

## **Summer is in full swing at Clarence Town Parks**

We are fortunate to have one of the finest Parks Departments in New York State. This past month has been particularly busy, and our Parks team has risen to the occasion with remarkable efficiency. Parks Superintendent Jason Holden is doing a great job leading our Department.

Firstly, our house baseball and softball leagues concluded successfully despite navigating a rainy late spring. Following the rainy period, a heat wave arrived, prompting the timely opening of the town pool to serve our community. Additionally, our Concert Association commenced its series on June 12th with a performance by the Clarence High School Chamber Music group. There are several more Sunday night concerts for you to enjoy.

Graduation weekend was bustling with activity. Our pavilions hosted numerous parties, and we welcomed the Clarence Rotary Pickleball Tournament to our Town View Park which has now 12 pickleball courts. Despite another rainy weekend, we witnessed hundreds of park visitors and a dedicated effort from our parks team to help clean and dry the courts, ensuring activities could proceed promptly.

A significant challenge arose with the need to reschedule the Fireworks in the Park event, initially planned for Saturday, June 29th, but postponed to Monday, July 1st due to inclement weather. This rescheduling required extensive coordination among various organizations to adapt quickly.

While fireworks celebrations around July 4th have been a tradition for over 30 years, Fireworks in the Park is a relatively new event. It aims to continue the town's traditions with a fresh approach. Historically, the Clarence Lions Club and Clarence Jaycees hosted "Day in the Park," which included activities, games, prizes, and food vendors, culminating in fireworks at dusk. In recent years, the event evolved into Hollowfest, a multi-day festival. The pandemic provided an opportunity for another transformation, now led by the Clarence Rotary Club.

This event was made possible through the leadership and expertise of Councilman Bob Altieri, who volunteered his time and knowledge from his "Day in the Park" era to assist Clarence Rotary. Deputy Supervisor Peter DiCostanzo, also President of the Clarence Rotary Foundation, leveraged his experience with the Jaycees to manage vendors and logistics for this large-scale event. Chrissy Casilio Bluhm, chair of the Clarence Veterans Memorial and a Clarence Rotary leader, initiated and organized the event, involving numerous Clarence organizations to offer fundraising opportunities at no cost. A special thanks to Veronica Jenks who was the voice of our event. We are grateful to the Clarence Fire Department for ensuring our safety during the fireworks display and for their ongoing emergency services.

The event saw participation from dozens of organizations and attracted thousands of attendees, especially during the fireworks display. This turnout was impressive, given the short notice change to a weeknight. Special thanks to Dawn Snyder from the Clarence Youth Foundation for her critical role in on-site coordination and children's activities. Many others deserve recognition, particularly the Parks Department, for accommodating the changes and providing a beautiful

venue for the community to enjoy now and in the future. Thank you to the whole committee who especially flew into action with the rescheduling of the event.

Looking ahead, we are excited about the 3rd annual Summerfest, hosted by Director Dawn Kinney and the Clarence Youth Bureau on Saturday, July 20th, from 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm. This event was well attended in the past. The event will feature bounce houses, obstacle courses, carnival games, a scavenger hunt with prizes, food trucks, concessions, face painting, tattoos, and a chalk art contest for all ages.

Additionally, the Clarence Chamber of Commerce will host the Taste of Clarence on Monday, August 5th, which remains one of our largest events of the year. 20 restaurants. 35 private vendors. Hundreds of Classic cars. The Taste brings thousands to enjoy everything our Town Park has to offer.

I hope you all have a great rest of the summer, and have ample opportunities to enjoy our beautiful parks, bike paths and trails!