

City's rebuilt gazebo hosts first concert Saturday

By **RACHEL F. SMITH-JONES**
Staff Writer

CLAREMONT — With the rebirth of the gazebo in Broad Street Park comes a new opportunity for area musicians to share their talents.

History is repeating itself Saturday, as local band Justin Black takes center stage from 7-9 p.m. in the nearly completed gazebo in the downtown park.

The classic rock, country, blues and jazz band was the last to perform at the site before the July 1999 storm that ripped the roof off the structure.

Two years later, restoration work on the 75-year-old structure is about to come to an end.

"It's so close," Parks and Recreation Department Director Scott Hausler said of the completion of the project. "It's such meticulous work. It's been a long time, but (Brian Gallien) is such a craftsman. It's been a one man job. Every nail that is hammered in, every measurement made is his. It's quite a project. It's been exciting to watch it go up. We want it to be there another hundred years."

Gallien, of Ironwood Restoration in Marlow, N.H., started the \$33,500 project

literally from scratch, Hausler said Wednesday.

"No plans could be found," he said of the original structure. "We used minutes from city council meetings and newspaper articles to date (the structure). It really was a matter of taking the old one apart and measuring everything."

During the process, Gallien discovered that the original gazebo was not a true octagon, Hausler said, which meant that all of the new measurements had to be a little "off" to make the pieces fit with the existing base.

Work continues on a roof extension, designed to prevent water from dripping and continuing to deteriorate the foundation wall, Hausler said. Additional ceiling work, painting and copper roofing installation will take place in the next few weeks, he added.

"It just inspired me," founding Justin Black member Bill Eckert said Wednesday of his thoughts when he saw construction work beginning at the site. Earlier this year, Eckert worked with Claremont's community access television station to tape several performances by younger bands at Dusty's on Pleasant Street. "It got too big for the establishment," he said

of the gigs.

Launching a concert series at Broad Street Park seemed ideal.

"I thought 'here's the place. This is going to exist again,'" he said. "If the city of Claremont can put this much effort into remaking this, we're going to give something back to the community. We're focusing on the younger groups. They really don't have any place to play. This actually gives them some direction."

The events are open to all ages and all types of music, he added. Saturday's concert will be videotaped and televised on CCTV.

"We figured we'd try it and see if it sparked any interest," Hausler said of bands volunteering their time. "It's an opportunity for some local artists to step forward and have a chance to perform. I think it'll be fun."

Eckert hopes to see it expand to include comedy and theatrics, as well as find a place to continue the performances during the winter.

Anyone interested in performing in the park or receiving more information on the effort can contact Holly Morse at 603-542-4265 or by e-mail at justinblackent@yahoo.com.