

# Annual swim returns as COVID-19 restrictions ease



Pictured are scenes from the 2019 Olcott Lions' "Swim for Sight" at Olcott Beach. (File photos by Wayne Peters)

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said. "We hope to lead the way showing it can be done and be done safely."

He said swim participants who usually encounter Lake Ontario temps in the low-30s can expect temperatures hovering in the low-40s this weekend.

"The water will be plenty cold with the average temperature approximately 10 degrees warmer than the average March water temperatures," Clark said. "Polar

Bears won't feel much different."

The popular "Swim for Sight," a fundraiser to benefit the Lions' numerous community programs, typically sees anywhere from 300 to 400 daring swim participants in the water – and a spectator crowd of 1,000-plus on the shore watching and celebrating. However, Clark noted the Olcott Lions' focus for the 2021 event is centered on the safety of both swimmers and spectators.

"This year we have adjusted the

swim to comply with any and all health regulations at the time of the swim to keep everyone (participants and spectators) safe," he said. "Activities will start at 10 a.m., with swimmers entering the water in organized groups earlier than past swims in small groups, wearing masks. It will include practicing social distancing, predicated on CDC guidelines at the time of the swim."

With COVID-19 still a concern, and the CDC state protocols on crowds and distancing ever-changing, Clark said the club has chosen to air on the side of caution. He emphasized the event will strictly adhere to CDC guidelines, as well as those by the state and county health departments when it comes social distancing.

"They will be separated," Clark said of both the swimmers and crowds. "Our aim is to keep it small due to COVID."

He added, "Our aim is to keep people distanced, in the registration and staging areas, and also when it comes to outside activi-

ties. For this year's 'COVID-times' 'Swim for Sight,' we must reduce congestion, and all participants must remain in small, separated groups."

The Lions also stressed the following:

- Everyone must wear a properly fitted mask when in the registration area and when entering and exiting the beach area. Participants will not be granted entry to the registration or swim areas unless they are wearing a mask. There will be no exceptions, even if someone is fully vaccinated.

- Swim participants and spectators must wear a mask in the street corner assembly area and on the stairway to the beach. Swimmers may remove their mask when in the water but must immediately place the mask back on after leaving the water and before proceeding back up the stairway.

"A big difference for this year's swim (is) there will be no shotgun start," Clark said. "Entry to the water will begin as early as 12 noon and continue until 2 p.m."

So what happenings can spectators look forward to Sunday?

Clark said many of the annual favorites. Look for costume contests, the annual Niagara County fire companies' tug of war contest, a street parade through Olcott, the popular Polar Bear Queen and King contests and, of course, the swim itself. Other highlights include tons of food and drink of ferings, music, fun and more. The event is open to visitors of all ages; families are welcome to attend.

"With continued progress in vaccinations, we feel confident we can manage a successfully safe swim for the entire family," Clark said. "We'll also have a couple of special extra things for participants."

"We're already making plans to make it the best yet!"

Clark advised those interested in attending to check the Olcott Lions official "Swim for Sight" Facebook page for complete information on registration, participation and fundraising; or visit <https://olcottlions.org/index.html#form1-5>.

## IN THE NEWS

### Pekin Memorial Day ceremony cancellation

The Memorial Day ceremony that would normally be held at Mount View Cemetery on Upper Mountain Road in Pekin has been canceled again this year due to COVID-19.

Members of Sanborn American Legion Post No. 969 had coordi-

nated this service with their auxiliary and the Sanborn Fire Co. Band since June 14, 1924. Last year, the pandemic canceled the event.

The ceremony normally takes place at the foot of the Civil War monument located at the north end of Mount View Cemetery. This was the first Civil War monument to be erected in Ni-

agara County.

An observance began in 1886 by members of the Grand Army of the Republic. Their post, No. 125, was named after Pvt. Alexander B. Mabon, a member of Company B of the 8th Regiment NY Artillery, who gave his life during the Civil War. The ceremonial duties continued with the formation of Sanborn American Legion Post No. 969 in 1924. The post is responsible for placing flags on more than 1,000 veteran's graves in seven cemeteries in recognition of service.

HOPE Day 2021 nets \$317,228 for Appeal

HOPE Day, the annual 24-hour match challenge day of giving to benefit Appeal 2021, brought in \$260,016 on May 14. Matching funds of \$57,212 added to this total increase HOPE Day's grand total to \$317,228, toward the annual Appeal's \$10 million goal in support of Catholic Charities and the "Fund for the Faith."

To date, more than \$8,017,161 or 80% of Appeal 2021's \$10 million goal has been raised. Donations can continue to be made at [ccwny.org/donation](http://ccwny.org/donation) through June 30.

For more information, visit [ccwny.org](http://ccwny.org).

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