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# Opinions

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## Say 'No' to art towers on Center Street!

A recent proposal calls for 10, 8-foot high "art deco" towers that support display cases for art to be placed along Center Street, from Academy Park to Fourth Street. This plan runs contrary to recent efforts to remove unnecessary and unwanted signs along Center Street that create clutter and distractions. In fact, Center Street needs fewer objects, rather than more, to preserve and protect our historic streetscape, and recent surveys indicate the vast majority of Lewiston residents agree.

The proposed art deco design does not support or advance Lewiston's efforts to promote our heritage. Our community's history is focused on the 1820s, not the 1920s. It is not consistent, nor complementary, to the image Lewiston wants to project to our visitors and guests. Now is not the time, nor is Center Street the place, to have illuminated art deco towers up and down the street.

Much progress has been made over the past three years to clean up the street. Giant state signs

have been removed, and over a dozen other signs have come down. Recent efforts to place veteran banners along Center Street were redirected to other locations in the town. And while putting murals on the restroom at Academy Park is acceptable and would be an improvement, the placement of the display towers will not conform to our local historical standards. Maybe in a larger city, but not in an 1820s village.

We don't need to be everything to everybody. Lewiston has already

found its niche, and it's working. People are flocking here to enjoy our restaurants, festivals, Artpark, and historic charm and quaintness. Finding a parking space in the summer on Center Street or near the river is next to impossible.

The proponents may find better places for the art towers to go. But for now, I urge the powers-to-be at the village to say "no" to the art towers on Center Street.

Lee Simonson  
Citizen De-Sign Committee

## Residents have responsibility to speak up on proposed art project

To all residents of the Village of Lewiston:

Once again, we are positioned to consider yet another alteration to Center Street, the addition of 8-foot metal art frames spanning the length of the thoroughfare. Already in place are several other developments that I have previously addressed as abominations. And yet here we have one more.

Now, as a bedroom community of residents, we are faced with standing by as a decision is made by our elected and appointed officials about proceeding with the planned installation of 10 of these eyesores.

I ask that you communicate to the mayor, as well as to all trustees and Historic Preservation Commission and Planning Board members, your opinion about this matter. The voice of the people must be heard. And as you formulate one, consider these perspectives:

•First, the village's identity is firmly 19th century as its 1820 establishment and its prevailing Federal and Greek Revival architectural styles reveal. The art deco style originated in France in the 1910s. This is a 20th century design. Consequently, it does not fit the original village look and is, therefore as a design element, entirely inappropriate.

•Second, the renderings of these towers describe ugly black metal frames stuck on a pole with an illuminated flange light on top. Unspecified art will be displayed in these rotating frames. Not good art deco and not aesthetically enhancing. This is kitsch, not class.

•Third, the word on the street is that Greenway dollars, \$90,000 of them from the town, and more from the village, will be used to pay for them. Why? Couldn't such money be used for necessary

improvements to the infrastructure or to other projects that will benefit future generations? For example, what could a professional landscape architect design for Academy Park that would make it more inviting to the residents who live here, not just for isolated events, but as a welcoming year-round venue and as green space that welcomes gatherings?

•Fourth, there is the transparency issue. Or, more appropriately, the lack of transparency issue. How is it that this entire plan was sprung on the people without sufficient public knowledge or hearings? This project is both expensive and extensive. Shouldn't it have been gingerly presented to the community for our residents' input? Elected officials knew about this for a while. Why keep it a secret? Unless, of course, commitments have already been made.

Overall, does Center Street really

need this project? The cityscape is visually busy and is marred by excessive signage, giving truth to the adage that "More is Less." Going further with this plan continues the serious design and construction blunders that rear their ugly heads along the village's entrance way, from the amazing sinking horror off Ninth Street to the ersatz architecture of the Ellicott Development to the metal facade on North Fourth.

What we can do as a first step is to talk with those whom we see every day, our family and our friends, and then tell the village and town officials what we think.

Of course, we can always do more. But we are derelict to ourselves and to our descendants should we do less.

Frank Scelsa  
Lewiston

## Piper offers thanks for cemetery ceremony

I was unable to participate in "Lewiston Jeopardy" or accept my award from HAL, or be present for the Lewiston Village Cemetery dedication ceremony due to a serious injury. I am home now, and I hope to return to my historian duties and projects.

Although I was hospitalized at the time, I wish to extend a heartfelt thank you to Mayor Anne Welch for stepping in for me to host the ceremony. I'm grateful for the kind words about my historical preservation efforts and volunteerism in the village to promote our historical heritage.

A special thank you goes out to Pastor Sirianni for her emotional officiating of the ceremony and for her generous donation to purchase the memorial bench in honor of the veterans; and to Joan Sheusi for the bench in memory of her late mother; to Lee Simonson and Bill Westadt for their generous donations to make this project a reality; and Jim Farchione of Niagara Monument Works for his efforts in designing the beautiful granite benches. My heartfelt thanks and appreciation for your making my project a reality; Justin Higner (aka Capt. James Van Cleve) and Clau-

dia Carnes (aka the Widow Rev. Mrs. David Smith), and the VFW Guard, who were there to honor all Lewiston veterans. I will be forever grateful to all of you.

With my next project, I hope to raise funds to place a permanent standing flagpole in the Oakwood section to honor all those veterans who rest there. I'm thinking, perhaps, a 30-foot pole will be the perfect height due to the beautiful historic oak trees. Since I have received no offers of decorative trees to enhance the grounds, I am confident that the placement of a flagpole will be the finishing touch to the

project, currently in the works, to be revealed when completed.

It will be in the neighborhood of \$1,700. The VFW will make sure there is a proper flag flying from it.

In closing, thank you from the bottom of my heart for helping me to make my historical projects complete to date. To all of you who have encouraged me in my endeavors and for the many thanks and compliments, I have received from you in the village, thank you.

With my heartfelt thanks and appreciation.

Russ Piper  
Village of Lewiston Historian

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**PUBLISHER**

Skip Mazenauer

**GM/MANAGING EDITOR**

Joshua Maloni

**EDITOR IN CHIEF/SENTINEL EDITOR**

Terrence P. Duffy

**WEBSITE/SOCIAL MEDIA EDITOR**

Joshua Maloni

**ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES**

Colleen Rebmann, Jeff Calarco

**ACCOUNTING/OFFICE MANAGER**

Kim Stacharczyk

**ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT**

Jennifer Walowitz

**PRODUCTION MANAGER/**

**GRAPHIC DESIGNER**

Wendy Juzwicky

**CLASSIFIED MANAGER**

Wendy Puffer

**CIRCULATION**

Kim Stacharczyk

**SENIOR REPORTERS**

Michael J. Billoni, Patrick J. Bradley,

Alice Gerard, Karen Keefe

**CONTRIBUTORS**

Timothy Chipp, Kevin and Dawn Cobello,

Michelle Blackley Glynn, Wayne Peters,

Elijah Robinson, Lauren Zaepfel

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1859 Whitehaven Road  
Grand Island, N.Y. 14072

Phone 716-773-7676  
Fax 716-773-7190

**Editorial:**

Dispatch@wnypapers.com

Sentinel@wnypapers.com

**Advertising:**

NFPDesign@wnypapers.com

**Classifieds:**

NFPClassifieds@wnypapers.com

**Circulation:**

NFP\_Circulation@wnypapers.com

**Legals:**

legalnotice@wnypapers.com

**Website:**

wnypapers.com

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