

A Memorable May in the Town of Clarence

100 years ago, the Clarence Hollow was one of the busiest Hamlets in the region. It had nearly every business and service you could imagine for that time period, and it was the home of two multi-room Clarence schools: The Parker Academy and Parker High School. The Hollow also was home to the Buffalo Truck Company and one of the area's first new car dealerships. The Automobile Club of Buffalo built their Country Club House now the Clarence Town Park which was a day's drive from the City of Buffalo at the top of the West Hill at the old Lusk farm.

Former Clarence Supervisor Kathy Hallock set the path bringing the Hollow back to its prominence of yesteryear. The goal was to make improvements to the Hollow in order to bring business and people back. For almost twenty years the Town has been working with the State of New York returning the Hollow back to a walkable business community. Over this time period, the Town and State made infrastructure improvements including curbs, sidewalks, bike trails, public parking, and a pedestrian bridge. Working with the State and County the Hollow also now has a sewer system which allows the change of use and expansion of existing buildings.

The Clarence Hollow Association, which was incorporated to help promote the Hollow and Hollow Businesses held Hollowday a few Saturdays ago. Jean O'Connell, President of the Association, and the Hollow Board held an all day and night community event. The day started with Clarence Fire District's 100th Anniversary Celebration, followed by other events during the day in the Hollow and Town Park. In the evening, 14 business and restaurants participated with dining specials and live music.

John O'Hare, one of the hard-working event organizers said it best, "there was a groundswell of support from everyone who was involved with the event." Like what was said in the theme song to Cheers', whichever Hollow restaurant you were in, "Everybody knew your name and was glad you came." It was surreal leaving the Bistro Restaurant that night hearing live music up and down Main Street. Walking from one restaurant to another I saw everyone enjoying the comradery of that evening.

Congratulation's Clarence Hollow Association and the Hollow businesses for having a very successful "Hollowday." Similarly, to the Village of Williamsville, I hope in the very near future a night can be picked to have this type of event all through the summer for everyone to enjoy.

After a two-year COVID break, the Lions Club held Bark in the Park on Saturday, Memorial Day weekend. Tim Pazda and the Lions Club members did not miss a beat running a very well attended, successful Bark in the Park. The day was filled with events, and over 40 vendors showing their wares. Over one thousand people attended, many with their dogs. It was fun to see so many different breeds all in one place. Even if you attended without a canine – there was a lot to do and see – including a petting zoo, pony rides and the opportunity to hold a baby kangaroo! I also saw some pet adoptions from rescue groups – which is always great to see! Congratulations Lions Club!

This year again there was a great turnout for the Memorial Day Parade and ceremony. In addition to a beautiful ceremony from the American Legion 838 honoring our fallen soldiers, Clarence Rotary acknowledged 30 Veteran names added to the Honor Walls of the Memorial. All the flags were new for this Memorial Day. The military branch flags were raised by veterans who had served. A tradition that the Clarence Rotary Club plans to continue for years to come.