

Lewiston couple giving back to military, ONE CUP AT A TIME

Vets, active duty can have coffee or pastry for free July 1-4 at Orange Cat

BY JOSHUA MALONI

GM/Managing Editor

If you're an active-duty, former or retired military member, your Orange Cat order is on the Erways this weekend.

For a second year, the Lewiston couple is treating our troops to coffee, iced drinks and pastries at the popular Center Street location.

"I've always been passionate about our military," Joel Erway said Wednesday. "We have a lot of family members that are active and former military, retired military. And so, they've always held a special place in my heart."

Joel and his wife, Maryjo, run The Webinar Agency, a digital marketing and podcast studio headquartered at the Red Brick Municipal Building. She is from Lewiston, while he grew up in Elmira and went to school in Rochester. They met there, married, and moved to Lewiston when their two children were younger.

"I fell in love with this place. I really, really love this place, and so I've wanted to be part of the community. I've wanted to give back to the community, and just kind of say 'Thanks,'" Erway said. "I wanted to find a cause. And it was mid-June last year. I was talking to my wife, Maryjo. ... I come to the Orange Cat almost every day. And so, I said, 'What do you think about, for the Fourth of July this year, let's invite anyone who's active or former military to come and enjoy what we enjoy?'"

Erway reached out to Michael Broderick.

"We were more than happy to do it," the Orange Cat owner said.

Broderick called the partnership a no-brainer. He said his father and uncles served in the military, and he's always had a soft spot for Vietnam veterans, "because it was a different world."

Moreover, "Since we've opened, we've always comped all drinks for police officers, our local sheriffs, state troopers, Lewiston police. Doing this is kind of a natural extension," Broderick said.

Erway said the first go-around "went really well. I think we served about 200 orders last year to active or former military; and so, we want to do it again this year, and hopefully we'll keep growing."

In fact, Broderick said, "We'd love to double that amount this year."

He explained, "Joel and his family have been super-generous with organizing it."

"A lot of veterans that came in last year thanked us, but didn't want anything comped. But they still showed their appreciation for it," Broderick said.



Joel Erway, pictured, and his wife, Maryjo, will treat our troops to free beverages and pastries this weekend (July 1-4) at the Orange Cat Coffee Co., 703 Center St., Lewiston.

"This year, with the bicentennial falling on the same weekend, we're assuming there's going to be a lot more people in town. We're hoping for an excellent turnout, as just a way to say 'thanks.'"

Erway said, "The plan is to keep doing it every year. And possibly do it with other shops on Center Street. I mean, I bring my clients here. They fly from all over the world. When I say I love Lewiston, I really do. I love to show it off. I mean, it's just such a unique little town, little village. And so, I want to contribute to our community. Give back to our military, and just contribute to the area in as many ways as I can."

Niagara River Region Chamber of Commerce President Jennifer Pauly said, "Joel and his family are always thinking about ways to support the community. During COVID, they helped us create community T-shirts, where proceeds were donated to the give-or-take table, first-responders and local emergency response organizations. This offer, for those who serve and served, this coming weekend, is an act of kindness that will go a long way."

Town of Niagara

Banners installed for 'Hometown Heroes'



The Town of Niagara's "Hometown Heroes" project is in full swing, with banners installed on street poles and expected to remain to Veterans Day.

"Locating a specific one can be a daunting task if you don't know the approximate location," Town of Niagara Historian Pete Ames said. "This year, we have about 80 banners on display, and they are in alphabetical order for the most part."

Ames said the "Hometown Heroes" banners were installed around Memorial Day. They are dedicated to local service members. The project leads off with a banner for veteran Eddie Adamczyk, found south of the six corners at Military and Packard roads. Another, dedicated to Joseph Candella, is at the northwest corner of that intersection. At the Military and Lockport roads intersection, banners are found for Joseph Casale and Cosmo Fratello.

Heading north to Military and Witmer roads, banners include those dedicated to Allen Garlock and David Hall. A banner for Carl Hall is found on Lockport Road, and one for Gordon Oldfield is on Miller Road heading west to Military Road.

"When you drive into Veterans Park, there are the 12 veterans who represent the 12 wars up to the veterans monument," Ames said. "After the monument, drive toward the Community Center, and the rest of the veterans are in order as you come back around the pond, ending with Casey Zygmunt."

"Each year, we will go in alphabetical order, and then reverse it, so they will be in different spots."

Ames extended his thanks to Supervisor Lee Wallace, Highway Superintendent Bob Herman, and particularly to Parks Department employees Phil Mitchel, Bill Beckwith and Vince Zuccari for their assistance.

He added, "I also want to thank the families, friends and organizations who sponsored the banners to honor our veterans. Tom and Nancy Tierney, John and Jackie Teixeira helped get this project started, and we couldn't have done it without their involvement. Last, but not least, thanks to Casey Zygmunt Jr. for preparing the photos for the banners."

Ames said those with questions on the "Hometown Heroes" project can contact him at 716-297-4429.

Pictured: Parks Department employees Phil Mitchel (bucket operator) and Vince Zuccari (road safety coordinator) work on mounting a banner at the corner of Lockport and Military roads. (Submitted photo)

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