

Lewiston Beautification Team to Host Mansion Tour and Garden Party, (working title) by Jan M. Czech

This is a busy time of year for the Lewiston Beautification Team. You may have seen them planting colorful gardens on Center Street, the waterfront, the Peace Garden, Hennepin Park and the Red Brick School to name a few locations benefitting from members' hard work and green thumbs. They are easy to spot wearing navy blue T-Shirts with Beautification Volunteer written across the back in white letters.

The team takes their task of brightening up the village seriously. "Our wonderful volunteers work tirelessly to make the village as lovely as it can be and that includes tending 57 gardens on Center Street alone," said Beautification Committee Coordinator Tasia Fitzpatrick. The team's motto is "Grow Positive Thoughts" and is evident in all their endeavors. Their talents extend beyond the summer season to include pumpkins in the Center Street pots marking autumn's harvest, village wide Christmas decorations heralding the holidays, including the tree lighting ceremony at Academy Park, and spring flowers celebrating the end of a long winter.

The new picnic tables, trash cans, swings, planters and fencing at the waterfront were all selected by the Beautification Team Members. Many Beautification projects are made possible through grants and donations from local businesses and private citizens but to continue their ongoing work as well as tackling future ventures, more support is needed.

Mayor Anne Welch remarked that," every year we receive many compliments from visitors and residents alike who enjoy Lewiston's dynamic summer horticultural display of pots, plantings, hanging baskets and beautiful gardens. People love to stroll along Center Street, the waterfront or just sit quietly on a bench to enjoy the beauty of their endeavors, The Beautification Team works tirelessly to carry on their mission of making Lewiston the beautiful community that it is today."

To that end, The Lewiston Beautification Committee invites the public to an old-fashioned Garden Party complete with picture hats, live music, light refreshments and, of course, gardens. But there's more. The festivities will take place on the grounds of Barton Hill, the mansion on the hill at 210 Center Street in Lewiston. As part of the event, the public is invited to tour the 6000 square foot residence. Ten rooms in the gracious home, owned by Diane and Ed Finkbeiner, will be open for viewing.

The mansion commands expansive views of the Niagara River and Canada. Its location was integral to its place in history. Barton Hill was built in 1807 by Benjamin Barton and acted as a headquarters for the military during the War of 1812 until the British burned it to the ground in 1813. Barton rebuilt the house in 1815, expanding it into a larger and grander home for his wife and eleven children. Generations of the Barton family lived at Barton Hill for over 140 years. At one time a tunnel ran from beneath a trap door in the kitchen down to the Niagara River acting as a stop on the Underground Railroad. "Barton Hill has figured prominently in the region's and nation's history from the early days of the frontier," said Mrs. Finkbeiner in a recent interview.

The house is Greek Revival in style and features a flying staircase which leads to the Captain's Walk on the roof and is highlighted by a skylight original to the house. Wide plank wood floors, beamed ceilings and nine fireplaces, are just a few of the house's original trappings. "No expense was spared to create these beautifully appointed interior rooms featuring unusually high ceilings and floor to ceiling windows which flood the rooms with light and a sweeping view of the Niagara Gorge," she added.

Don't pass up this opportunity to tour the mansion as part of the Beautification Team's Garden Party benefit event and see for yourself one of Lewiston's premier architectural jewels. Stroll the grounds and enjoy the river view from the back terrace. Sip lemonade while relaxing in a wicker chair on the front porch. Let the bucolic setting sweep you away to an earlier time.

The Barton Hill Mansion Tour and Garden Party takes place on June 28th from 1:00 – 5:00 at Barton Hill, 210 Center Street, Lewiston, NY. Purchase advance

tickets for \$25 at www.upwardniagara.com/chamberevents/events/, from a Beautification Team member, or at the door for \$30, (cash only).

* All proceeds to benefit Lewiston Beautification.