

65th Annual Lewiston Kiwanis Peach Festival

The Kiwanis Club of Lewiston will present the 65th annual Niagara County Peach Festival the weekend of Sept. 7-10 at Academy Park on Center Street in Lewiston. Free parking is available at the upper Artpark parking lot off Portage Road on Thursday, Friday and Sunday, with Gray Line Tours shuttle buses providing courtesy rides to Academy Park.

Thursday, Sept. 7

√ **"Peach Taste Off" recipe competition**, 5 p.m. Alphonso I. DiMino Memorial Band Shell.
 √ **Nerds Gone Wild** will take the stage at 8 p.m. for two hours of live music and "Nerdy" 1980s-themed entertainment.

Friday, Sept. 8

√ **Opening ceremonies** will be held at 5 p.m. Friday, Sept. 8, with a rendition of both the American and Canadian national anthems. This year's emcee for the opening ceremonies will be WEBR's veteran talk-show host and Buffalo Broadcast Hall of Fame inductee Tom Darro.
 √ At 5:30 p.m., an **"All-Star Cheerleading Competition"** will be held on the band shell stage and feature local units representing youth football and all-star cheering squads. At 8:30 p.m., The Thurman Brothers Band will perform, playing until the 11 p.m. closing.

Saturday, Sept. 9

√ The morning of Sept. 9 will feature the **Peach Festival parade** on Center Street at 11 a.m. Serving as parade marshal will be WGRZ-TV Channel 2 morning show anchor Pete Gallivan. Serving as parade announcer once again this year will be longtime radio personality Brandy Scrufari. This year's parade will feature 70 units, six marching bands and five dance units.
 √ **Peach Blossom** and **Peach Fuzz** contests for the youngsters will also take place on Saturday on the Academy Park stage at 2:30 and 4:30 p.m., respectively.
 √ **Peach Queen** contestants will conduct a fashion show on stage at 6 p.m.
 √ The popular **"Tribute to Elvis with Terry Buchwald"** will follow at 8 p.m.

Sunday, Sept. 10

√ On Sunday, the stage schedule includes a **dance showcase** from noon to 2 p.m.
 √ **Everyday People** performs at 3 p.m.
 √ The finals for the **Peach Queen scholarship pageant** begin at 7 p.m.
 This year, almost a dozen girls from Niagara County have entered the competition vying for the Peach Queen crown and a \$4,000 scholarship awarded by the Kiwanis Club of Lewiston. WGRZ-TV news anchor Maryalice Demler will serve as hostess for the Peach Queen finals.
 More information and a schedule can be found at www.niagaracountypeachfestival.org.

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Niagara County Peach Festival to cap Lewiston's summer season in style

65th annual Niagara County Peach Festival opens Sept. 7 with four days of family fun at Academy Park

BY TERRY DUFFY
 Editor-in-Chief

The excitement is building for a Western New York favorite – the 65th annual Niagara County Peach Festival. Presented by the Kiwanis Club of Lewiston, it returns Thursday, Sept. 7, to Academy Park in the Village of Lewiston.

As Kiwanians discussed the many attractions of this family-fun event at a press conference last Friday, they also took a moment to remember perhaps one of the more prominent faces in club history – the late Jerry Wolfgang. A Kiwanian since 1970, Wolfgang passed away in January of this year. His leadership and contributions with the club, and particularly the Peach Festival, were not forgotten.

"I would like to remember Jerry Wolfgang," 2022 Kiwanis Past President Marty Pauly said. "He was a member for 50 years; we didn't expect him to pass away back in January."

"He was one of the main, if not the main driving forces behind the Peach Festival every year. He ran the parade; he ran this press conference. He was responsible for bringing the taste-off to the festival, responsible for cheerleading competitions, so there's a lot of shoes that are currently being filled. We thank Jerry for all the work he did."

Julie Berrigan, director of development for festival sponsor Niagara County Community College, spoke of Wolfgang's many contributions to the festival over the years.

"I think it's all important for us to remember Jerry Wolfgang," she said. "Jerry was a steadfast advocate, not only for this event and NCCC, but for all of Niagara County. His contribution to the Peach Festival and so many organizations were tremendous. And we'll miss his steady voice and steady hand."

The first Peach Festival was held in 1958 and, since then, Kiwanians have contributed more than \$1.6 million in donations to area charities and organizations from event proceeds.

Chairperson Gerry Gismondi estimated a crowd of 40,000 will attend this year's Peach Festival over the four days, weather permitting.

The club said free parking would again be available in the upper Artpark parking lot off Portage Road on Thursday, Friday and Sunday, with Gray Line Tours shuttle buses providing courtesy rides to and from Academy Park.

"We've been doing that for the last 13 or so years; the idea is that we want to minimize traffic around the park," Gismondi said. "Artpark has been our partner with this through this entire time. They allow us to use their upper lot, with our partner, Gray Line shuttles."

Gismondi said that, due to a scheduled concert at Artpark, "Unfortunately, we had no choice but to suspend shuttle service for Saturday." How-



Peach Festival leaders are shown at a press conference in the Alphonso I. DiMino Memorial Band Shell at Academy Park. (Photo by Bob Koshinski) • Kiwanians Jerry Gismondi and Marty Pauly address the media. (Photos by Terry Duffy)



ever, he noted there would be plenty of handicapped parking available around Academy Park throughout the festival.

As far as festival fare, look for peaches, peaches and more peaches. Volunteers are expected to serve more than 14,000 pounds – some 7 tons – of peaches, along with fresh shortcake made by the famous DiCamillo Bakery. Kiwanis and community volunteers will prepare and serve peach shortcakes under the big tent on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The festival will also feature 27 food vendors serving a wide variety of American and ethnic cuisine.

"We could not put on such a great festival without all of our volunteers, partners and our sponsors," Gismondi said.

The "Peach Taste Off" recipe competition takes place at 5 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 7, offering a competition of homemade peach desserts on the Alphonso I. DiMino Memorial Band Shell. Judges include Niagara County Community

College Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs Josh Blumberg, chef Cathy Baron of the Niagara Falls Culinary Institute, and Lewiston-Porter Board of Education member Joseph Palermo. The "Peach Taste Off" competition is sponsored by the Niagara Falls Culinary Institute, the Niagara Gazette and Niagara Frontier Publications/Niagara County Tribune/Sentinel. Prizes include a \$100 Wegmans gift card.

Also on Thursday night, the popular Nerds Gone Wild will take the stage at 8 p.m. for two hours of live music and "Nerdy" 1980s-themed entertainment.

Amusements of America will again operate the midway at the Peach Festival, supplying thrilling and family-friendly rides. Kiwanis retained the ride inspection team of LJM & Associates to add a third level of safety inspections to the rides at this year's festival. New York state inspectors and Amusements of America also

inspect the rides.

Opening ceremonies will be 5 p.m. Friday, Sept. 8, with a rendition of both the American and Canadian national anthems. This year's emcee for the opening ceremonies will be WEBR's veteran talk-show host and Buffalo Broadcast Hall of Fame inductee Tom Darro.

At 5:30 p.m., an "All-Star Cheerleading Competition" takes over the band shell stage and will feature local units representing youth football and all-star cheering squads. At 8:30 p.m., The Thurman Brothers Band will perform, playing

until the 11 p.m. closing.

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feature 70 units, six marching bands and five dance units. Kiwanis officials said there would also be a special remembrance for Wolfgang in this year's parade.

Over at Academy Park, the Peach Blossom and Peach Fuzz contests will take over the band shell at 2:30 and 4:30 p.m., respectively. That eve-

ning, Peach Queen contestants will compete in a fashion show

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