

Doors shut at Lewiston APlus/Sunoco; Tops Xpress expands hours



BY JOSHUA MALONI
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Early last week, the Village of Lewiston was notified Reid Petroleum Corp. was not renewing its lease with Sunoco/APlus for the gas station and convenience store at 890 Center St.

A note on the building's front doors said the business would close as of last Wednesday night. Plastic tape is now around the pumps and in front of the entrance.

NFP reached out to Reid Petro-



leum and the corporate offices of Sunoco/APlus for comment, and is still awaiting response.

In the meantime, Tops Xpress has stepped in to fill the early, early morning shopping and coffee



It was dark at the Sunoco/APlus last week Thursday night, as the store was empty and the pumps were unavailable to the public. • Above, Tops Xpress, meanwhile, is looking to fill the void now that the APlus doors are shut.

needs of those who patronized the APlus. Owner Anthony DiMino said his convenience mart is open from 5 a.m. to midnight seven days a week at the

corner of Cayuga and South Eighth streets.

A pair of store coolers recently added cheese and an expanded line of dairy products. Tops Xpress also sells rock salt and ice for drinks – two popular items at the APlus.

DiMino said he expects the Sunoco shuttering to be temporary. He was told another franchisee is lined up for this location.

No paperwork has been submitted to the Village of Lewiston. Signage for a new business would have to be reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission and approved by the Planning Commission.

DiMino said he was happy with his gas station and mini-mart, and has no interest in the Center Street property.

Of course, coffee is readily available at the Orange Cat Coffee Co., the Village Bake Shoppe, Syros and throughout the village.

HAL travels 'From Russia – With Log'

The Historical Association of Lewiston's February program, "From Russia – With Log," will take place at 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 25, at the Red Brick Municipal Building gym, 145 N. Fourth St. Douglas DeCroix is the presenter.

In 2004, a British and Russian salvage team extracted a waterlogged warplane from the depths of Lake Mart-Yavr, about 18 miles southeast of Luostari in the Russian Arctic Circle. The aircraft was a Bell P-39 Airacobra – P-39Q-

15BE 44-2911, to be exact – which had disappeared on a routine ferrying flight 60 years prior. The pilot, Lt. Baranovski, was still seated in the cockpit, and when salvagers looked in the door-mounted map case, they found the aircraft's log – documenting every stage of its life from Niagara Falls to the arctic lake.

This historic aircraft was acquired by the Niagara Aerospace Museum in 2008 and it returned home to Niagara Falls, yards from where it was manufactured

in 1943, the following year. Since that time, it has provided a fascinating window into local aviation history and the vital Lend-Lease lifeline to the Soviet Union.

Some of the stories gleaned from this remarkable aircraft will provide the focus for historian DeCroix's latest presentation for HAL. In his program, "From Russia – With Log," he will share details about the aircraft's design and construction, along with its brief, but storied journey to the Soviet Union and back.

A familiar presenter to HAL members, DeCroix currently serves as executive editor of Western New York Heritage Inc., the not-for-profit publisher of Western New York Heritage magazine. He holds degrees in history from the University of Illinois and Miami University of Ohio, and achieved doctoral candidacy status at Bowling Green State University.

A native of Chicago, DeCroix came to Western New York in the early 1990s. Since then, he has made significant contributions to numerous nationally aired historical documentaries produced by WNED-TV and The History Channel. He oversaw production of the three-volume commemorative series on the War of 1812, published by Western New York Heritage, and was one of the scholars selected to contribute a chapter for the Routledge Handbook of the War of 1812, pub-

lished by the Taylor & Francis Group in late 2015.

For his contributions to regional history, DeCroix was selected to receive the prestigious Owen B. Augspurger Award by the Buffalo History Museum in October 2015. He continues to collaborate with a variety of cultural and educational organizations, working to celebrate the region's rich history while seeking creative ways of bringing that history into the classroom and into the lives of the region's inhabitants.

This community event is free and open to all. Guests can use the north door on Onondaga Street. Due to COVID-19 pandemic safety rules, all people must wear appropriate facial covering and practice social distancing during the presentation. Hand sanitizer will be available. There will be a 50-person seating limit.

There will be no refreshments served at this meeting.



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