

Lehigh Valley Italian-American Band in Northampton

On 15 July under the direction of Paul Chepolis, the Lehigh Valley Italian-American Band presented a panoply of Italian operas, marches and folk songs to an eager crowd in Northampton. The concert also included several swing numbers featuring the sweet sounds of reed master Rich Nasto, alto sax soloist. For a complete listing of concerts visit the Concert Schedules page of the Local 45 website.



Sax Soloist Rich Nasto



Lehigh Valley Italian-American Band

Allentown Arts Walk - It's Official

On a beautiful July morning, Allentown Mayor Ed Pawlowski and Lehigh County Executive Don Cunningham cut the ribbon to officially open the Arts Walk. The brick-paved walkway connects Symphony Hall, the Baum School of Art, the Allentown Art Museum and the Allentown Arts Park.

The celebration began with a parade from Zion's Reformed Church at 620 Hamilton Street along the Arts Walk to the ceremony site. The celebration continued in the Arts Park featuring performances by Allentown Symphony and Community Music School Musicians, art activities by the Allentown Art Museum and Baum School of Art and more. The Arts Park was completed in 2007 as a centerpiece for the downtown Arts District. The park is owned and maintained by the city.

"The arts are critical to the health of the city," said Pawlowski. The Arts Walk brings a new focus to our efforts to connect our downtown commercial district to our arts treasures."



Friends of the Allentown Parks

Several years ago when Allentown Mayor Afflerbach eliminated the funding for the City's summer band concert series, several individuals worked with local service clubs (eg, Lions, Rotary, Soroptomists, West Park Civic Association and others) to enlist their support of the series. We were successful and, although there were less funds available, the series continued uninterrupted. During that time, one service club representative along with an Allentown Recreation Dept representative and several Local 45 representatives discussed forming a non-profit organization to solicit funds from the general public. While that did not come to fruition, discussion on the matter continued.

Today, that effort has culminated in a non-profit organization, avidly supported by current Mayor Ed Pawlowski. Known as "Friends of the Allentown Parks," the mission of this membership driven organization is to enhance the park system both in beauty and activities. Still in its relative infancy, there has been discussion of increasing the entertainment offerings throughout the park system. A member of the Program Committee, Local 45 President Karen El-Chaar is working with "Friends" to identify grants and other activities to expand the musical entertainment at our parks. This will benefit not only the bands, but our symphonic and casual club date musicians as well.

Mr. James Steffy, Executive Director of the organization, recently retired from Muhlenberg College where he was a vice president and interim president. Earlier in his career, he was Director of Bands at Susquehanna University and a popular guest conductor for band festivals throughout the northeast. He recalls coming to West Park with his parents as a young student musician from Reading to hear Bert Myers and the Allentown Band in West Park. In further effort to promote the Allentown summer concert series, the bands and of course, "Friends of the Allentown Park System," Jim has volunteered to be a guest conductor at several of the band concerts this summer.

Local 45 members thank Mayor Pawlowski, Jim Steffy, Greg Weitzel (Exec Director, Allentown Dept. of Parks & Recreation) and the entire Parks and Recreation staff for their continued support of ensuring the continued presentation of live music in the parks and other venues throughout Allentown. For additional information on "Friends" visit www.friendsoftheallentownparks.org or phone Capri Roth/Jim Steffy at 610-437-7757.