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- Village of Lewiston to offer horse & carriage rides, welcome new pizza fest



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Town Clerk's Corner

Rabies immunization clinic at Highway Garage

•New York state will offer "Free Fishing Days" the weekend of June 29-30. This is a great opportunity to try fishing for the first time or to take the family fishing.

•Replacing your tattered American flag? As Flag Day is celebrated on June 14, the proper disposal of the flag is a very important and respectful thing to do. The town received a receptacle from VFW Down River Post No. 7487, which is located in the front foyer of Town Hall. Residents are encouraged to dispose of their flags properly.

•The Niagara County Department of Health, in cooperation with the Niagara County Veterinary Society, will sponsor a free rabies immunization clinic from 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, July 13, at the Town of Lewiston Highway Garage at Swann and Harold roads. Clinic registration is required and can be found at www.niagaracounty.com/health. Additional dates have been set and are available on the town website under the department drop-down – Dog Control.

•Door-to-door solicitation season is upon us. If a solicitor comes to your home, request to see their town-issued permit. All solicitors are required to apply for a permit in the Town Clerk's Office; this allows us to have their identification and lets us know they are in the area. If any resident feels undue pressure to purchase, donate or otherwise accept services, please

TOWN CLERK'S CORNER



Donna R. Garfinkel

contact the Town Clerk's Office at 754-8213, ext. 222, and, depending on the circumstances, the permit may be revoked.

•Speaking of permits, with home improvement projects underway, residents are advised that a building permit is required for the construction of a shed, fence, installation of a pool and many other projects. Permits are available through the town's Building and Zoning Department. Call the office to make sure your project is in compliance – call 716-754-8213, ext. 227, ext. 243 or ext. 245.

•Dog owners are reminded the Town and Village of Lewiston have a leash law in effect. For the safety of our residents and other dogs, please adhere to this law. The local law also addresses residents cleaning up after their dogs. Please remove and dispose properly of

your dog's droppings.

•Make summer travel "E-Zier" with the purchase of an "E-ZPass on the Go." The Town Clerk's Office is an authorized "E-ZPass on the Go" retailer. The cost is \$25. Once the tag is registered, those monies go directly on the tag to use for tolls. Any questions, please contact our office.

•If you notice a street light is out or flickering, please contact the town clerk's office at 716-754-8213, ext. 235 or ext. 236, or enter the information on the town website, www.townoflewiston.us, under the comment drop-down. The following information is necessary in order to report this to National Grid: pole number, closest house address, and closest street intersection to the pole.

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'Consortium for Safe Communities' is a time for change

BY MICHAEL J. FILICETTI
Niagara County Sheriff

When I think of a fair criminal justice system, I think of one that works to protect our citizens and attempts to reform those that commit crimes. I believe in the simple premise that those breaking the law should be held accountable and that, while housed in our correctional facility, we will offer opportunities for rehabilitation.

This seems like common sense and something that most people would agree is pretty fair in principle. In New York state, many criminal justice reforms have come along over the last four to five years. I would say that small reforms in the criminal justice system have been happening for years. These recent reforms were more wholesale changes that we all predicted would have an affect on law enforcement and the communities we serve. Bail reform, "less is more," "raise the age," "green light laws" and discovery are at the top of the list for me. All of these laws and reforms combined have had a negative impact on our ability to keep this com-

munity safe.

When a thief knows that an appearance ticket is the only option, they take additional liberties to steal more and often. Larcenies are still up in numbers from just four years ago. Repeat offenders have certainly become a topic of discussion. Over the last four years, 1,363 suspects have two bookings to their name in our correctional facility. A staggering 552 have three; 301 have four; 180 have five; 126 have six; and the number continues to an individual having 21 bookings. Additionally, judges still cannot consider the dangerousness of a suspect when setting bail; this puts the victim and public at risk.

This is all a direct result of bail reform. As parolees are given far more latitude and parole officers' hands are tied by the system, they too take advantage of a weak system. One of our "less is more" candidates was released to commit three new crimes within a month. This is thanks to "less is more."

"Raise the age" has led to record numbers of 16- and 17-year-old suspects carrying guns. This

age group is also largely involved in many of the vehicle thefts you see. The message was loud and clear that punishment would not be swift or appropriate for the crime committed.

The "green light law" was passed to give illegals a driver's license in this state, and also direct local law enforcement to not share information or cooperate with immigration officials. We live in a border county and the state desires that I not work with our federal partners to keep our county safe. Discovery is one that has placed a heavy burden on law enforcement and district attorneys across the state. The reality is that this has slid the scale to the side of the defendant and, at times, made it impossible for the prosecution to move forward on a criminal matter. I am not sure how any of this put the interest of the community above the criminal suspect that chose to commit a crime.

So, in the blind pursuit to make things fairer, our State Legislature has tipped the criminal justice system upside down. What can we do about this as a community?

We are starting a "Consortium for Safe Communities" in Niagara County. We are joining with the Monroe County Sheriff's Office and Erie County Sheriff's Office to move this effort across New York state. The mission is quite simple: Bring community members together to discuss their thoughts on criminal justice and public safety. Once we can agree on the key issues, we take it public to gain traction through a simple scan of a QR code or a quick form to show your support. The site, www.ourconsortiumny.com, describes the program in full and offers the opportunity to send a message by supporting the initiative.

The message is simple: The community wants to be safe, and we want change to make that happen. As our consortium develops, you will hear more from us and we will need your help.

This initiative has to go far and wide. The more signatures we gather, the stronger the push for change. As your sheriff, I want to work with you to make our community safer and create a justice system that works for all.

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