

Village of Lewiston reconsidering Ridge Street traffic path

Board may reverse or flip one-way traffic pattern

BY JOSHUA MALONI
GM/Managing Editor

Stuart Sports owner Curt Stuart recently canvassed his Ridge Street neighbors and found more than two-dozen are not in favor of the roadway's one-way traffic pattern. Some, he said, are even scared of motorists heading the wrong way down the street, or hitting a vehicle backing out of one of the parking lots.

Prior to Monday's monthly meeting, the Village of Lewiston held a special session to listen to Stuart and fellow business owners Dr. Glenda Rose of Rose Chiropractic and Brad Hardison of Hardison Funeral Homes, plus Eva Nicklas of the Lewiston Council on the Arts and members of St. Paul's Episcopal Church.

"I face people coming the wrong way on that street," Stuart said.

Rose said she's seen the same thing during the day.

Lewiston Police Department Chief Frank Previte said part of



the problem is that Ridge Street "hasn't been properly marked yet."

The Department of Public Works was charged with completing that task.

"Give that a chance, and see if that makes a difference," Previte said.

He noted that, to this point,

"We haven't had any accidents; we haven't had anybody call. ... I have a traffic car to address that stuff; I'll sit somebody."

"It's a matter of getting people accustomed to that."

Last May, after discussion with Department of Public Works Superintendent Larry Wills, trustees voted unanimously to amend a local law and limit traffic to one way on Ridge Street.

Board members said it made more sense to steer traffic east, with motorists entering via the Fourth Street corner and exiting out onto Fifth Street. Wills said the traffic pattern was chosen to accommodate new diagonal parking spaces on the south side of the road.

"Somebody used the word 'intuitive' (as rationale for the change) ... but, intuitively, you want to use that street both ways," Nicklas said.

Stuart said, "The solution is more dangerous than the prob-

lem that it was intended to solve." Though Stuart Sports faces Center Street, it takes in deliveries via a Ridge Street lot.

"As someone who's been there for 20 years, I have never noticed a problem here," Stuart said. "Now I notice some problems."

Previte said, "Well, that's because you weren't getting the phone calls. I was noticing a problem" with people parking on the sidewalk or in front of a driveway. Trustee Nick Conde said, "When it is striped correctly, maybe ... the problems that you're seeing will go away?"

Mayor Anne Welch suggested keeping Ridge Street as is for the summer and fall, but also said the board will look into the merits of flipping traffic the other way - from Fifth Street to Fourth Street. Parallel parking striping also is on the table.

Welch said parking will be in greater demand come July and the opening of a new Gallo Coal

Fire Kitchen at Center and North Fourth streets.

"I just don't want to go back to two-way traffic because, (at 66 feet wide), the road is just too narrow," she said. "It causes more problems than not. But maybe the traffic flow this way (westward) would be better?"

Previte said flipping the traffic direction might be advantageous to the fire company. Lewiston Fire Department No. 1 President and village Fire Inspector Barry Beebe said firefighters don't have a preference as to which side traffic faces.

Stuart said a switch might benefit his business - but would potentially hamper Hardison Funeral Homes on the other end of the road.

Ironically, this writer encountered a motorist driving the wrong way on Ridge Street following the board meeting.

Dispenza family returns to Lewiston Artisan Farmers Market

BY JOSHUA MALONI
GM/Managing Editor

Visitors to the Lewiston Artisan Farmers Market were recently surprised to find two familiar faces: Frank and Rachel Dispenza. The couple, which used to run Dispenza's Meat Market on Ridge Road in Ransomville, was the market's original breakfast sandwich provider.

Frank said marketgoers "are excited" to see his family back at Academy Park.

"Obviously, as you know, we had our meat market before; but in October, our son, Joseph, who's 12, was diagnosed with diabetes type 1. So, it kind of brought us back to our roots of eating healthy and really watching what we eat and knowing where our food comes from - which was mainly our goal at our meat market," he explained. "So, Joe and I started raising chickens to kind of keep him busy and occupied, and we decided that we're going to raise the chickens organic and pastured."

"There's a guy named Joel Salatin who has a method where you move these pens around -



Pictured at the Lewiston Artisan Farmers Market in Academy Park are Rachel, Lucy, Joe and Frank Dispenza.

a pasture every day - and then the chickens can eat natural. We do that, and we process them on our farm, and do everything ourselves, which causes less stress for the animals and creates a better product in the end."

In lieu of a brick-and-mortar location, Dispenza & Son is working the farmers market scene this summer.

"We're just focusing on the chicken and our Thanksgiving turkeys," Frank said. "And so,

we're here at the Lewiston Market selling it. And we're going to be at the Youngstown Main Street market once a month. We do not have our shop open, so we don't have anything at our farm, except for raising chickens and processing."

Patrons also can visit www.dispenzas.com.

"They can contact me, and we can make an appointment where they can meet us at our farm; or they can meet me here at the market," Frank said.

For the Dispenza family, it's all hands on deck at the markets. In addition to poultry, Frank said, "Rachel

may do her soup. Her soups were real popular at the shop; so she might do her chicken sausage soup." And daughter Lucy sells lemonade.

"Some people say, 'Why is it Dispenza & Son?' when I have

a daughter, we have five other boys," Frank said. "Back in like the '20s in Buffalo, my great-grandfather had a business called Dispenza & Son soda water. So, it's kind of a takeoff of that."

Joe said, "I like it."

His father said, "Joe's a very kind-hearted person, so he loves animals. He's learned to respectfully process chickens and everything. He helps with that, from start to finish."

Joe said, "It's nice to be able to be a kid that knows how to do this."

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Primary day voting light throughout county

BY TERRY DUFFY
Editor-in-Chief

Primary day voting was very light Tuesday throughout Niagara County, with 11,371 ballots cast out of 150,000 eligible voters for limited races throughout the county, according to data provided by the Niagara County Board of Elections.

As of Thursday, unofficial tabulations - excluding absentee ballots and affidavits in communities of interest - found the following:

- In the Town of Lewiston on the Republican ticket for the two council seats, candidate J. Steve Boddecker was the top vote getter with 350 cast (38.28% of the vote), with five participating districts reporting. Incumbent Robin "Rob" Morreale was second with 304 votes (34.12%) and Ed Lilly third with 235 votes

(26.37%). Two write-in votes (0.22%) were also logged.

On the Conservative line for Lewiston councilman, Steve Shoecraft was the top voter getter with 32 votes (35.16%). He was followed by Dennis M. Stornelli with 28 votes (30.77%), Morreale with 17 votes (18.68%), and John O. Jacoby Jr. with 14 votes (15.38%). No write-in votes were cast.

- For Niagara County judge on the Democratic line, Michael Benedict was the top choice with 3,174 votes cast (74.18%), with John J. Ottaviano Jr., scoring 1,093 votes (25.54%). There was also 12 write-in votes cast (unspecified) (0.28%) in the county-wide vote.

On the Republican ticket for county judge, Ottaviano Jr. won the count by a narrow margin,

netting 2,972 votes (50.89%) to 2,861 cast (48.99%) for Benedict. There was also seven write-in votes (0.12%) and again for unspecified candidates.

On the Conservative line, Ottaviano Jr. was first with 372 votes (65.72%), followed by Benedict with 193 votes (34.10%). One write-in vote (0.18%) was cast.

And on the Working Families line for county judge, Benedict was first with 92 votes (53.49%), followed by Ottaviano Jr. with 80 (36.51%). No write-in votes were recorded.

- In the Niagara Falls race for City Court judge, Jenelle M. Faso won both the Republican and Democratic lines. On the GOP ticket, Faso garnered 334 votes (42.39%) over challengers Dominic H. Saraceno with 261 votes

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