

Waterloo gets ready to celebrate

Waterloo will be celebrating and commemorating the 150th anniversary of Memorial Day at this year's festivities in May.

The Celebrate/Commemorate Committee is co-chaired by Jane Shaffer – (315) 539-3353, jane@sesslerwrecking.com – and Deputy Mayor David Duprey – (315) 521-9715, duprey1@mac.com.

The 17th annual Celebrate/Commemorate Memorial Day events will be held May 27-30 in Waterloo.

On a spring day in 1865, Waterloo druggist Henry Welles watched as a lone widow walked to the cemetery to place flowers on the grave of her deceased Civil War soldier husband. How soon they forget, Welles thought, resolving to do something to make sure those who gave their lives in defense of their country would not be forgotten. Working with General John Murray, Welles

This May, the village will come alive with a “Norman Rock-well” feel as the Birthplace of Memorial Day observes the 150th consecutive Memorial Day. The goal is to take Waterloo back to the first Memorial Day in 1866 through Living History, while continuing to present the myriad of events that has made Celebrate/Commemorate so successful.

“I am humbled by the patriotism in this little upstate village of about 5,000 people, my hometown” said Shaffer. “As co-chair of Celebrate/Commemorate for the past 17 years, it has been my privilege to work with the committee of nearly 40 volunteers who dedicate their time and energy to honoring our veterans. This year will be our most ambitious observance ever.”

A month of observances is planned, including parades, balls, presentations and a motorcycle bike rally. The month will kick off with historical walking tours and a dinner theater re-enactment of the history of Memorial Day May 5, the traditional Memorial Day. The Waterloo Women's Re-search Club will present a “Walk Through Time” Fashion Show and Tea at the 200 year old Waterloo Presbyterian Church May 14.

The annual Celebrate/Commemorate observance is expected to bring thousands of people “home” to Waterloo to participate events to delight every family member. The events include musical concerts, arts and craft shows, children's games and performances, a youth essay contest and a big parade celebrating our freedom at 11 a.m. May 28. The parade's honor float will feature eight World War II Navy vets who trained at Sampson Naval Base, Romulus, now a state park, and wounded warriors from the VA Hospital in Canandaigua, escorted by scores of Patriot Guard

and American Legion motorcycle riders, bands, floats and military groups including National Guard and active military troops.

During Celebrate/Commemorate weekend, Waterloo will host the largest concentration of Civil War re-enactors in one site in the northeast. Groups will gather from throughout the eastern United States, including infantry, signal corps, artillery, U.S. Colored Troops from New York City and fraternal organizations such as the Grand Army of the Republic and its Allied Orders; Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, Daughters of the Union Veterans of the Civil War 1861-65 (DUVCW) and Auxiliary to the Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War including two past presidents of the DUVCW. The Confederate counterparts have been invited and will share in our commemoration.

There will be encampments of both Union and Confederate re-enactors presenting Living Histories of Civil War camp life including many events such as camp cooking, children's crafts, military training and drills, a Grand Review with President Abraham Lincoln, presentations by Civil War surgeons, morticians, sutlers, photographers, artillery with cannon fire, commands by Harriet Tubman and support by the Christian Commission and the Sanitary Commission. Frederick Douglass will share his address as given at Arlington Cemetery on Decoration Day.

A special Reconciliation Event will take place May 28 at Waterloo's, American Civil War Memorial. This memorial was built by the citizens in honor of those men from Waterloo who died in the Civil War. The Reconciliation Event will bring the North and South together for



Ongoing support

Seneca Meadows Community Relations Director Mark Benjamin recently presented Seneca Falls Backpack Program President Lisa Garigen with a check to help sustain the backpack program in the district. The funds will provide weekend food for the Seneca Falls Backpack program for the 2016 school year. “Thank you so much for the donation. This donation will feed 20 children for the entire school year,” stated Garigen. The program now provides food for 75 children in the Seneca Falls School District. Like many other aid organizations in the Finger Lakes, the program is a 100% volunteer organization, and Seneca Meadows provided supplies and equipment for volunteers a couple of years ago that are still in use and in great condition today. “The backpack program sincerely thanks its valued partners Foodlink, Seneca Meadows, Seneca Falls Rotary Club, and numerous private individual donors,” added Garigen.

healing and reuniting.

Special “dignitaries” will include President Lincoln portrayed by Fritz Kline, President and Mrs. Ulysses Grant (Mr. and Mrs. Larry Clowers), Tubman (Carolyn Evans), Douglass (Michael Crutcher Sr.), General Robert Lee (Norman Joy), Civil War photographer Alexander Gardner (Doug McGovern), Dr. Mary Walker and spy Belle Boyd (Marilyn Dirk), Clara Barton (Eleanor Sterns), northern sympathizer Elizabeth Van Lew (Nancy Karasinski), mortician (Don Williams), Rev. Scott

(Marty Hillman), Sisterhood of Spies (Karasinski and friends), Mary Gahan of the 148th NYVI (Caren Cleveland), Civil War surgeon (Fred Till), Christian Commission by Beth and Jessica Cade, Colonel Murray (Tim Bills) and President Teddy Roosevelt (Gib Young).

The 20th and 26th United States Colored Troops (USCT) from New York City has confirmed they will attend, a special honor. The USCT has worked with both Douglass and

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Around the county

planned the first Memorial Day in Waterloo in 1866, and for 150 consecutive years, Waterloo's citizens have remembered with parades, prayers and ceremonies.

On May 26, 1966, that consistency inspired President Lyndon Johnson to sign a Presidential Proclamation recognizing Waterloo as the official Birthplace of Memorial Day.

“This is our heritage!” explains Duprey. “We must continue what Mr. Welles and General Murray started 150 years ago. It is an honor to be recognized as the Official Birthplace of Memorial Day, but with that honor comes responsibility.”

That's why a committee of veterans groups and community leaders have been meeting for more than a year to ensure this year's events are bigger and better than ever.

Seneca Falls tackles tricky budget numbers

The Seneca Falls Board of Education met last Thursday (Feb. 11) and heard from the budget committee target budgets need work to achieve.

With meager state aid allocations in the governor's executive budget proposal, the district is currently faced with a 3.4% tax levy increase. Efforts to reduce an additional \$200,000 would reduce the increase to 1.9%.

Progress towards such a target, which would exceed the tax levy limit, will be reported at future meetings.

The board provided Certificates of Recognition to the High School/Middle School Robotics Team and parent volunteers. This team advanced in regional competition and were participants in the state competition. Parents were recognized for supporting the program and giving of their time to guide students in many hours of preparation time.

The Seneca Falls Education Foundation has been established. Theresa Clark, Tony Ferrara, Heather Higby, Jerry Macaluso and Zac Young have agreed to serve on the foundation, which is looking to work with the district to access additional scholarship award funds for graduating seniors. The

board and foundation will work together over the next year or so and hope to begin with scholarship awards in June 2017.

Two board members reported on their attendance at the Four County School Boards Association. David Little, Rural Schools' Association executive director, spoke about state aid funding issues and the negative impact on rural schools. Regional board members also discussed and worked on legislative advocacy points to share with legislators.

Two board members also attended the District Steering Committee meeting and shared the agenda items – strategic plan updates (graduation rate, academic programming, school community connections), Project Lead the Way Tech Ed proposal and secondary grading revision considerations.

The board discussed the concept of modified track & field. Discussion included a trial basis this spring and budget considerations for future years. The board will revisit this concept in an upcoming meeting.

Jim Bruni shared the Technology Refresh Plan goals and potential purchases for this spring and summer. The board

approved the appropriation of state aid (from last year's purchases) for this year's purchases.

Andy Doell and Bruni shared the proposal to incorporate Project Lead the Way into the Tech Ed Department, with up to two introduction to engineering & design classes. The two classes would replace existing tech ed elective courses. The board will act on a resolution to approve the course and credit in an upcoming meeting.

Doell reported considerations for revisions to grading, with less weight being given for mid-term exams, final exams and Regents exams. While a number of schools have eliminated use of Regents exams in students' GPAs, the tentative proposal is to reduce the weighting in GPAs in the district.

Spring coaching recommendations were approved as presented.

The board accepted, with regret, the resignations for retirement purposes from Rebecca Elder (transportation director) and Mary Jo Doyle (Mynderse biology teacher). Both were thanked for their years of service and contributions to the district.

The board approved an increase in FTE status for Sara Deatherage (speech & language teacher) for the purposes of provid-

ing required instructional services to ELL students at Frank Knight.

The board approved a memorandum of understanding with the county Board of Elections for using a county optical scanning machine for the annual budget vote in May.

The board approved the resolution for a merged girls' lacrosse program between Seneca Falls and Romulus.

The next meeting will be a Frank Knight round table next Thursday (Feb. 25) at 7 p.m. in the cafeteria.

Around the schools

Upcoming events

LaFayette's mid-winter fundraiser continues through March 4. Gemini registration at Waterloo High School will be held next Wednesday (Feb. 24).

The Seneca Falls eighth grade Washington, DC trip parent meeting will be held next Wednesday (Feb. 23) in the middle school cafeteria at 7 p.m. The board of education meets next Thursday (Feb. 25) with a Frank Knight round table in the cafeteria at 7 p.m.