

Bee Editorial

In our darkest hour, WNY shines brightly

Plenty has been said and done during the past 30 years to create a negative impression of Buffalo and Western New York when it comes to bad weather.

What happened last weekend should stand for a much longer period of time as a testament to what people like us can do when faced with unimaginable conditions.

We huddled in our homes Thursday night and braced for the worst. The rain that began earlier in the day turned to wet snow, and lots of it. The colorful autumn leaves that we thought would adorn our neighborhoods for weeks were soon covered in sterile white. The sturdy limbs to which they clung began to bend and sag under the unusual weight. Then, as dusk faded into evening's darkness, thunder and lightning enveloped the surreal scene, and the devastation began.

Limbs and trunks broke with sounds similar

to gunshots, often taking utility lines with them. Power and communication was lost to an estimated 400,000 customers from downtown Buffalo to its eastern suburbs.

Many residents have waited patiently for five days or more to have power restored. They have tolerated cold, dark evenings in their homes as well as the Herculean task of clearing and cutting limbs blocking driveways, sidewalks and roadways. Their only reward was a cup of coffee or a simple meal procured from a neighbor with a gas stove or the pleasant surprise of finding a store that still had batteries for sale.

The key word is "neighbor" because without them, the past week would have been even more difficult to endure. We missed seeing some of our favorite sports on television but discovered what it was like 75 years ago to spend the night listening to the radio with our

families. We had to throw out some food, but we found stronger friendships served up with a side order of chain saws and snow shovels.

Government officials in the towns and villages covered by Bee Group Newspapers acted with the safety of all residents in mind throughout the emergency. So did the police officers and firefighters who took time away from their families when they were just as needed at home. Municipal workers, volunteers and power crews from across the northeast came here by the hundreds to help us when we needed it most. We thank them from the bottom of our hearts.

To his credit, Rep. Thomas Reynolds was far ahead of any other elected official in securing information and funding from agencies familiar with disasters of this scale.

Slowly, power is being restored. So is our region's reputation.

Spindle items



JILL SCHMELZER

Amherst Reporter

• **WEATHERING THE STORM** — This weekend has marked a historic event for all of Western New York. Yes, some were luckier than others. For example, the people who never lost power or didn't have many trees on their block.

Road to Main Street. I want to remind people that when traffic signals are out of service at an intersection it automatically becomes a four-way stop. I couldn't count the number of drivers that failed to follow this procedure. In one area, a tree lay across one side of the street. As a courtesy, people were letting one car go and then the other. It was my turn to let the vehicle on the other side pass, and sure enough, about 12 cars followed. Just my luck! I live down the road in Depew, and my neighborhood was hit pretty hard, too, so this has been an everyday occurrence since I finally left my house Saturday morning.

Before I was aware of the effects of the October storm, I woke up Friday morning and started to get ready for work. I thought I had a special meeting with the Village of Williamsville Board of Trustees. I somehow didn't hear the cracking and breaking of the trees from the horrific storm that devastated the surrounding areas. I went upstairs, and

much to my surprise, my sister, who normally leaves for work at 6:30 a.m., was sitting on the couch watching the news. We were snowed in. I looked outside, and my father was shoveling about two feet of snow. Trees and power lines were down everywhere. I put on my snow pants and went outside to help. A large, heavy tree branch missed landing on the windshield of my vehicle by about two inches. We only had one shovel, so I took a broom and was pushing the snow off the hood of my car as more tree branches fell around us. Luckily, we didn't have any serious damage, but my neighbor's yard looked like a war zone. There were several large trees on their property, but not one was left standing as tall as it once was. Their lawn was left covered in brush; branches piled one on top of the other stretched the length of the street, sidewalk and up to their home. A power line stands between my family's house and theirs. Thank goodness the trees fell to the right rather than the left.

Who knows what extent the damage would have been had they fallen onto our property or over the lines.

We luckily had power until late Friday evening, but then we also succumbed to the storm and lost electricity like the rest of our neighborhood. We are still without power as of noon Tuesday.

So for the past four days, just like many other people, my family and I have been living in the dark. It is hard to maneuver around the house using just a flashlight or lantern. The worst part of the experience is no heat. During the day, the house is bearable — it is the evening that it is so cold I have to cover myself with five heavy blankets to keep warm.

One good thing about the blustery weather was the community support. My neighbors, like those in many other Western New York communities, came outside and lent each other a helping hand, supplying hookups to generators and clearing debris that the storm left behind.

Those here in Amherst weren't so lucky. As I drove into work Monday morning, the devastation was unbelievable. Streets were unrecognizable and impassable. I took a detour from my normal route up South Cayuga Road and ventured over to Wehrle Drive, up Garrison

Out of the Past

125 Years Ago Oct. 20, 1881

At the annual Clarence school meeting held a week ago Tuesday, Mr. A.G. Eshleman was elected trustee and Dr. R.B. Myers, clerk. The teachers engaged for the coming season are Mr. J. Ayers of Clarence as principal and Miss Lizzie Bissel as assistant.

There is sickness in the family of Mr. Henry Sinsel.

The Looneyville Post Office has been transferred to the station, and Mr. Gould is Post Master.

Two gentlemen from the insane asylum at Black Rock were in town Tuesday, searching for an escaped lunatic. None of the population is missing.

A new counterfeit in the shape of a quarter dollar has made its appearance. Watch for it.

The Royal Templars of Blazing Star Council in East Clarence intend on having an oyster supper on Wednesday evening, October 26th, at their rooms at Hunt's Corners. A good time is anticipated.

"A man never feels poor when he has a ten dollar bill to wrap on the outside of his roll of ones."

"Cremation and the women's movement are alike because they both rob a poor man of his bier."

"The boy who spends an hour each evening lounging idly on street corners, wastes in a year three hundred and sixty-five precious hours, which if applied to study, would familiarize him with the rudiments of any science."

100 Years Ago Oct. 18, 1906

Mrs. S.V. Dickinson is the new president of the Williamsville Study Club.

The electric lights which for many years cheered the traveler on his way along Main Street in this village have been removed by the B.&W.E.R. Co., owing to there being too much expense attached to maintaining the system.

75 Years Ago Oct. 22, 1931

The orange and black of Amherst Central High School opened their first football season with a win last Saturday over the Lackawanna "B" eleven at Lackawanna. Amherst took advantage of a break when, in the last quarter, Lackawanna tried to punt from behind their own goal and the Orange and Black line crashed through to block the kick and recover the ball for a touchdown.

Theodore Roosevelt, revered in memory by every true American, would celebrate his 73rd birthday next Tuesday if he were still living.

The residence on the Transit Road owned by Dr. M.M. Metz and tenanted by Edward Cooper was destroyed by fire last Friday. It was impossible to remove any of the contents of the house except a washing machine and Frigidaire.

August Pampel succumbed to the infirmities of

old age Saturday, October 17, 1931 at his home in Newfane. He would have attained his 84th birthday this coming November 24. A farmer by occupation, he was industrious and thrifty, a good example of those of German descent. He was a reader of The Amherst Bee for years.

Danahy-Faxon food market, 5548 Main St., advertises Zozo coffee, 17 cents a pound. "A smile with every cup."

50 Years Ago Oct. 18, 1956

A member of the Snyder Fire Department suffered a fatal heart attack while on duty at a leaf fire on Sunday evening. He was Rudolph M. Lutz, 50. He called to the men who had hooked up a hose to a hydrant that the truck was ready to pump water, then suddenly slumped to the pavement.

Williamsville defeated its arch rival, Amherst, on October 12, with a score of 13 to 6.

25 Years Ago Oct. 21, 1981

Theft of an American flag, "rope and all" from a flagpole at 15 Garden Parkway has been reported to Amherst Police by owner William Groth.

Barbara Batchen of Amherst has been promoted to manager of the Elmwood-Utica office of Marine Midland Bank.