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Hello Everybody,

A very happy 250th birthday to our country and all of you as well. I hope everyone enjoyed our special Independence Day celebrations! I find it a bit ironic how Paul and I have been working together for 10 years now putting together your neighborhood magazines, we are the same age and have daughters the same age as well. So what's so special about that? Well, my daughter Heather just got married

on May 16 and Paul's daughter Veronica followed up on June 13 with her wedding. Now both of us can get back to focusing on our jobs.

This issue, we're proud to feature Julie Cohen, who has spent the last thirty-eight years building Hubba-Hubba, her Wilmette boutique, on a simple idea: someone believing in you is worth passing on. From a middle schooler selling beaded jewelry at the old Lad and Lassie to a downtown Wilmette fixture that partners with New Trier's vocational program, Julie's story is a reminder of what independent, family-run businesses mean to our community.

Enjoy the read.

Warmly,

Mike Stark

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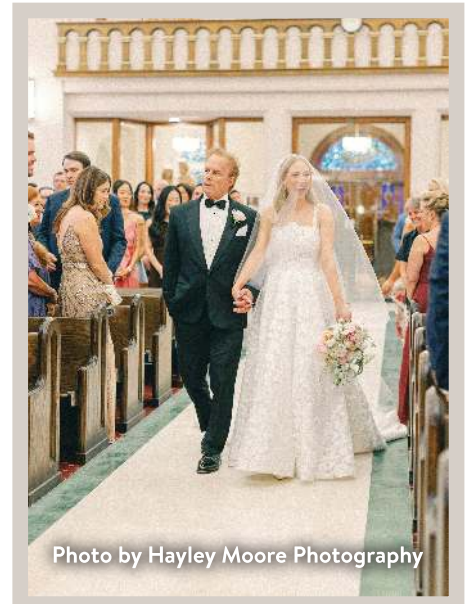


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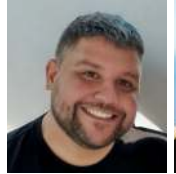
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"I would like to say a few words about weddings. I've just been through one."

By Paul Clements | Photography by Sarah Faith Photography

There's a scene in *Father of the Bride* where George Banks stands in his own backyard, surrounded by tents, caterers, and strangers rearranging his lawn furniture, and wonders aloud how a wedding turned his house into a war zone. I thought of that scene more than once over the past several months. A backyard wedding sounds romantic right up until you're staring at a 10-day forecast like it owes you money, fielding calls about tent stakes, and realizing 120 guests and a small army of catering staff are about to descend on the same patch of grass where my three dogs do their business every morning. The weather, naturally, found a way to make itself a character in the story: my wife's family flew in from the west coast straight into a wall of storms that scrambled flights for two days straight. I braced for the worst.

And then none of it mattered, because the day itself was perfect. The sky cleared, the family made it, and not one thing went wrong that anyone but me will ever remember.

The truth is, my daughter and her now-husband ran the whole show, ceremony and reception both, and they did it better than I ever could have. Every detail was theirs, and it showed. But what stuck with me wasn't the décor or the playlist or even the ceremony itself, it was having every single person we love under one roof, in one yard, for one night. There's a kind of joy that only happens when a celebration takes place at home, surrounded by family old and new, that no ballroom or vineyard or rented venue can manufacture no matter how much you spend trying.

Fittingly, June 20th marks one year since we left Highland Park, a community we loved for more than a decade, for this house. We didn't know, when we made that move, that we were also picking the place where our daughter would get married. But watching 120 guests, a full catering crew, and our whole family fill this backyard with a single seamless celebration, it's hard not to feel like this house just earned its title: our forever home, christened by our daughter, our terrific son-in-law, and everyone we love.

So here's a toast to everyone with a wedding on the calendar this year: may your weather hold, your flights find a way through, and your day be exactly as perfect as it's supposed to be. Mine was.



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Running with a Purpose:

Rev Run



By Meera Jagannathan

When my mom, Rev, an oncologist with an in-depth knowledge of cancer was diagnosed with breast cancer in January 2026, my family's life changed. I struggled to understand how someone so healthy with no family history could develop such a life-threatening disease. What I didn't realize then was that my family was far from alone.

As I tried to make sense of my mom's diagnosis, I began searching for answers and realized my family's experience was part of a much larger story. According to the American Cancer Society, breast cancer accounts for about 30% of all new female cancers each year and there is a 1 in 8 chance a woman will develop breast cancer. Many families have navigated the uncertainty and fear of facing cancer.

Running has always been a significant part of my life. As a member of New Trier Girls Cross Country, it has taught me discipline, resilience, and the importance of showing up when things are hard. During my mom's diagnosis, running became an outlet to clear my mind and keep moving forward. Out of that experience, Rev Run was born.

Rev Run is a community 5K/1 mile run or walk dedicated to raising awareness for breast cancer. My experience made me think about people who do not have the same access, resources, medical knowledge, or support systems my mom did. If my mom, with her medical background, could be caught off guard by this diagnosis, how much harder would it be for individuals facing barriers to screening or lacking guidance? I learned that awareness extends beyond knowing that breast cancer exists, but it also means screening and recognizing that it is never too early to become informed about this disease. That is why all proceeds from the event will benefit A Silver Lining Foundation, a nonprofit organization that provides equal access to cost-free breast health testing. Early detection saves lives—like it did with my mom—and every person deserves screening services regardless of financial circumstances. The Rev Run will take place on Sunday, August 9th at 8AM at the Wilmette Community Playfield and welcomes participants of all ages and abilities.

More than just a race, Rev Run is an opportunity for our community to come together in support of survivors, patients, and families that have been impacted by cancer. Whether you run, walk, or simply show up, every person helps make a difference.

I hope that Rev Run reminds people that even in life's darkest moments, no one is ever alone. One moment that stuck with me was a conversation with my mom where she admitted that she did not want people to worry about her. She was trying to protect us and not be a burden, even while she was the one facing something terrifying. I realized just how lonely that must have felt, but watching people show up for her through flowers, calls, and visits taught me that no one should endure something this heavy without a community beside them. Rev Run is my way of turning fear into connection and reminding the community that no one has to face cancer alone.

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JULIE COHEN HAS SPENT THIRTY-EIGHT YEARS BUILDING HUBBA-HUBBA ON A SINGLE IDEA:

Someone Believing in You Is Worth Passing On

By Paul Clements

Photography by Melissa Levine
- Sweet Melissa Media

Maya Angelou once said that people will forget what you said and forget what you did, but they will never forget how you made them feel. At Hubba-Hubba, the eponymous boutique she has run for thirty-eight years, Julie Cohen has built an entire business, and an entire life, around that single idea.

"We have to be nimble," Cohen said. "I go on buying trips with my manager, who, just like me, is on the sales floor a lot. So, we kind of know what women want on a day-to-day basis. We buy what is on trend, not necessarily trendy clothes, but what's happening. Always buy what's comfortable. We're not a luxury store, but we're not a Target — we're in that sweet spot that people really appreciate."

That sweet spot — not discount, not luxury, just paying close enough attention to know what a customer needs before she asks for it — has been Cohen's operating instinct since long before she owned her own boutique. It started with a girl who liked to make things.

As a middle schooler growing up in Wilmette, Cohen made beaded jewelry. Rather than leaving it at that though, she decided to see if she could actually sell it. So, the adolescent decided to take it over to Lad and Lassie, another Wilmette retail institution that closed its doors in 2020 after 67 years in business.

"I marched myself over with my beaded jewelry to Lad and Lassie, and asked them if they wanted to sell my jewelry, and they obliged, and I got so excited," she said. "I was like, wow, I can make things — and then, people actually bought them."

It's the story Cohen tells today when asked what she'd say to a girl on the North Shore with a creative streak and no idea what to do with it. "I think perseverance is a big first step for anyone," she said. "I doubt I would have stopped trying to sell my jewelry if Lad and Lassie had said no."

It's advice that she has incorporated into her boutique. Hubba-Hubba takes on a limited selection of independent jewelry and clothing designers today, on consignment. "It helps me test the waters to see if it will sell and which customers it appeals to, and the designers make a little money and get feedback on what's



happening with their product," Cohen said. For a young or up-and-coming designer, that chance to test something in public — and find out, in real time, what works and what doesn't — builds the same confidence Cohen found for herself as she began to grow into the woman she wanted to be. Knowing at 12 or 13 that retail clicked for her was an epiphany.

At New Trier, Cohen took part in DECA, the school's work-study program, leaving campus to run the gift wall — stuffed animals, figurines, stationery — at a mom-and-pop pharmacy in Hubbard Woods. "It made it very exciting to go to school and get a paycheck," she said.

An art class at New Trier handed her something else: batik, the slow, layered wax-and-dye process that rewards patience with depth of color, turning plain fabric into something nobody else owns. Cohen used it to remake her own painter pants.

"I was that hippie kid," she said, laughing a bit at the memory. "I feel like that artistic side was even then about self-expression and having that outlet."

That same free-spirited, unconventional streak — a teenager hand-dyeing her own wardrobe instead of buying it off a rack — is still the engine of the store today. "I didn't go to business school, or study fashion merchandising," Cohen said. "It's kind of like my art is coming through with how I put my story together and how I get people dressed."

The other half of her education came from her older sister, Wendy, who ran her own boutique in Los Angeles and brought Cohen out to manage it for a year right after college. "She trained me, and I worked in LA, and got full-on immersion doing it," Cohen said.

It was immersion in a retail world that doesn't exist anymore, a time when a Saturday outing was the entertainment, not a tab left open between errands. "Since there was no internet for online buying back then, your weekend was when you went out," she said. "You'd go to the movies, go out to eat, go shopping. You couldn't just sit at home all the time and shop."



In 1988, Cohen came back from California and opened a vintage shop with her mother in Chicago's Lakeview neighborhood. Before they opened, they knew that the right name would be critical.

"Finding the name was a fun process, and because we were all vintage, we wanted an old moniker that went with that," said Cohen. They landed on Hubba-Hubba, a World War II term made famous by Bob Hope who used it frequently on his massively popular wartime radio broadcasts and in his many "Road To" movies. "When he saw a pretty woman, he'd go 'Hubba-Hubba,'" she said. "Everybody knows what it means, and you have to say it with a smile on your face." The term fit the shop and they never turned back. Today, it's still a fun term for expressing style and beauty in yesteryear's terms.

The store ran on vintage exclusively for its first six or seven years, with Cohen and her mother crossing the country to buy secondhand inventory wholesale from rag houses. By that time, however, Cohen was starting her family, so raising small children while doing buying trips was problematic. Plus the math for keeping the shop in stock was no longer adding up.

"We realized it was harder to keep the store rich in inventory with the quality and quantity of clothes that we wanted," Cohen said. The racks then began to shift gradually toward new

merchandise with a retro edge, and the store later moved from Lakeview to Roscoe Village.

Twenty-seven years and two Chicago addresses after it opened, Cohen brought Hubba-Hubba home to Wilmette in 2015 — a move she had resisted on principle for most of her career. "I always said I could never have my store in the suburbs," she said. "Then I realized never say never, because circling back was the perfect choice." The customer base widened rather than narrowed: high schoolers, senior citizens and everyone between now shop the same racks, drawn by the same honestly priced, well-chosen sweet spot Cohen has been describing all along.

Cohen doesn't talk long about the store without turning the conversation to her manager, Jen Santo, who has worked the floor beside her for twenty-seven years, through both Chicago addresses and the move to Wilmette. The two of them buy inventory together, reading day to day what the women coming through the door actually want, and Hubba-Hubba's own private shopping parties are billed not as Cohen's alone but as evenings with "Julie & Jen," co-stylists who give clients their undivided attention for the night. Cohen built a business with her name on the door, then spent decades making sure it was never just about her.

Her two daughters, twenty-four and twenty-nine, have built lives in very different

directions. The younger works in graphic design at Caterpillar in Peoria, and moonlights as a DJ and stand-up comedian. The older teaches history, social studies and civics at Highland Park High School, is finishing a master's degree, coaches field hockey and is part of the school's Model UN program. "What a leg up for these kids to have this type of experience in the Model UN program," Cohen said of her older daughter's students — the same sentence, almost word for word, she could use about her own teenage years with the DECA program at New Trier.

That circle closes most visibly in the store's partnership with New Trier's vocational program, which trains students with disabilities directly on the Hubba-Hubba sales floor — a cause that traces back to Cohen's own high school years spent serving classmates with disabilities and with the Special Olympics.

"Volunteering and serving others doesn't seem like a big deal to me, but it is a special big deal to them," she said. "They're appreciative — the parents are appreciative too." Some of those students go on to jobs in grocery stores and restaurants, wherever they land, carrying with them the same thing Lad and Lassie once gave a kid with a bag of jewelry: a chance to prove what you can do.

continued on next page

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That same instinct runs through the store's civic life more broadly — a seat on the Wilmette Chamber of Commerce board, work with the Chicago North Shore Convention and Visitors Bureau, and an early sign-up for Ron Goldblatt's North Shore Loyalty texting program, the kind of unglamorous, data-driven decision that put her ahead of marketers with budgets many times her size. Text messages carry a roughly ninety-eight percent open rate within the first three minutes of being sent — a response rate email marketing rarely approaches — and Goldblatt's North Shore-based program has built its business on exactly that gap, helping small retailers reach customers who'll glance at a text long before they'll open a promotional email. Cohen's reasoning was simpler than any of that: "Everybody's going to look at their phone, not everyone's going to open an email." It's a small bet, made years ago, that has quietly kept paying off.

Cohen has long believed Wilmette doesn't need a chain store downtown — there's already Edens Plaza and Plaza del Lago for that. "I hope they continue to give business licenses to people in the downtown that are independent," she said. "I think there's enough shopping districts that we don't need a chain store here."

She points to downtown Evanston, once a regional draw that lost its pull, as a cautionary tale, and argues the opposite strategy lifts everyone — shoppers who come to Edens Plaza or Plaza del Lago for one stop often wander downtown for another. "If we all do well, it raises us all," she said.

She's watched that bet pay off as Wilmette has spent recent years deliberately building itself into a North Shore shopping-and-dining destination, with new streetscaping downtown and continued investment around both shopping centers. Cohen, once a Chamber board member, now prefers to cheer the effort from closer to the ground. "I want to be a worker bee and not a board member," she said. She still keeps a hand in through committees and isn't shy about calling the village directly when she sees room to improve. "I try to be a bit of a squeaky wheel to the village," she said, "and they're really receptive."

For more than twenty-five years, Cohen has also hosted Ladies' Night Out shopping parties that flex to whoever's asking — a realtor's client-appreciation event one month, a fundraiser for an outside cause the next. The format barely changes: racks pulled together, a glass of wine poured, the store open late and full of women who came for the

company as much as the clothes, with either a special discount, or a share of that night's sales going back to whatever organization brought the crowd in. "It's really fun to just bring people together for a shopping night," she said. "Women love having their cocktails and shopping, and it's good for everybody — new people coming through my door, and the organization getting something out of it too."

Cohen runs her sidewalk sale the same way she runs everything else — against the calendar everyone else follows. Big-box stores and most chains merchandise a full season ahead of the weather: spring racks in February, summer in May, fall and back-to-school gear by late July, a rhythm dictated by trade shows and supply chains rather than what's actually happening outside. It's a mismatch that lands harder in the Midwest, where a warm September can run weeks past anyone's planning calendar. "People are not in the mood to buy a sweater in July and August," Cohen said. "They want to wait till it's really shifting." So she holds her summer stock through August, sometimes into September, selling it through rather than clearing it out on someone else's schedule.

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On a sad note, a few days before this interview, Cohen's older sister, Wendy — the same sister who had trained her in that Los Angeles boutique decades earlier — died. The timing landed on her all at once: a store completely settled in the town she grew up in, and a journalist showing up the same week she lost the person who'd taught her the business in the first place. "This is so bittersweet that we're talking today," Cohen said. "It feels like everything is circling back at once — my store finally landing in Wilmette, and you showing up for this interview right after I lost her. It's a lot."

Our condolences go out to Julie and her family on the loss of her sister. And yet, true to the resilience that has carried her through nearly four decades in retail, Cohen was back on the sales floor within days — because for a small-business owner, the store doesn't pause, even when the heart does.

Hubba-Hubba is open on Central Avenue in downtown Wilmette, where Cohen can usually be found on the sales floor with Jen Santo, a couple of racks to turn over and an eye on whoever just walked in. It's the same idea she's been chasing since she marched into Lad and Lassie with a bag of beaded jewelry: that how you make someone feel is the thing they'll actually remember. Thirty-eight years later, that's still the only inventory that really matters.

Walk in on any given day, and you'll understand why Wilmette held a place for her all along, even during the years she swore she'd never come home. Julie Cohen did come home — and thirty-eight years in, she's still making sure everyone who walks through her door feels like they belong there, too.

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AL FRESCO SEASON ARRIVES IN WILMETTE

Article and photos submitted by Anne Kelly
A.S.K. Marketing Group



On a beautiful summer day in Wilmette, the outdoor dining scene comes alive from morning to night. As the sun shines and patio umbrellas pop open, friends gather over coffee, families linger at lunch, and shoppers pause for a bite between errands. By evening, restaurant patios fill with diners enjoying cocktails, conversation, and dinner under the open sky as lights illuminate the trees, live music drifts across Village Green, and the village takes on a warm, welcoming energy that captures the very best of summer on the North Shore.

With one of the most vibrant outdoor dining scenes on the North Shore, Wilmette offers something for every taste and occasion. From casual cafés and family-friendly favorites to destination dining, residents and visitors can enjoy a remarkable variety of culinary experiences without ever leaving town.

Downtown Wilmette serves as the heart of the village's dining scene. At its center, the intersection of Wilmette and Central Avenues creates a natural gathering place. Three of the corners are anchored by popular dining destinations—Valley Lodge Tavern, Pescadero Seafood & Oyster Bar and Pit & Tap—while the fourth is home to Village Green. Throughout the summer, Village

Green comes alive with live music as part of Wilmette's Sounds of Summer concert series, creating a festive backdrop for outdoor diners. Whether seated on a nearby patio or enjoying takeout from one of the many local eateries at the Village Green picnic tables, visitors can savor both great food and live entertainment.

Strolling around downtown Wilmette leads to a discovery of an impressive variety of outdoor dining options. Upscale dining favorites such as Sophia Steak and Carlos & Carlos share the neighborhood with more casual destinations including Torino Ramen, Napolita Pizzeria, EvaDean's Bakery & Café and Small Cheval, whose spacious outdoor deck has quickly become a popular gathering spot. Casual favorites including Buck Russell's, Hotcakes, Trendy Taco, Central Station Coffee & Tea, and Panera Bread make it easy to grab a quick breakfast, lunch, coffee, or snack and enjoy the sunshine.

Just south of downtown along Green Bay Road, Taverna Naxos brings the flavors of the Mediterranean to Wilmette with its vibrant atmosphere and inviting outdoor seating, making it an inviting spot for leisurely summer lunches (weekends only) and dinners.

A short drive down Lake Avenue, The Lawn Grill at Wilmette Golf Club offers a different

outdoor dining experience, with scenic views overlooking the course and a relaxed atmosphere perfect for lunch, dinner, or drinks with friends.

At historic and refreshed Plaza del Lago, outdoor dining is part of the destination itself. North Shore institution Convito Café & Market continues to delight guests with its European-inspired menu and inviting patio with lakeside views. Nearby, Space 519 offers a chic setting for brunch and lunch, while The Henry—one of Wilmette's newest dining destinations—welcomes guests for breakfast, lunch, and dinner on its beautiful outdoor patio or inside its stylish dining room.

Edens Plaza has also expanded Wilmette's dining options, with newcomer Goddess and the Baker joining casual favorites such as Just Salad, Five Guys, and The Porch at Wayfair, all offering convenient outdoor dining options for shoppers, families, and those looking for a quick bite.

Whether you're lingering over brunch, meeting friends for cocktails, enjoying dinner under the stars, or picking up takeout before a concert on Village Green, Wilmette offers countless ways to enjoy the season outdoors. This summer, pull up a chair and discover why al fresco dining has become one of Wilmette's favorite seasonal pastimes.



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UPCOMING ART FESTIVALS BRING ART, MUSIC AND FAMILY FUN TO THE NORTH SHORE BURBS

By Alisa Bay

Art lovers and families alike are invited to enjoy original artwork, live entertainment and interactive activities as Amdur Productions presents a trio of popular North Shore art festivals over the next few weeks including the **Glencoe Festival of Art** on July 18 and 19, **Art at the Glen** on July 25 and 26, and the **Wilmette Art Fair** on August 1 and 2. All three festivals are free and open to the public.

For more than 42 years, the Highland Park-based Amdur Productions has produced some of the Midwest's most respected juried art festivals, connecting artists with communities while creating memorable experiences for visitors of all ages.



The Glencoe Festival of Art returns to downtown Glencoe July 18 and 19, featuring more than 125 juried artists showcasing paintings, sculpture, photography, jewelry, ceramics and more. Guests can enjoy live music, food and beverages, artist demonstrations, and a Kids Art Zone with face painting, spin art and more.

The following weekend, Art at the Glen transforms Glen Town Center into an outdoor gallery with more than 150 artists from across the country displaying a wide variety of artistic mediums. Visitors can stroll the festival while enjoying shopping, dining and family-friendly entertainment.

The summer festival season continues August 1 and 2 with the Wilmette Art Fair, where more than 100 artists will line Wilmette and Central Avenues with original artwork. Festival-goers can enjoy live music, interactive art experiences, artist demonstrations, and plenty of activities for kids.

"These festivals are about much more than buying art, they're about creating community," said Amy Amdur, founder and president of Amdur Productions. "We love seeing families spend the day together discovering new artists, listening to live music and participating in hands-on activities."

"Our goal is to make art accessible and enjoyable for everyone," added Amdur. "Whether you're a serious collector or simply looking for a fun summer outing, these festivals offer something for every age and interest. Save the dates and join us!"

For more information about these art fests and other Amdur Productions' festivals throughout the season, please visit www.AmdurProductions.com



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Follow the Yellow Balloons to the **2026 Wilmette Sidewalk Sale**

Two Days of Shopping, Dining, Music, and Family Fun in Downtown Wilmette

Submitted by Sara Jane Abbott (SJ) | Executive Director-Wilmette/Kenilworth Chamber of Commerce

The Wilmette Kenilworth Chamber of Commerce invites residents and visitors to celebrate summer and support local businesses at the **2026 Wilmette Sidewalk Sale**, taking place **Friday, July 10 and Saturday, July 11 from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

This year's theme, "**Follow the Yellow Balloons**," encourages shoppers to explore all that downtown Wilmette has to offer. From beloved local boutiques and restaurants to a curated collection of artists, makers, crafters, and specialty vendors, visitors will discover unique products, services, and experiences throughout the shopping district.

"Wilmette truly has it all," said Sara Jane Abbott, Executive Director of the Wilmette Kenilworth Chamber of Commerce. "Great restaurants, cool shops, outstanding local businesses, and now even more excitement with a thoughtfully curated selection of vendors and

family-friendly attractions. We invite everyone to come out, support local businesses, and follow the yellow balloons through town."

The Sidewalk Sale will feature:

- Local retailers offering special promotions and sidewalk displays
- Artists, makers, crafters, and specialty vendors
- Outdoor dining and restaurant offerings
- Live entertainment throughout downtown
- Family-friendly activities and attractions
- Carnival-style games
- Kona Ice
- A special appearance by everyone's favorite blue heeler, Bluey

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT ON SATURDAY

Saturday's entertainment lineup, provided by North Shore Music, will bring energy and excitement to the event with performances throughout the day.

Visitors can enjoy:

- Live performances on the main stage at The Village
- Strolling musicians throughout the shopping district
- A singer-songwriter performing relaxed pop and acoustic favorites along Central Street
- Family-friendly musical entertainment for all ages

The Wilmette Sidewalk Sale has become one of the community's most anticipated summer traditions, bringing together residents, visitors, businesses, and families for a weekend that celebrates shopping local and supporting the vibrant downtown business community.

Admission is free and all are welcome.

For additional information, sponsorship opportunities, or a complete entertainment schedule, visit the Wilmette Kenilworth Chamber of Commerce website or follow the Chamber on social media.

EVENT DETAILS

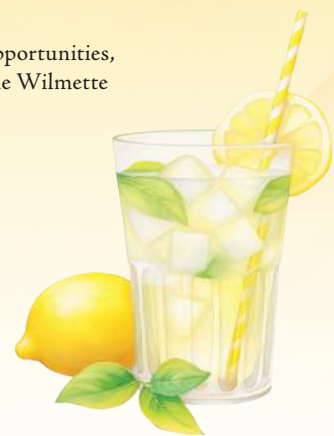
2026 Wilmette Sidewalk Sale

**Friday, July 10 & Saturday,
July 11, 2026**

10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

**Downtown Wilmette-Where
Central and Wilmette meet**

Follow the Yellow Balloons and discover why Wilmette is one of the North Shore's favorite destinations for shopping, dining, and community fun.



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