

Niagara County Tribune/Sentinel

June 18, 2021 FREE 20 Pages Vol. 30 / No. 26 • Vol. 34 / No. 17



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Village of Lewiston

'ALL THAT POSSIBILITY AT ACADEMY PARK' with bandshell relocation, renovation



A big change came to Academy Park this week, as Farley handled the move of the bandshell to a new location. See more photos online at www.wnypapers.com.



BY JOSHUA MALONI
GM/Managing Editor

Standing in front of the relocated Alphonso DiMino Memorial Bandshell on Wednesday morning, Village of Lewiston Mayor Anne Welch and Deputy Mayor Vic Eydt couldn't help but express their excitement for what Academy Park could be, now that its biggest asset is resituated.

"I think this is awesome," Welch said. "This is the perfect place for this. It should have been here to begin with, because it opens up to the whole park for concerts; the

Peach Festival – they're gonna love it."

Eydt said, "You come around the corner – you stop at the corner down there – and you look at that ("Circle of Honor" veterans) monument. It's wide open. I mean, it's just like, 'Holy cow.' Now that the grandstand's been moved and the bleachers are down, it's incredible."

"It just opens the park up," Welch said.

"It just opens it all up," Eydt reiterated.

DiMino Lewiston Tops owner Anthony DiMino financed the

bandshell's creation 20 years ago. The structure originally sat right off the corner of Portage Road, with the stage facing Center Street. It was most notably used for Niagara County Peach Festival events such as concerts, dance competitions and the Peach Queen pageant.

The bandshell is now located at the corner of Portage Road and Cayuga Street, across from Syros Restaurant and Warren's Village Hardware. Its stage faces the field and will be able to accommodate more events.

SEE MORE, continued on Page 9

Lewiston Kiwanis welcomes Academy Park updates

BY TERRY DUFFY
Editor-in-Chief

Planning continues for the recently announced return of the annual Niagara County Peach Festival, to be held Sept. 9-12 at Academy Park in the Village of Lewiston.

This week's long-awaited move of the Alphonse DiMino Memorial Bandshell from the park's northwest corner at Center Street/Portage Road to the southwest location across from Syros on Cayuga Street is now complete. Festival organizers, the Kiwanis Club of Lewiston, were upbeat as they checked out the new site and the expanded options it provides the club come this fall.

"I love the new location," said Dean Beltrano, Peach Festival chairman. He said the move has long been on the club's "wish list" when it comes to improvements to the festival's decades-long home.

"It's even going back to Mayor (Terry) Collesano's tenure," Beltrano continued, as he referred to an earlier push to relocate the popular facility by the former Village of Lewiston mayor and longtime Kiwanis member. "Early on, he had met with a lot of the stakeholders who do stuff in the park. And that actually was one of the first things asked – that the stage has to move, that we got it in the wrong place."

"It has to be in one of the back corners and you have to turn it around, because it opens to Center Street, and what you want is (it to) play within the park. And it's not just for us; it's for anybody that uses that park, that uses that stage, that brings in bands or entertainment."

SEE CLUB, continued on Page 8

Play all!

Unified basketball
rolls at NWS

BY DAVID YARGER

The game of basketball can bring countless memories to all who have played. Some remember the first time they made their first basket, some remember game-winning shots, and some may just remember being part of a team.

For some, though, they haven't been as fortunate to feel the experience of playing in front of fans or being on a team ... until recently.

In the past few years, school districts around the state have begun an initiative to include all students in sport. Schools around the Niagara Frontier have begun unified sports programs, such as basketball and bowling, which gives students with intellectual disabilities the opportunity to compete in competition. This spring, Niagara Wheatfield High School kicked off its first year of unified basketball.

With unified sports interest growing in the region, the faculty and administration at the school decided it was time to look into putting together a team. Talks actually began last school year, before COVID-19 halted the remaining months of school.

"It was first brought to my attention by our athletic director and athletic director's secretary, Matt McKenna and Jamie Beiter, (they) brought it up to me and kind of explained what the program was," Niagara-Wheatfield unified basketball coach Anthony Cappuccilli said. "I was fascinated by it; I was really excited about it. So, they reached out to me to gauge my interest and I was 100% on board."

Cappuccilli, in addition to coach Nicholas Azzarella, started attending informational sessions about the program and began to get kids involved at school. Despite worries about COVID-19 restrictions, the group was able to get the season in. Cappuccilli said he and Azzarella continued to learn as

SEE PROGRAM, on Page 6

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