

Event organizers pivot for 2020

Continued from Page 1

for our region. Many of our businesses depend on the revenue from the longstanding festivals. A good festival weekend with perfect weather and record attendance could carry a business into the tough months when traditionally tourism numbers and spending in general are down: October, November, January through April.”

What Should've Been

“The band Cinderella said it best, ‘Don’t know what you got (till it’s gone).’ While closing the street down or having a vendor in front of your shop for two days could be a minor inconvenience at the time, it seems like one we would gladly take this year in order to have some sense of festival vibrancy back in our lives,” Pauly said. “In conversation with business owners, I hear, ‘I miss the energy the festivals bring to the street,’ or ‘As much as I didn’t think – fill in the blank with the attraction or concert – brought me business, I’m seeing with new eyes how much I am missing those customers.’”

One of 2020’s first canceled events was the Lewiston GardenFest, which would’ve taken place June 20-21.

President Sharon Low said, “The Garden Club did lose revenue from our GardenFest and perennial sale due to the cancellation. The profits are unknown because they vary from year to year. We did, however, return the vendors fee, which had been sent to us before the cancellation.

“We are sad for our regular vendors who probably did not have a good year because of the cancellation of so many festivals. We also feel badly for the impact that COVID-19 had on the closing of stores and restaurants on Center Street. We always hope that the festivals bring customers to the village.

“When I sent information on our Facebook page that we would not have the fest this year, I received many comments of disappointment from the public. It’s always nice to hear from people that it is their favorite festival.”

GardenFest funds go toward plantings and upkeep of green space in Lewiston.

“We had enough funds to continue our regular work in our adopted areas around the village. However, there was no big project this year. Hopefully, by June



The Taste of Lewiston, as shown in 2019, would’ve been one of the Lewiston festivals to take place this summer. (File photos)

2021, things will be back to normal,” Low said.

The Jazz Festival, which is nearing its 20th anniversary, would’ve taken place at the end of this month.

Board of Directors Chairman George Osborne said, “It would seem to me that restaurants and bars would be impacted the most by festival cancellations along with forced closures and ongoing limited openings. It is too early to evaluate the long-term impact this will have, but I would not look for everything to return to normal next summer.

“The Jazz Festival suffered a substantial loss as we had to cover operations and overhead, but we are not threatened as our surplus was more than adequate to cover any losses. I expect the Jazz Festival will come back close to full strength.”

Why It Matters

The Kiwanis Club of Lewiston was, perhaps, the most reluctant to cancel its 2020 programming. Kiwanians use the Niagara County Peach Festival to fund their charitable contributions for the next year.

Past President Marty Pauly said, “The Peach Festival itself is one of the major attractions, which bring thousands of people into Lewiston. I firmly believe other villages wished they had what Lewiston has with regard to festivals, as well as residents willing to sacrifice many long hours to make them a success.



“The Kiwanis Club of Lewiston, each year following the festival, donates tens of thousands of dollars back into the community. These donations go to a variety of charity and nonprofit organizations. Also receiving these goods are community events such as the village’s annual Spring Fling and the Lewiston Kiwanis Easter egg hunt.

“The Peach Festival allows the Kiwanis Club to award thousands of dollars in scholarship money to local students. Along with financially supporting local graduates, Kiwanis supports student leadership groups in our area’s schools from the primary grades through college. These groups receive the financial support they need and also have Kiwanis members as their advisers. Within these leadership groups, students learn the meaning of being a community-minded citizen. What it’s like being a volunteer and performing projects to help the less-fortunate. All of this is a direct result of the Peach Festival.”

He added, “It should be quite clear how important the Peach Festival is. Not just for Kiwanis to continue doing what we do every year, but also for the local economy. This is true of all festivals. The festivals are a major source of revenue, which helps some of the businesses get through the slower, winter months, which plague our region every year.”

Organizations Pivot

Though events are scarce, organizers haven’t exactly been on vacation over these past four-plus months.

The Chamber of Commerce held weekly Zoom meetings, offering safety briefings with local elected leaders and business-to-business networking events. It also debuted a give and take table, providing nonperishables to those in need – an especially worthwhile endeavor during the pandemic’s early weeks, when groceries and toiletries were in short supply.

“Our organization has, thankfully, positioned itself to have a reserve fund that is helping us get through this year and will take us into 2021,” Jennifer Pauly said. “The staff and board had to make tough decisions and a lot of cuts to ensure that this organization is here to help grow the communities we represent and business/organization members. Somehow, our businesses and organizations have figured out how to pivot and find a way to make the best of navigating through this time. The effects of the loss of income from this year will have a lasting impact for a few years.”

In lieu of an Art Festival, the Lewiston Council on the Arts hosted an online “Chalk YOUR Walk” competition. At 4 p.m. last Saturday – the time when the high school Chalk Walk winners would’ve been announced on

Center Street – LCA members gathered at the International Peace Garden to recognize artists who would not otherwise have been eligible to participate.

“The pandemic caused the cancelation of many of the concerts, festivals and programs that have made Lewiston a thriving arts community and cultural epicenter. This weekend would have been the 54th Lewiston Art Festival and the 36th Chalk Walk competition. In order to salvage something of this epic weekend, Lewiston Council on the Arts reinvented the KeyBank Chalk Walk competition into the ‘Chalk YOUR Walk’ competition and made it virtual,” the LCA stated in a press release. “Anyone in Western New York could submit their chalk mural to compete for \$800 in prize money. Chalk artists from 26 ZIP codes submitted 53 images that were posted to the Art Council Facebook page, where the public could then decide on the People’s Choice winner by registering their ‘Likes.’ Almost 7,000 votes were cast for murals created by chalkers ages 7 to ‘old as dirt.’”

Artpark & Company scrapped its popular “Tuesdays in the Park” concert series, but came up with an assortment of new programming. Drive-in movie nights have been successful – and visitors have noticed the main parking lot is getting a mural makeover. A Native American Peace Garden was recently dedicated, and a reimagined Fairy House Festival will take place this weekend. There’s also “The Art of Walking,” which is a guided tour exploring the state park’s natural beauty and famed history.

In a June press release, Executive Director Sonia Kozlova Clark said, “Like everyone else, Artpark and our community have been living through an unprecedented time of major sacrifice and loss. Such a time calls for a special kind of action, strategy and attitude. Right now, all on the Artpark team are focused on handling the ramifications of the unpredictable and managing what is under our control. While large-scale concerts will not be possible this summer, Artpark offers its natural beauty and inspiration to artists and visitors. Looking at this new emerging season, I see an Artpark that serves its community through the healing and uniting power of the arts and nature – an Artpark that serves its mission to nurture artistic talent while providing invaluable service to our audiences through experiences in the park that make us stronger.”

Residents Respond

While the absence of festivals and events could’ve spelled certain doom for the local economy, something unexpected happened.

Village of Lewiston Mayor Anne Welch said, “I’ve been in **SEE I FIRMLY, continued on Page 9**

AUTO INSURANCE DESIGNED FOR AARP MEMBERS

IF YOUR CURRENT INSURANCE IS:	YOU COULD SAVE:
GEICO	\$380
ALLSTATE	\$477
STATE FARM	\$383

\$370* AVERAGE SAVINGS WHEN YOU SWITCH

Experienced Drivers 50+: You could save hundreds* on Auto Insurance when you switch to the **AARP® Auto Insurance Program from The Hartford.**

- Rates that reward you for your safe driving
- Exclusive package of benefits
- 24/7 Claim Hotline and exceptional claims service

CALL THE HARTFORD TO REQUEST A FREE QUOTE AND SEE HOW MUCH YOU COULD SAVE:
1-855-963-4565

Not a member? If you're 50 or over, request a FREE quote and more information today!

AARP Auto Insurance Program from **THE HARTFORD**

* Savings amounts are averages based on information from The Hartford's AARP Auto Insurance Program customers who became new policyholders between 1/1/16 and 12/31/16 and provided data regarding their savings and prior carrier. Your savings may vary. AARP and its affiliates are not insurers. Paid endorsement. The Hartford pays royalty fees to AARP for the use of its intellectual property. These fees are used for the general purposes of AARP. AARP membership is required for Program eligibility in most states. The AARP Automobile Insurance Program from The Hartford is underwritten by Hartford Fire Insurance Company and its affiliates, One Hartford Plaza, Hartford, CT 06155. Auto program is currently unavailable in Massachusetts, Canada and U.S. Territories or possessions. Specific features, credits and discounts may vary and may not be available in all states in accordance with state filings and applicable law. Applicants are individually underwritten and some may not qualify.

Tax Problems: RESOLVED

There are many ways we can tackle IRS or State tax relief together:

- ✓ Tax Levies & Liens Release
- ✓ Wage Garnishment Release
- ✓ Stop Penalties and Interest
- ✓ Tax Debt Negotiation & Settlement
- ✓ Resolve Back Taxes
- ✓ Payroll Tax Negotiation
- ✓ Tax Preparation & Bookkeeping Services

Call us now for your **FREE** tax consultation & evaluation:
855-935-3010

Anthem offers a money-back guarantee designed to help you avoid wasting money on ineffective tax services. We will gather as much information from you as necessary and work with tax authorities to give you the best chance of reducing your tax debt. If for any reason that does not work out, and the government notifies us they refuse to reduce your overall tax liability or monthly payments by any amount, we will gladly refund you the fees you paid for our services in trying to reduce that debt. Money Back Guarantee does not apply to Bookkeeping and Tax Preparation Services.

Millions Of Dollars Saved In Back Taxes

Anthem Tax Services provides world class personalized tax debt relief and tax preparation services. We offer the tailored experience that you expect from your tax preparation professionals, and we operate remotely so you never need to leave your home or office.

Tax debt can happen to anyone. Whether you are self-employed, an independent contractor, took an early withdrawal from a 401k, or had another unforeseen life event occur, we can help resolve your debt in a few simple steps:

- Opportunity
- Agreement
- Investigation
- TAX DEBT FREE!