

'I firmly believe other villages wished they had what Lewiston has'

Continued from Page 8

contact with all the restaurant owners, the business owners, and they're doing really well."

The reason why, she explained, is, "The locals are really supporting the businesses."

"The (business owners) are missing out, because of Artpark and the festivals – they count on those festivals to make money. I just think that the locals have picked up the slack for them," Welch said.

She added, "Everybody's doing local. I think they realize that Lewiston is pretty safe, as far as our numbers for COVID. I know I do; I stay right in the village. I don't need to go anywhere. They have everything I need right here."

Even if New York allowed festivals, large events or concerts, crowds would be smaller. There has been a federal ban at the Canadian border, limiting travel to and from the neighbor to the north. In addition, New York has a travel advisory wherein anyone traveling to one of more than 30 states with a higher coronavirus infection rate must, upon return, quarantine at home for two weeks.

It's remarkable then, Village of Lewiston Treasurer Stephanie Myers reported that, after two months of a roughly 33% drop in sales tax received, the municipality netted more in July 2020 revenues than it did in July 2019.

The Village Bake Shoppe owner Michael Fiore said, "Our community has kept us busy. It seems like we're taking more cake and desserts orders than we did before. Our wedding cake business is on the rise after a slow start. The new restrictions on weddings have changed a few things, but people are still getting married, which is a huge blessing for us."

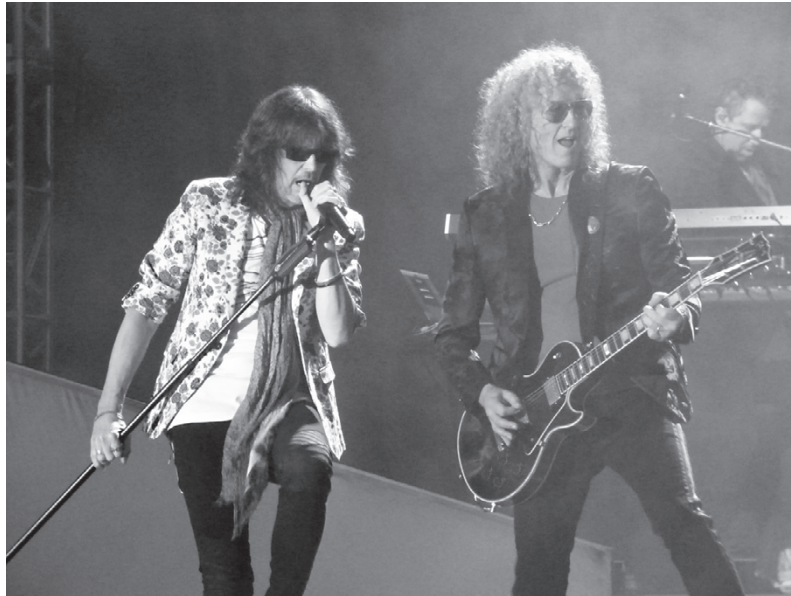
"Although the border is closed and there are no festivals, our store shelves have been wiped out every weekend. I never thought this would happen a few months ago. We've even added bakers to help keep up with demand. We owe it all to our amazing community. God has been so good to us through all this."

Still, Apple Granny Restaurant co-owner Chuck Barber said this summer has an unwanted feel to it.

"First and foremost, we're definitely keeping our head above water. But what I consider this to be is the long winter," he said. "You know, we've always made it through the winter, but we plan accordingly. We have our expectations differently; our resources differently. We get into March, where, for Apple Granny's, with our fish fry, once we get into lent is where the wheels start turning again. Then we have Easter; there's usually a little bit of a lull, but then we roll right into college graduations; then, right around the corner, there's high school graduations; and by then Artpark is going, so it's boom, boom, boom, boom."

"We lost all that. We were two to three weeks into lent when COVID hit. And I could feel like we were just starting to pick back up and it all shut back down."

Gov. Andrew Cuomo put "New York State on PAUSE" in March, prohibiting restaurants from offering indoor or outdoor seating.



Clockwise: Artpark has swapped concerts for drive-in movies. The Jazz Festival hopes to return even stronger in 2021. With no Peach Festival in September, Victoria Skrlin-Kozak will carry over her Peach Queen reign into 2021. Families will miss the Peach Festival parade this year. (File photos)

As spring began, Cuomo announced his "New York Forward" reopening plan, and gradually loosened restrictions on eateries. In Western New York, patrons were first allowed to eat outside, and then permitted to return inside restaurants – but at a lesser capacity.

Barber said local customer support has been more important than ever.

"The community's been great when we were in the curbside world, and I would say they've been great at coming to us; but, no matter how busy we are, we're only 50% of what we could be" because of state restrictions," he said. "There's times we filled up where people have had to wait for tables, but I also say – even though we're at 50% – a lot of people are still too nervous to come out. Our takeout business has remained stronger than pre-COVID. So, our

takeout has been good. But all of those events – from the festivals, to Artpark events or concerts, to the high school graduations, college graduations, the baseball tournaments that come to Pletcher Road, the soccer (Niagara) Pioneer tournaments at Fort Niagara – all of those were big draws for us.

"I understand we still are getting tourists, (but) you're not getting tourists from as far as normally you could, because of all the travel bans. We get a lot of out-of-towners. The Canadian bridge being closed has been huge to us."

"So, I would say what we have in the winter, we always rely on the locals who come and have been great to us. And that's that what we still have: The locals who are great to us. But in the summer you get that extra something. We don't have that extra something." Barber noted hometown pa-



tronage has been essential: "The majority of our business since COVID has been our locals. I appreciate their continued support through this."

Jennifer Pauly said, "Despite the event cancellations and restrictions on capacity for smaller

events and programs, we feel that, overall, the community has learned the importance of supporting small businesses and the organizations that make our region a great place to live, work and play."



Thank You

The devoted companion and service dog of Janie Lollis passed away Feb. 24, 2020 at 17 years of age.

Homer was well known around town at various restaurants & shops, and all the festivals & street fairs in Lewiston. He could always be seen around town in his signature blue stroller taking in all the excitement.

Homer was also a mainstay at The Lewiston Senior Center where at lunch time he greeted and was greeted by the seniors.

Homer brought joy and happiness to everyone who met him. He loved people.

Janie would like to Thank everyone who sent cards and dropped by with memorial keepsakes and gifts honoring Homer's memory. She would also like to thank the staffs of Lewiston Animal Hospital and Wheatfield Animal Hospital for the excellent care they gave Homer, especially Dr. Ashley Mott.

He will be greatly missed by all who knew him, especially his mom.

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