

Barber co-owner excited to meet-and-greet more community members

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“One of the reasons I left my nonprofit career after close to 20 years was to work in this community; have something that’s closer to home; family could be involved with it; and work differently,” he said. “Apple Granny’s was a dream; I got to meet wonderful people, work with talented people, my family works there. Two of my boys work there. My wife works there. But this year, unexpectedly, my mother passed away due to COVID.”

The sudden illness and tragic loss forced Barber to reevaluate his work-life balance. “And to continue on to meet the obligations successfully and properly at Apple Granny’s, the demands of the restaurant, I just needed to make the decision,” he said.

“My focus has changed. My priorities have changed a little bit. I just have to work differently. The restaurant’s wonderful. The restaurant’s outstanding.” But it’s also “a lot more physical demands, unexpected demands; you know, it’s very unpredictable.”

Barber has been an NRRCC board member and active with its Lewiston Business Group for four years.

“I’ve known this crew; I’ve always enjoyed the chamber. So, when this opportunity came up, it seemed like a great fit,” he said. “I feel like I have my board of directors’ hat on, so I know the chamber’s operations and what they’re about. And I’m also a business owner. So, I hope that I’m able to speak to the businesses. I know a lot of the folks from the restau-



Chuck Barber is now a member of the Niagara River Region Chamber of Commerce staff. To contact him, call 754-9500 or email Chuck@niagarariverregion.com.

rant, my kids, being a member of the Kiwanis. I’ve been involved with so many things, so I’d like to think that I check a lot of the boxes.”

NRRCC President Jennifer Pauly said, “The director of membership position was one we envisioned prior to knowing Chuck was going to apply – but once his application came in, I knew that he would be a contender. He went through the interview process and, having had a background as a small business owner, member of the chamber and board member, it was clear that he was the perfect candidate for the position. Chuck also has nonprofit experience, which is where I personally knew him from prior to owning Apple Granny and becoming a board member.”

She noted, “One of the areas of growth for the chamber is to focus on membership – specifically growing and retaining member-

CHANGES COMING TO CHRISTMAS WALK WEEKEND

Santa Claus is coming to town – and he’s bringing some extra goodies this year.

On Monday, the Village of Lewiston Board approved a request made by the Niagara River Region Chamber of Commerce to host an Electric Lights Parade from 3-8 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 5, as part of Christmas Walk weekend. An exact route is still being planned, but will likely start at or near Academy Park and then wind its way down Center Street, ending on Fourth Street.

President Jennifer Pauly said, “Our chamber has been in discussions for an Electric Lights Parade for the past two years. We decided this year was the year to make it happen.

“A lot of planning will take place between now and Dec. 5, but we have an events committee and local businesses dedicated to making it work! An official announcement will be made once we align our sponsors of the parade.”

Trustees also agreed to push the official tree-lighting ceremony in Hennepin Park to this night. It usually takes place on Friday, prior to the Saturday-Sunday Christmas Walk.

Now, the plan is for Jolly Old St. Nick to helicopter in to Academy Park Saturday morning, mingle with children and families throughout the weekend, and then visit the village ceremony Sunday night.

Of course, Santa’s schedule is weather-permitting – and organizers are hoping coronavirus safety protocols will allow for such group activities. Stay tuned for more details.

ship. We offer so much and needed a better way of making sure our members knew the value of the chamber. I knew that our current staffing structure needed to be updated, and that membership needed to be laser-focused. Chuck’s role will be responsible for making sure our members are engaged.

“I’m so excited for the growth of this organization! Putting the right people in the right positions, and focusing on growth is a priority for the fourth quarter and going into next year.”

Barber said he’s looking forward to this new opportunity.

“The activities the chamber does flows a lot with my family life, from the events, the mix, all those things that my family could still participate in,” he said. “I just love being part of the connecting of this neighborhood, the community. The customers would come in to see me at Apple Gran-

ny’s, and now in this job I feel like I’ll be going out to them.”

“I appreciate that I still get to keep all of those relationships – just now with a different hat on,” he said.

Barber stressed his decision to leave the restaurant “was not anything to do with the status of Apple Granny’s. Apple Granny’s is going strong. We’ve made it through COVID. I’m proud of being part of something that none of us will ever forget, is how we made it through COVID. And being a restaurant owner through COVID, I’m very proud of being part of that team to navigate through the waters of it. I loved being part of the community support of it.

“It had nothing to do with Apple Granny’s not thriving still and going strong. This wasn’t me trying to take an opportunity to get out of the restaurant world due to COVID. I thought I’d be there for

many years to come.

“It’s important for me to let people know that – that this was really an unexpected change of life that drove this. An opening came up. They say when one door closes – hate to be so cliché – but it truly was that for me.”

Barber said he spoke with Apple Granny co-owner Michael Burke, and “It was just a life change that I needed to do. I knew I needed to make a change, and the opportunity for the chamber – literally within weeks – presented itself. Mike and I talked about Apple Granny’s, because I wasn’t sure what was going to be next. So, it really just seemed like the timing could not have been better for me.

“Mike, I stayed on board with Apple Granny’s to transition out. He brought in a new person to welcome into there to help carry on Apple Granny’s, and I still help behind the scenes right now.”

Town, village to discuss future ice rink plans

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water connections exist. “Without the infrastructure, you’re looking at putting in more money, more time, more effort going to a new location.

“We’re not opposed to a new location long-term – I think the town’s been perfectly clear saying that we’re guests there; wherever

you tell us to go long-term, we’re willing to work with you, if you choose to do the ice rink.”

For now, Dashineau said, “Power and water at that location is essential.”

Deal Realty owner Tom Deal, who has spearheaded financing and promotional efforts for the ice rink, reiterated Dashineau’s

points.

“We’d like to just put it back just for ease of use; to put it where it was” last, he said. “Then next year, we can look to move it. If that’s where you guys would prefer it, we’ll certainly move it wherever it needs to be.

“Just with the time and putting everything in together, we

just feel that’s the easiest to get through this winter. Next winter we can move forward.”

With the bleachers gone and the Alphonso DiMino Memorial Bandshell moved, Eydt said he expected it would be easier to move rink materials in and out of the park. Wills agreed. “They’ve got more room to work,” he said.

Trustees have said their long-term goal is to install a permanent concrete pad, a pavilion or splash pad in Academy Park that

could accommodate both ice rink operations and warmer-weather events and social gatherings.

“We need to look at something other than this ice rink with the chiller and big tent,” Welch said. “It makes a mess of the park every single year.”

She added, “We’re trying to make that park really beautiful; and the mess every spring is tough.”

The Lewiston Family Ice Rink is set to open Nov. 19.

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