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## Safety key for optimal eclipse viewing

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Pictured in front of the "Fichtemobile" are, from left, Dr. Thomas R. Elmer, Dr. Michael J. Endl and Dr. Claus M. Fichte. (Submitted photo)

Monday will boast many distinct eclipse-viewing options across Western New York, with different happenings planned at each site. Regardless of the activity, organizers have one common goal: visual safety.

"What's important to know is that eye protection is very important," said Dr. Thomas R. Elmer, a board-certified ophthalmologist and physician at Fichte, Endl & Elmer Eyecare. "Normal sunglasses are great for protecting against ultraviolet light, but they won't protect your eyes while directly viewing the sun. You must have certified eclipse glasses to view the sun safely during the eclipse. Permanent sun damage can occur without feeling any pain at all."

Fichte, Endl & Elmer Eyecare will host a "Total Eclipse Party" from noon to 5 p.m. April 8 at its office at 6500 Porter Road.

Event organizers said, "Located in The Town of Niagara, it is the perfect viewing location for the event," which will be highlighted by the solar eclipse at 3:20 p.m."

This free family gathering will include a live band performing in the Fichte, Endl & Elmer Eyecare

parking lot; llamas for children to see and pet; and the optical boutique will be open, so shop around for some sunglasses. In addition, there will be free parking, free solar eclipse glasses, and free hot dogs. Attendees are encouraged to bring chairs or a blanket.

Pre-event glasses are no longer available.

Dr. Michael J. Endl said, "We are so excited about the April 8 solar eclipse that we are throwing a party! Western New York is one of the lucky regions of the country that falls directly in the 'path of totality.' This means we will see the moon completely block out the sun for up to three minutes in the middle of the afternoon.

"Not only is this a phenomenon that hasn't happened in WNY for 99 years, it's also important for us to attempt to educate the public on eyewear for safe viewing. We will be passing out ISO-approved safety glasses at our free eclipse party. It is vitally important to your eyesight not to look at the eclipse without ISO-approved eyewear. If you do, you risk permanent retina injury resulting in decreased vision."

## Hibbard's Original Frozen Custard OPENS FOR 85TH SEASON

Lewiston landmark debuted in 1939



### LEFT OF CENTER WITH JOSHUA MALONI

GM/Managing Editor

Wednesday morning, the temperature was 45 degrees, and there was a steady rain.

Not exactly waffle cone weather.

But sure enough, not 10 minutes after Hibbard's Original Frozen Custard staff switched on the red "Open" sign, people started lining up at the serving windows.

It's a rite of passage in Lewiston – and one that predates, well, just about everything else. This summer, the village sweet shop is celebrating its 85th season.

Senior scoopman Dan Buchner said, "It's amazing. We've got people that say, 'Hey, I've been here for 80 of your 85 years.' And they're bringing their grandkids or great-grandkids. So, it's a huge tradition – and it's something we're all really proud of."

Harold Hibbard, who was inspecting the grounds, said the milestone is a testament to his family members – and something that is very special.

To celebrate, Buchner said, "There's going to be all kinds of fun. There's going to be some giveaways pretty much every month. It should be a lot of fun."

Of course, the big question always involves which foundational flavors patrons can look forward to with each visit.

"Our 'core four' again is the chocolate, vanilla, pistachio and black raspberry," Buchner said.

Last year, Hibbard's introduced more than a dozen new custard creations.

"There were some that were really popular," Buchner said.



Top: Hibbard's Original Frozen Custard team members Aaron Hannam, Dan Buchner and Gabby Blose celebrate opening day. • Middle: April and Laila Vandenbosch were the first customers of the 85th season. A dish of chocolate custard was the first purchase. • Right: Custard flavors on Wednesday included the "core four" of vanilla, chocolate, black raspberry and pistachio, as well as creamsicle, cherry cheesecake and chocolate peanut butter cup.

"Lavender blueberry was a huge hit. The German chocolate cake was a really good one. Bananas Foster was pretty popular.

SEE HIBBARD'S, continued on Page 10



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