

# Lewiston lost a 'giant oak' with Jerry Wolfgang's passing

Even giant oaks do not live forever. Lewiston is blessed with many very old oak trees; many were alive when the Hurons and the British came through in 1812.

At one time, I and one of my friends tried to catalog these "Witness Trees" to remind people how old they are, and to protect them, and to connect us with our past through them. And as it worked out, my friend, Bruce Sutherland, and I never got to catalog those trees. Bruce

was one of those large Lewiston oaks himself; sadly, now gone (in December 2021).

Lewiston lost another of our "oaks" last week – Jerry Wolfgang – a massive presence everywhere in Niagara County. To say that Jerry was involved with everything is an understatement; taking charge and managing everything is more correct. Like a giant oak, he couldn't be ignored or moved. You had to go around Jerry; never through. Like the "Witness Oaks" of our village,

Jerald Wolfgang was as solid as an oak.

Jerry Wolfgang will have a lengthy resume of boards on which he sat, honors received, projects designed and accomplished, and all he asked in return was respect. He sat on these endless boards and, unlike many, it wasn't to juice up his resume. He wanted accomplishments. He could hear the truth and not be angry or depressed. It is an important part of life to know a person like Jerry.

Like the trees, you expected him to be here forever. The oaks themselves were there when you were born and they will overlook you as you pass. That is how I felt about Jerry. If you needed something or needed to know something and he trusted you, he would tell you the truth. He was never passive. He was hot or cold; never lukewarm. How many people know he was a sincerely compassionate man, especially with the disabled and disadvantaged?

My wife, Mary, and I loved to have Jerry over to the house occasionally for martinis on Friday evenings. I wish I could have just one more evening with him. The oaks just seem to be immortal; so did my friend, Jerry.

Rest in peace, Jerry. Your community will miss you for a very long time.

*Norman R. Machelor  
Village of Lewiston*

## Empower announces annual campaign

Submitted by Empower

On Feb. 20, Empower (United Cerebral Palsy Association of Niagara County Inc.) will be launching its annual giving campaign.

Empower is a leading provider of supports and services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. With 17 locations throughout Niagara County, Empower supports people in the areas of housing, employment, day habilitation services, respite, skill building, family support, and preschool special education.

Empower would like to remind the community that the funds

raised during the annual appeal are of direct benefit to the people we support, with programs and services that empower them to live their best lives.

"Approximately 85% of the funding we receive are Medicaid dollars and go directly to the people we support in ensuring we meet their basic needs," Executive Director Diane Baehre said. "That leaves very little to provide enrichment activities and programs that improve the individual's overall quality of life. Fundraising dollars make a significant impact in advancing our mission."

Board Chair Russ Petrozzi has served the agency for over 35 years. "I am so proud of the work that the agency has done in serving some of our community's most vulnerable," he said. "Empower has been adept in responding to the ever-changing needs of our individuals by using a person-centered approach."

Here are some ways in which the community can support Empower:

- Donate via cash, check, or online at <https://empower-wny.org/>.

- Bring your bottles and cans

to one of our two redemption centers. You can either get the full deposit back or donate your amount. Hours are 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. weekdays.

- √ 4701 Military Road, Niagara Falls; 716-545-0023

- √ 3571 Niagara Falls Blvd., Wheatfield; 716-260-1791

- Visit our Grab N Go Cart at the Fashion Outlets of Niagara Falls, 1900 Military Road, Niagara Falls (near off 5th Saks Avenue) for coffee, beverages and snacks. A paid job training opportunity for people with disabilities. Hours are 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

weekdays.

- Document shredding, 4701 Military Road near Route 31, Town of Niagara. Hours: 8:30 a.m. until 2 p.m. weekdays. A paid job training opportunity for people with disabilities. NYS certified document destruction contractor. All state privacy regulations are observed. .55 lb. or \$8 banker's box.

The campaign will run until May 1. For more information about Empower, please visit our website, <https://empower-wny.org/>.

## IN THE NEWS

### Niagara Falls State Park handicraft lottery

Applications for the 2023 Native American handicraft sales permits are now available for the upcoming summer season at Niagara Falls State Park.

Applications are available at the DeVeaux Woods State Park Castellani Building, 3160 DeVeaux Woods Drive E., Niagara Falls, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays; or online at <https://parks.ny.gov/parks/46/>. To have an application mailed, call 716-278-1770.

Entries are due by Friday, March 17. The drawing will be held at 11 a.m. Monday, March 20, at the DeVeaux Woods State Park Castellani Building. Six names will be drawn. Applicants must be present.

To be eligible for the lottery, applicants must be 18 years of age or older and registered as a Native American or provide verifiable proof of Native American heritage. For more information, call 716-278-1762.

### Town of Wheatfield Democratic Committee looks for candidates

The Town of Wheatfield Democratic Committee is seeking candidates to run for various local offices. The offices of town supervisor, councilmen (two), town clerk, highway superintendent and county legislators are up for election this year.

Any resident interested in running on the Democratic line for

any of these offices should contact Shirley Joy, chair, at [sjoy4@hotmail.com](mailto:sjoy4@hotmail.com) or 716 693-6106.

### Town of Wheatfield Republican Committee looks for candidates

The Town of Niagara Republican Committee is looking for candidates interested in the following positions: town supervisor, town clerk, town justice, town councilman, superintendent of highway.

The interested individual must be registered in Niagara County as a Republican, and a resident in the Town of Niagara. Please send a letter of intent to Melody Burow, chairmen, 1805 Tuscarora Road, Niagara Falls, NY 14304.

### Free tax filing at NCCC

Tax season is here and Niagara County Community College (NCCC) is ready to assist people with their annual filings.

A press release explained, "If you made \$73,000 or less in 2022, you qualify to meet with representatives from the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance who will walk you through filing your tax returns online."

Sessions will take place in-person at the NCCC Lewis Library, 3111 Saunders Settlement Road, Sanborn; and the Niagara Falls Culinary Institute, 28 Old Falls St., Niagara Falls. Appointments can be made for 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesdays through April 12.

Participants will need to bring their 2022 tax documents, a copy of their 2021 tax return, a valid email address, and possess basic computer skills. A NCCC librarian will be on-site to assist. To register, visit [www.niagaracc.suny.libcal.com](http://www.niagaracc.suny.libcal.com) or call 716-614-6786.

### Niagara Arts Guild meeting

Lockport artist Peggy Taylor will show Japanese low relief wood

carving at a meeting of the Niagara Arts Guild on Friday, Feb. 10. The event is at 7 p.m. at the Dale Association, 33 Church St., Lockport.

Taylor, who holds arts degrees in fine arts, science and graphics, studied wood carving in low relief for several years in Japan. She now concentrates on all types of wood carving in her Lockport studio. Taylor has exhibited in Tucson, North Carolina and Lockport. She is a long-term member of the Arts Guild.

All artists and art lovers are welcome to attend. Refreshments will be served.

The Niagara Arts Guild has been serving artists in the area since 1948.

### Sheeran elected first vice president of NYS Magistrates

Longtime professor of education Dr. Thomas Sheeran was elected to the position of first vice president of the New York State Magistrate's Association. The group represents more than 2,200 town and village judges in the 1,300 local courts across New York.

In addition to his more than 50-year tenure on the faculty of Niagara University's College of Education, Sheeran has also served as the town justice in Lewiston for the past 31 years, and as a member of the advisory committee on judicial ethics for the past 15 years.

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