

Vote for legislators who listen

It's just a few weeks until Election Day, Tuesday, Nov. 7. We are reading and hearing that voter apathy brings about lower voter turnout. Some say that legislators do not listen to what people want, and what can we do about it? Vote! Vote for legislators who listen to what people say they need and want, and you will make a difference.

Our public libraries are filled with educated people, and these are the people who do make their needs known and who do vote. Legislators are supposed to listen and provide for the needs of their constituents. We were fortunate last year to have our elected officials support Williamsville Library in the town budget to help it survive until the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library could fund the system adequately.

For the first half of this year, Williamsville Library circulated 59,772 materials, had 2,259 people who used computers, accommodated 1,493 children in programs, had 35 meetings in the community room for 230 people, and so far, out of 37 libraries left in the system, it is number 17 in circulation in 2006 and going higher.

In spite of a reduced request for Williamsville Library due to funding from other sources, no funds were allocated for this purpose in the supervisor's town budget for 2007. We know that this is a difficult budgetary period, but we also know that our elected

officials manage to find millions for various projects. Why aren't all the legislators listening? One would think they learned after the library crisis in 1976 when thousands of people all over the county led by the Citizens to Save the Libraries petitioned, wrote letters, and filled Daemen College with crowds overflowing onto Main Street, blocking traffic. Yes, the library system was saved. But over the years it has been bled more and more.

This year the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System has distributed flyers, "Help Write Your Library's Next Chapter," with enclosures giving the details on each library. These brochures, which are available at your local library, show the staggering loss and state that for every \$1 received, the library returns at least \$6.63 in services. Nationwide, two-thirds of adult Americans visited the public library last year (approximately 135 million). More than eight of 10 (85%) believe public libraries deserve more funding. More than half (52%) believe support for public libraries should be \$41 per capita in local tax support. (The national average is around \$25; Erie County's prop-

erty tax provides less than \$23 per capita in 2006, less than the average retail cost of one hardcover book).

In a recent online survey of Buffalo & Erie County Public Library patrons, 85 percent of survey participants believe the Library deserves a restoration of some Erie County property tax funding — from as modest an increase as \$5 more per year to as much as \$25 (or more) per year, based on the average property tax assessed on a \$100,000 dwelling. Of all those who believe restorations are in order, 68 percent (57.6 percent of total respondents) believe the increase should be at least \$25 per year.

Tell your community leaders that you support proper funding for public libraries, then vote for legislators who listen and give their constituents what they want.

And, those thousands of people who use Williamsville Library and voiced their concern for this branch last year, filling the

Town Hall auditorium, halls and streets, need to remind their legislators, again, by writing and calling to tell them that this library is an important part of their lives.



MARY F. BOBINSKI

Director
Amherst Libraries

Village residents reject request to build curb cut at public hearing

by JILL SCHMELZER
Reporter

Several Williamsville residents spoke out against the proposed installation of a curb cut from the Center for Plastic Surgery onto Spring Street.

The exit would go behind the existing buildings and empty onto the side street. The two existing fences would be removed and a one-way driveway would be installed pending Village Board approval.

Residents addressed the board with their concerns for pedestrian safety during the public hearing that was held at last Tuesday's meeting. Some cited the potential hazard of motorists not seeing a child dart across the road as they pull onto the side street.

The future of the Williamsville Water Mill was also a major issue residents had with the installation of the exit onto Spring Street.

The Traffic and Safety Committee unanimously rejected the proposal in May and recommended the Village Board do the same.

An attorney for The Center for Plastic Surgery said

the proposal came about after a concern for patient safety was addressed. There have been three documented accidents from the current exit onto Main Street, and one included a bicyclist that was struck by a vehicle and had to be transported to the hospital.

"My concern was safety — my only concern," said owner of the center Dr. Zvi Sharf. He noted that he has spent more than \$20,000 in search of a solution to the problem, and every conclusion pointed in the direction of the construction of a curb cut.

"Is safety more important than the mill," he asked, noting that he allows drivers to use his parking lot on the weekends.

"I can block this parking," Sharf said. "I do a lot in order to accommodate."

If the curb cut is approved, one parking space will be eliminated in the village.

A decision is set to be made at the next Village Board meeting to be held Monday, Oct. 23 at Village Hall, 5565 Main St.

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Public hearing on budget rescheduled, school tax deadline extended

The Town of Amherst cancelled the Oct. 16 public hearing on the proposed 2007 budget due to damages from the storm.

Supervisor Satish Mohan said the hearing will be at 7 p.m. Monday, Nov. 6 at town hall, 5583 Main St.

Town Attorney Tom Jones said by law the town's 2007 budget is not due until Nov. 20, giving the town significant time to have the

hearing and adopt a final budget.

Town hall reopened on Tuesday to conduct business, with garbage pickup running on its normal schedule having missed pick up on Friday, Oct. 13.

Residents have been granted an extension on their school taxes that were due on Oct. 16. The new deadline is Monday, Oct. 23 and are to be paid in the town clerk's office.

Mall-o-ween set for Oct. 29

Eastern Hills Mall will host a free Mall-O-Ween "spook-tacular" event from 1 to 4 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 29 at the mall, 4545 Transit Road.

The annual event includes trick-or-treating for children 12 years and younger and a costume contest with age categories for children and adults. Highlights for this year's festivities include more than \$200,000 in treats, free trick-or-treating throughout the mall from 1 to 4 p.m. and a deluxe trick-or-treat bag for children 12 and younger.

As always, the mall will host a Halloween costume contest with the grand prize in the adult contest being an all-expense-paid trip

for two to experience the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City.

Join an assortment of celebrity judges for the costume contest scheduled to begin at 2 p.m. The contest is open to all ages, with deluxe prizes for every age group, including bikes, Power Wheels and compact disc players.

Registration for the costume contest is from 1 to 2 p.m. near Mall Services at Center Court. The contest will begin at 2 p.m. with the 6 and younger age group. The second age group, 7 - 17 years, will immediately follow, and the contest will conclude with the adult category, ages 18 and older.

"Mall-O-Ween 2006 will be one of the biggest and best events Western New York has ever experienced," organizers said.

To learn more about Mall-O-Ween, contact the mall at 633-1600.

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Business News

Audax Business Solutions, provider of human resources and payroll management services, has re-located its offices to 6724 Main St., Williamsville. The move follows an announcement in July that Audax and the Stahlka Insurance Agency, who have been working together since the early 2000s, had formalized their partnership and would be sharing the location in order to streamline delivery of services. For more information, visit: www.audaxsolutions.com.

Kenneth M. Wojtkowski of Amherst has been elected president of American Society of Civil Engineers Buffalo Section for the 2006-07 term. He is a senior project manager for TVGA Consultants based in Elma.

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