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Niagara River Region Chamber of Commerce: Growing Business & Community

## SMELT FEST IS BACK!

BY JENNIFER PAULY  
 President

Smelt in Lewiston. Who knew that the Lewiston community would be known for a tiny fish that is netted only a few weeks out of the year.

Our office is flooded with phone calls throughout spring with conversations always starting with the topic of smelt, and if the "smelt are running." Most of the time, Suzanne and I yell across the room to each other asking if the other knows if they are running yet in the river. We generally give a call to our board member, outdoor specialist and charter captain Frank Campbell, to find out. We have also been known to drive down to the docks, finding a few fishermen and asking if they have started to net any of the coveted fish.

This is also the time of year when we receive the phone calls on if the traditional first festival of the season, the Smelt Festival, is happening. Over the past 10 years, we have dealt with rain, snow, wind, mud and a few years of COVID when the first week of May comes around. The last festival was held in 2019.

The answer has been "we are not sure" – but this year we have a definitive date!

We are excited to find a partner with The Griffon Brewery & Gastropub (115 S. Water St., Lewiston) to host the next Smelt Festival on Friday, May 26, beginning at 5 p.m.

Ken Scibetta, co-owner of The Griffon, has ceremoniously been hailed as "The Smelt King," for the past decade, so it was a natural fit! Moving the event back a few weeks gives us a chance for a better weather outcome – and a location that overlooks the Niagara River that can withstand the weather elements!

Live music (The Brothers of Invention will play on the patio), food, beverages and smelt (at a nominal cost) will all be a part of the event.

We would not be able to host the festival again without the support of Anthony DiMino and DiMino Lewiston Tops Market. Anthony assists us each year



### Smelt Festival 2023

**Time/Date:** 5 p.m. Friday, May 26

**Location:** The Griffon Brewery & Gastropub, 115 S. Water St., Lewiston

**What to expect:** Food, beverages, live music with The Brothers of Invention – and, of course, smelt – available for \$5

Smelt will be served by a host of local dignitaries, including "The Smelt King" Ken Scibetta and Niagara River Region Chamber of Commerce President Jennifer Pauly. (File photos)

and growth in the community. We are excited about this collaboration with The Griffon, DiMino Tops, the Chamber and the fishing industry to continue an event that has a long tradition in Lewiston.

More details on the Smelt Festival can be found online at [www.NiagaraRiverRegion.com](http://www.NiagaraRiverRegion.com).

We hope you join us for the traditional "first festival of the season," and continue the fascination with smelt – the "fries with eyes."

Lewiston never SMELT so good!

in sourcing and purchasing the smelt.

Proceeds from the festival will also benefit the Niagara River Anglers Pen Project in hopes of a new aquaculture project in Youngstown.

The Chamber of Commerce strength is convening people together to create positive change



Some of The Silo Restaurant team members gather for a photo on opening day.

## Summer comes early to THE SILO

Lewiston waterfront restaurant now open for season

LEFT OF CENTER  
 BY JOSHUA MALONI

The Silo Restaurant opened for the season on Wednesday, bringing summer vibes – not to mention "Haystack," hot dog and ice cream fans – back to the north end of Water Street after a cold winter.

General Manager Lexi Alfiere-David said, "We're open for training this week. We're open earlier than usual, but really wish we could've been open last week for those couple of warm days."

As it was, the Lewiston eatery "had staff away for spring break, and basically used the time to cross our T's and dot our I's to

make sure we were really ready to open for training," Alfiere-David said. "We had our staff meeting and completed a couple projects."

"Until May 1, we are based on weather, but would really like to serve noon to 8 p.m. – but who knows? With Western New York weather, it could snow when it says it's going to be sunny (laughs). So, we encourage customers to call before visiting to make sure we're serving."

Summer 2023 will mark a special milestone for The Silo, which was built by Richard Hastings and is now operated by his son, Alan.

SEE HAYSTACK, continued on Page 9



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