 6 a.m.-1 p.m.;
Saturday, 5 a.m.-3 p.m.

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Commissioner, Department of
Recreation and Youth Services

Jim Farr, Market Director

Cindy DeCoste, Market Supervisor

Rob Sharman
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