

THE CASE OF THE MISSING POEM

BY JOSHUA MALONI
GM/Managing Editor

Village of Lewiston resident Norah Perez recently submitted a letter to this publication asking what became of the work an acclaimed writer donated to the International Peace Garden on Center Street.

At a dedication ceremony in 2010, “Renowned poet Robert M. Giannetti delivered his fine tribute to those gathered to mark the abiding alliance between two countries once divided by the War of 1812,” Perez wrote. “In a well-publicized event, residents and representatives from Lewiston, New York, and Niagara-on-the-Lake in Ontario, Canada, arrived from both sides of the Niagara River to commemorate 200 years of staunch friendship and mutual respect.”

Perez wrote, “In this garden hope is clear and bright – springing from earth in stirring breeze, telling time in fruitful fragrance under sky afire and in sustaining rain,” Giannetti recited. ‘Garden’s fine, let mind incline to greening thought, so long sought, so long sought.’

“Today, a cobbled path of memorial stones tell intimate stories of both the living and the dead as people stopping by pass under the welcoming archway to enter a flowering haven beyond. There, in the spacious courtyard surrounded by masses of crimson roses, snowy hydrangeas, and other blooms carefully maintained by the Lewiston Garden Club, volunteers and the local DPW, is a magnificent bust of Morgan Lewis (sculpted by Susan Geissler of Youngstown), once the third governor of New York state, whose noteworthy name the village adopted in

1805. This inviting area also contains trees, shrubs and other greenery, meditative areas, a fountain, Oriental statuary, tables and benches, a chess board and pool, and a curving platform used by performers and entertainers during numerous Lewiston festival events.

“Yet what has happened to Robert Giannetti’s Peace Garden poem delivered at the initial dedication and installed there as a gift to the community?”

She broached the subject with the Village of Lewiston Board of Trustees on Monday.

“Lately, I’ve noticed it’s missing. It’s gone. I’ve asked questions. I can’t seem to get any answers,” Perez said. She added, “I think it should be restored, put back where it belongs, maybe even improved – weather-proofed; maybe a nicer pedestal?”

“Does anybody have any idea what happened to the Peace Garden poem?” Perez asked.

Mayor Anne Welch said, “When we were working in the Peace Garden, it was in really bad shape. It was wooden, and it (had become) illegible. You couldn’t even read it anymore. I took it home and even asked my husband, ‘Could you fix it?’ (Welch’s husband, Bob, restored the toll booth that now sits next to the Niagara River Region Chamber of Commerce office in Academy Park.) It was really beyond that.

“But, if you could give us the poem, maybe we could do something that would last better than the wood? Because, like I say, it was not salvageable.”

Perez said, “It would be easy to get another copy. But it should be weather-proofed. ... Would there be funds available to get it back in place?”

Welch said she thought the village had money available in a Peace Garden account.

“If you could get us the poem again, I would suggest we do it more on a bronze plaque, because the wood just doesn’t last,” Welch said.

She added, “Maybe we even put it on a stone that we don’t need a post or anything.”

“OK,” Perez responded. “You’ve answered my question.”

Mystery solved.

“What has happened to Robert Giannetti’s Peace Garden poem delivered at the initial dedication and installed there as a gift to the community?”

Vacation Bible School reaches out to community

Post-COVID, Colonial Heights Church aims to bring light to youngsters

BY KAREN CARR KEEFE

Colonial Heights Free Methodist Church is on a mission: Give kids faith, hope and fun in the church’s upcoming Vacation Bible School.

But the church, at 1310 Saunders Settlement Road, Niagara Falls, has some new and different plans this year.

“We’ve all done Vacation Bible School as a way to reach out and minister to the community, help kids have fun and also help them learn about Jesus, the Lord,” said the church’s pastor, the Rev. Tim Deeks. “We’ve always done it in the church.”

But this year, in a new approach spurred largely by COVID-19, they are going right out into the community and hold classes in three local parks.

“We’re not convinced that people are ready to come back to an indoor Vacation Bible School,” said Deeks, who has been pastor of the church since March.

The organizers are calling it a “Pop-Up” Vacation Bible School, to be held from 6-7:30 p.m. on successive Wednesday nights this summer. The sessions are:

- July 28 at Gill Creek Park, 3085 Niagara St., Niagara Falls.

- Aug. 4, Veterans Memorial Park, 7000 Lockport Road, Niagara Falls.

- Aug. 11, Sanborn Park, 5811 Buffalo St., Sanborn (behind the firehall).

The Vacation Bible School isn’t just for children in the congregation, but also for any neighborhood kids who want to come, Deeks said. All families participating will also receive a blessing bag full of goodies, including food and personal care items.

Rachel Stevens is the family ministries director at the church and is director of Vacation Bible School. “We tried to pick locations where kids can come out off their street. They don’t have to preregister.”

“Our mission statement is to be a blessing to all families,” Stevens said. A team of more than 15 people is working on VBS, including the pastor’s wife, Linda Deeks, who also is director of the Sanborn-Pekin Free Library. She will be running the science station of the VBS programming. “We are grateful to have her and her experience.”

Stevens said their church is a little bit farther away, “so we wanted to go out into the community that can’t get to us and just show that you can have fun and you can learn about God at the same time.”



Colonial Heights Free Methodist Church in Niagara Falls is taking its Vacation Bible School to three local parks in a community outreach for this year’s Vacation Bible School. The VBS will take place from 6 to 7:30 p.m. on three successive Wednesdays, starting with July 28 at Gill Creek Park. Making “slime” – today’s twist on Play-Doh for arts and crafts – is one of the fun science lessons the church team will be teaching. Practicing the science “experiment” are, from left, Linda Deeks, the pastor’s wife; Dan Carr; VBS Director Rachel Stevens; Ian Heist, 7; and Ian’s mom, Maria Heist. (Photo by Karen Keefe)

“There’s such a darkness going on in the world that we just want to bring a little light and a little bit of Jesus’ love into the community,” she said. “We’re labeling it ‘All are welcome.’”

Kids of all ages can participate. Pre-K through middle school is the typical target age, but science lessons and other programming they’ve planned can be enjoyed by teens as well.

“People look at science and they don’t think about God, but God created science. So it does still go hand in hand,” she said.

“One of the unique things about this VBS is that we’re hoping to encourage the parents to stick around with the kids as

they go from station to station” during the program, Stevens said.

Different stations at the Bible school will include crafts, Bible adventures and stories, science, snacks and music. Each station will carry a Bible message. Each night there is a specific theme. Week one’s theme is Noah’s Ark. Week two is the Resurrection story.

SEE VACATION, continued on Page 5

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August 13 - Joe & the Shmoes
(Classic Rock of the 50's, 60's, 70's and 80's)

August 20 - Mackenzie Highlanders Pipes and Drums
(Celtic Bagpipes)

Concerts are free to the public, but donations are graciously accepted!
NOTE: rain location (if needed) will be the Red Brick gym, 240 Lockport St.

The Concert Series is by generous contributions made in memory of former Mayor Neil C. Riordan by many friends and businesses who knew how much the concert series meant to Neil.

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As food costs increase, we need to take a look at what the purpose of food is. It is to nourish our bodies for growth, repair, energy production and detoxification. Your body really is as healthy as you feed it. If you are eating highly processed, devitalized foods filled with chemicals like preservatives, colorings, synthetic vitamins, it is impossible to have a healthy, strong body with a strong immune system. Your body may be able to cope for a while, but eventually the stores of nutrients are used up. The now missing nutrients cause a breakdown of the necessary processes of the body and the systems begin to malfunction.

Although many of us live to eat in our culture, much of our entertainment and pleasure centers around food. Unfortunately, billions of dollars a day are spent convincing us that we need the latest pre-made, processed, heat it up and serve it convenience foods. More often than not, there is little nutrition left in these “foods”, and the amount of sugar and salt they contain does more harm than good.

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