

ROTARY CELEBRATES BAND SHELL LAMPLIGHTER STYLE

Event highlights true potential of outdoor stage at Charles Daley Park

BY SCOTT ROSTS
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It may have officially opened on July 1, but rather than just settle with a ribbon cutting, the Rotary Club of Lincoln spent a whole evening celebrating the new Rotary Shell at Charles Daley Park.

The event, held last Friday, was a chance to celebrate new cultural opportunities for the Town of Lincoln, but also celebrate the hard work of the volunteers and contributors who helped make a dream become reality when the band shell opened earlier this summer.

The event showed the true potential of the new facility. Performances by the Lincoln Concert Band, whose members say the acoustics in the band shell are great and playing in it is a phenomenal experience, and theatrical performances from past Lamplighter Tours highlighted the event, all under the confines of the new band shell.

"We have seen and heard just how wonderful the Rotary shell is," Rotary Club of Lincoln President Margaret Andrewes told those in attendance Friday night.

Andrewes noted it's also a symbol of just how wonderful the community is. Hundreds of volunteers through the club's Lamplighter Tour have helped play a part in raising funds for the band shell, along with the many members from the community who support the annual fall production.

"The creation of this unique facility, the Rotary Shell, is a one-of-a-kind story," said

Andrewes.

The impetus of the project, Andrewes recalled, was the work by Laura Gibson and the Friends of Charles Daley Park to restore the park with projects like its boardwalk.

"The Rotary Club of Lincoln saw the potential for this idea to become reality," said Andrewes.

It formed a "much-valued partnership" with the Town of Lincoln and made a \$165,000 commitment to the Town of Lincoln over a 10-year period to help fund the project. The Lamplighter Tour proceeds, along with generous support from sponsors such as Investors Group, Hopkins Pharmacy, Blue Sky Nursery, Lincoln Chamber of Commerce and others are all key to making that happen – and were all part of the celebration last Friday.

"We celebrate collective accomplishment and pay tribute to hundreds of volunteers, and others in the community, who have played a role in the Rotary Shell story," said Andrewes.

One of those supporters has been Lincoln Council. Lincoln Mayor Bill Hodgson noted that while past councils were difficult to convince about investing in the park, this council has been "very supportive of all of the work" and the "invaluable enthusiasm."

The Rotary Club also acknowledged the support of Brouwer Construction, which helped build the shell. Al Brouwer, of the Lincoln-based company, said it was their pleasure to be able to do something in their

own town. His father, Dick, while he retired 15 years ago, was instrumental to the design and already has ideas for what he would like to see happen to the grounds in front of the shell in terms of seating, said Brouwer.

The community will once again have a chance to support the Rotary Shell funding through this fall's Lamplighter Tour. The tour is scheduled for November 19-22 with the theme "Lamplighter Goes to the Beach". Tickets will go on sale in October for a one-day sale, and those wishing to attend better make the call quick.

"Last year we sold about 90 per cent (of tickets) within an hour and half," said producer Jennifer Southward, who along with artistic director Bev Haskins was described as the "heart of the Lamplighter Tour" by Andrewes.

Southward said as producer she has been thrilled with the buy-in for the event, even in its first season six years ago.

"I realized the spirit of the people out there," she said. "I was inspired by them."

There is still more room for people, said Haskins.

"There are an amazing number of jobs," she said, encouraging the community to get involved, whether on stage, or behind the scenes. There are numerous roles from props to baking to set design and much more.

For more information on the Lamplighter Tour, including ticket information and volunteer opportunities, visit www.lamplightertour.com or call 905-563-8387.



Captain Joseph Moyer, played by Jens Hansen, gets caught up in one of his sea stories during a performance of a portion of a play from last year's Lamplighter Tour production. Hansen's performance was part of the Rotary Club of Lincoln's Rotary Shell celebration last Friday at Charles Daley Park.

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