

Village of Lewiston DPW agrees to remove snow in main Peace Garden entrance

Public service will enable site to be open year-round

BY JOSHUA MALONI
GM/Managing Editor

At Monday's Village of Lewiston work session, Niagara River Region Chamber of Commerce President Jennifer Pauly petitioned local leaders to keep the International Peace Garden open year-round. She was joined by Chuck Barber, who owns the adjoining "Big Yellow House" on Ridge Street; and his tenant, Brooke Unversaw, who operates Queen B's Cottage inside that building.

"I had written a letter, convening the businesses that surround the Peace Garden. They have all come to us, at various points throughout the year, regarding the Peace Garden – and, most notably, during the winter season, because it's been closed," Pauly said.

She explained, "There's been no access from Center Street through the garden. I know people are trying to use the restroom there, and it's closed for the winter. So, then they go asking all the other businesses over on the side.

"I figured if we could tackle this now, as we're approaching summer, we can figure out a plan for that Peace Garden."

"I, personally, didn't realize that it was closed during the winter," Pauly added. "I think, this year, we had a lot of snow, so maybe that's where it became more noticeable?"

"The other aspect is the (former 'Big Yellow House' tenant) Arts Council didn't really use that back



Plans are forming to relocate the International Peace Garden archway so as to allow the Village of Lewiston Department of Public Works to snowplow the walkway. That action will enable the site to remain open year-round. The pathway leads to a Queen B's Cottage entrance.

door of that building, so it may not have been brought up as much. But Brooke has had a successful business in there since the summer."

Department of Public Works Superintendent Larry Wills said he fashioned the pavement inside the International Peace Garden almost 20 years ago. At that time, Wills explained, former Mayor Richard Soluri "wanted it to be seasonal, because everybody buys all those (fundraising) bricks. ... He didn't want anybody throwing salt in there, shoveling with metal;

even rubber, over time, will slowly (erode the bricks, which are actually colored concrete). ...

"There's a lot of money over there. And it was designed to be a delicate garden nine months out of the year."

Wills offered a "solution that I have – and I've got no problem with this (idea of keeping the garden open) – is if the archway was taken out and, as we go down Center Street with the snowblower ... we can swing and take that straight all the way back to where that little wall stops.

"So, if Chuck and Brooke meet me at that point ... where the one little step comes down – you guys just take care of that – I'll make sure all that bulk stuff's gone."

Barber was amenable to Wills' request.

Suggestions were offered to move the archway inside the courtyard.

Pauly said, "It's nice to see people walking through that garden. They do 365 days a year. And now that the concentration of businesses around that is growing, and are consistent businesses, I think it's just important to keep the cohesiveness there. So, we appreciate it."

Trustee Tina Coppins made a motion to permit the DPW to clear the main pathway, when snow-covered, as laborers are available.

She said, "We'll do a test run this year. We'll see how it goes. And then what we'll do is we'll reconvene maybe next spring, and you guys come back in and we can talk about it some more."

The action was approved.

Peace Garden History

At a ceremony in July 2010, former Lewiston Council on the Arts Artistic Director Eva Nicklas said, "In 2001, we (at LCA) decided that a courtyard would be so much better than a parking lot!

"Our past mayor, Dick Soluri, agreed with us and, even though the business community needed parking places, they wanted a

courtyard more. So, with funds raised from the Taste of Lewiston, we commissioned the brilliant, Canadian landscape architect John Morley to create a plan for this space.

"The initial partnership brought together the Village of Lewiston, (Greater Lewiston Business and Professional Association) and the Art Council, and we began fundraising. ... Together, we raised \$85,000 and built the 'bones' of this courtyard ... brick and concrete work, electricity, plumbing, fencing, a decorative fountain and a public restroom. Then came basic plantings ... a thoughtful selection of low-maintenance trees and shrubs. ...

"In August 2005, the Historic Lewiston Courtyard was officially dedicated."

The popular Lewiston spot, also located behind the historic "Little Yellow House" on Center Street, was officially designated an 1812 Bicentennial Honorary International Peace Garden on Oct. 15, 2011.

Today, the site is maintained by the Lewiston Garden Club, the Lewiston Beautification Commission, and community volunteers.

Mayor Anne Welch noted members of Lower Niagara Moose Lodge 584 spent a Sunday in late April cleaning the garden.

"They did a fantastic job," she said.

IN THE NEWS

Floral-themed evening of prayer at Center of Renewal

To celebrate the beauty of late spring transitioning into summer, the Center of Renewal at Stella Niagara is inviting all interested Western New Yorkers to "Flowers In Bloom: God's Insight for Our Lives" from 4:45-8 p.m. Thursday, June 1, as part of the new ongoing "Evening of Prayer" series.

Organizers said, "This mini-retreat will include an enjoyable dinner, prayers, personal reflection, and relevant discussions facilitated by Nancy P. Askins, Ph.D., executive director, Center of Renewal at Stella Niagara.

"This unique topic will feature numerous scriptural references to flowers replete with discussions of the relevance and symbolic correlations of flowers in our spiritual lives.

"Flowers are a beautiful reminder of our glorious God and creation. In the Bible, flowers have been cited as symbolism for beauty, growth, the environment, fullness, and more.

"As part of a special discussion, retreat participants are asked to bring one or two artificial flowers and/or leaves on a stem, or a fa-

vorite photo of flowers (but please, no real flowers since many people have allergies). There is no need to purchase artificial flowers if you have none at home; however, some extras will be available to borrow for this retreat activity."

Preregistrations are required to ensure adequate meals, seating, and materials. Call 716-754-7376, ext. 1, to preregister by May 18. Reservations after May 18 will be subject to availability, so call first to confirm space.

OFN: America's Native Nations

Old Fort Niagara will host its first smoke dance competition, Native Nations at Niagara, on Saturday, May 13.

A press release stated, "The smoke dance was originally an Indigenous war dance, primarily danced by men, but has expanded within competition dance to include and highlight female dancers.

"Old Fort Niagara will be welcoming local and nationwide competitors to dance throughout the day."

Visitors will be able to watch as dancers compete for prizes; learn about traditional and historic Na-

tive regalia; and talk to Fort Niagara's interpretive staff about the connection that Fort Niagara has to the Haudenosaunee, and other Native communities during the site's almost 300-year history. Visitors will also be able to peruse a variety of native craftsmen, artisans and food vendors.

The press release added, "Old Fort Niagara would like to stress our gratitude to the participants and visitors for facilitating the sharing of Native cultures and knowledge. These perspectives have historically been overlooked and undervalued, and we look forward to continued collaboration with our local Indigenous communities to reinforce the importance of the Haudenosaunee's historical presence at the Fort.

"This event was made possible by the Museum Association of

New York and our generous donors."

The Youngstown Village Diner

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 - WED 6AM-2PM - Polish Sausage with Parsley Potatoes and Sauerkraut or Fish
 - THURS 6AM-2PM - Chicken and Biscuits or Fish - Battered, Breaded, Baked
 - FRI 6AM-2PM - Haddock, Fish Sandwiches, Tuna Melts & New England Clam Chowder
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