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FASNY urges New Yorkers to play it safe this Fourth of July: Leave fireworks to the pros!

BY THE FIREMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

The Fourth of July may feel a little different this year due to COVID-19. Smaller barbecues, less parties and limited celebrations filled with displayed fireworks. Although sparklers and similar items can be bought and sold in much of New York, the Firemen's Association of the State of New York urges residents to let professionals handle the fireworks.

FASNY reminds New Yorkers that, although sparklers may look harmless, and almost toy-like, they are incredibly harmful and can cause serious injury and fires.

"Fireworks and sparkling devices are extremely dangerous in the hands of non-professionals," FASNY President Steven Klein said. "Although they seem fun, fireworks and sparkling devices can cause serious bodily harm and even death. Fireworks should only be used by professionals who have undergone proper training."

The tip of a sparkler burns at a temperature of nearly 2,000 de-



grees Fahrenheit, which can cause severe third-degree burns. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), sparklers cause roughly 25% of all fireworks-related emergency room visits, the most of any type of fireworks device. A 2019 report from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commis-

sion shows that, in 2018, fireworks were involved in an estimated 9,100 injuries. Between June and July of 2018, emergency rooms treated 5,600 patients for fireworks-related injuries. Children under the age of 15 accounted for 36% of these injuries. According to the report, 44% of the emergency department-

treated injuries were burns, with the most common injury to hands, fingers and arms.

"Rather than take the risk of getting hurt, FASNY is urging New Yorkers to either attend a fireworks display in their town or county – while maintaining proper protocols – or to watch one of the professional shows that will be televised or live-streamed," Klein said.

He added, "On behalf of the Firemen's Association of the State of New York, and all of the dedicated firefighters who serve the Empire State, we wish everyone a happy, healthy and safe Fourth of July. And should there be an emergency or unsafe situation, we urge everyone to call 911. It's better to be safe than sorry."

About FASNY

Founded in 1872, the Firemen's Association of the State of New York represents the interests of the more than 90,000 volunteer firefighters and emergency medical personnel in New York state. For more information, visit www.fasny.com.

Village of Lewiston planning on fireworks for July 4

As first reported here last week, the Village of Lewiston intends to hold its annual Fourth of July fireworks show at dusk on Saturday, July 4.

This is assuming Western New York is in phase four of Gov. Andrew Cuomo's "New York For-

ward" reopening plan, which is expected to happen on Tuesday, June 30.

Residents are asked to be on their best behavior: Mayor Anne Welch said all spectators will be required to wear a mask and social distance when near other people.

This will be enforced by local first responders.

In addition, she is working with the Niagara River Region Chamber of Commerce to establish social distance zones within Academy Park.

Lewiston Tops owner Anthony

DiMino and developer/businessman Jerry Williams each donated \$5,000 to the village, enabling the municipality to hold the fireworks celebration.

A rain date is Sunday, July 5, also at dusk.

Carnegie Art Center to sponsor Fourth of July kids parade in NT

MICHAEL DEPIETRO

Interim Tribune Editor

Legislator Richard Andres and the Carnegie Arts Center are sponsoring a kids Fourth of July parade. The event will take the place of the annual Herschell Carrousel Factory Museum Fourth of July kids parade, which was canceled due to COVID-19 concerns.

Andres' request to hold the parade was tentatively approved by the North Tonawanda Common Council on June 19.

The parade will start at 10:30 a.m., beginning at the corner of Thompson and Niagara Street at the Pine Woods Park entrance. From there, it will head down Niagara Street to Goundry Street, heading west on Goundry to the Carnegie Art Center. Once at the

art center, kids will be able to take part in social distancing activities including a magic show as well as a public art project celebrating America's birthday.

The event is expected to end at noon. Kids are encouraged to bring their bikes and wagons and to decorate them for the Fourth of July, while parents are encouraged to bring a picnic blanket.

This year would've marked the fourth year for the Herschell Carrousel Museum Fourth of July parade. Speaking on the decision to cancel the usual event, Andres said it would've been nearly impossible to run it safely.

"We usually crush the Carrousel Museum with 250 kids all at once. If they're supposed to clean every surface, with kids going from this ride

to that ride... they just don't have the staff there; it's usually volunteers," Andres said. "(With the Carnegie Center), we thought we could do something that was more of a performance instead of everybody touching the same things. We thought we could handle the social distancing better by having something passive that you watch rather than everyone handling the same materials."

Andres noted the Carrousel Museum staffers said they would "be happy to resume next year."

The decision to cancel the traditional festivities was tough on Andres, who's spearheaded the event every year. Still, he said that this year – perhaps more so than any other – it was important to give kids an event to look forward to.

"Considering everything going

on in the country right now, I didn't just want to let (the celebration) die. My wife and I came up with (Herschell Carrousel Factory Museum Fourth of July kids parade) a number of years ago and it's always been super successful and kids seem to love it, especially because on the Fourth of July morning there's nothing to do. This year especially, we thought that the kids deserve it and it's something better than the same old, same old," Andres said.

"It's kind of an interesting rearrangement of the tradition, but we'll make it work. Social distancing is front and center, so we're definitely keeping that in mind. We're hoping to keep everyone safe and entertained and we're hoping for great weather," he said.

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