

letters

to the Editor

Tiny fire company

(Continued from page five)

one firefighter try to grab a couple of minutes sleep with his head on the table. Another firefighter grabbed a blanket and put it over him. This type of care and compassion was shown to everyone who came into North Bailey's hall. And calls still had to be answered.

Dr. (Supervisor Satish) Mohan, this community should be proud of North Bailey Fire Company; we should count ourselves blessed for every volunteer fire company and not play politics with them.

I truly don't know what we would have done without them during this disaster. They are lifesavers. Thank you seems so inadequate for all they did and all they continue to do on a daily basis.

Ellen J. Brown
Emerson Drive
Amherst

Acknowledging
Zymanek's efforts

I retired from the Amherst Police Department in 2004 after 28 years of service. During this time, I worked during several local emergencies but last week's "October Surprise" snowstorm was the first one I faced as a civilian. I realize other people have already given thanks to our usual cast of first rate professionals such as our police and highway departments and volunteer firemen, but anyone who has firsthand experience behind the scenes knows last week's coordinated and seamless response to this potential disaster was no fluke. It was the result of a staggering amount of work in planning and preparation.

In particular, we should acknowledge Jim Zymanek, director of emergency services, for the vast amounts of time and dedication he has put into his job. My last eight years at the police department were in the capacity of training lieutenant, and one of my duties was to make sure the members of the department received adequate training in certain mandated areas, many of which touched on disaster preparedness. Often I had to seek out Jim's expertise to put together lesson plans, many of which he personally and competently delivered to our 151, now 154 sworn officers. Jim's schedule, even in the days when terrorism preparedness was unknown, was staggering, and it took a superhuman effort, with his pager continually going off, and having to accomplish more tasks than anyone could fathom. He was continually giving classes, attending training for his own job, dealing with committees and local fire and police departments, international airports and politicians, who I often felt were unaware of what this man did, or the hours worked in a typical week. There is no way to describe the workload this man and his equally able staff of Dominic Creamer and Beth Allen has continually shouldered (and always smiling along the way) to deliver to the Town of Amherst the security we enjoyed during last week's storm.

On Sept. 11, 2001, a new dimension was added to Jim's job when

the mortal threat of terrorism was first truly acknowledged by America. I know Jim and his staff has been working closely with federal and local law enforcement in preparing for such eventualities to ensure a vigorous and measured response, should they happen.

Thankfully, like many other aspects of public safety, things like this don't become apparent and appreciated until a crisis happens, when all the training and planning comes together (or doesn't). Anyone who has anything to do with emergency preparedness and planning knows the crucial necessity of having competent (and dedicated) people in this difficult and often thankless job. In Jim Zymanek (and his staff), we have some real "ringers" and workers on our side. I just wanted to echo the great respect that Jim has among professionals and hope this serves to make sure credit is given where it is truly deserved.

Michael J. Worczak,
retired police lieutenant,
Amherst

Inspect trees before
cutting them down

There is no doubt the storm damage to trees in Amherst is massive. Despite the immediate costs, there are two significant reasons why the Town of Amherst must make every effort to trim and preserve all salvageable trees. This may cost less than cutting trees down and hauling them away.

Amherst is known for its trees, particularly the mature growth in the older sections of town as well as the wooded areas of the less populated sections. Loss of more trees than is absolutely necessary will adversely impact our town's attractiveness, hence house sales.

Secondly, we need trees for our health and comfort. Photosynthesis is essential for our air quality; it will already be reduced by the tree loss we have sustained. Trees also provide sound buffers for traffic and help us keep cool during hot weather.

In a sad way, this is an opportunity to introduce a variety of native tree species to our area. We know a tree disease, such as Dutch elm, can devastate tree stock. Increasing the variety of trees we plant is a way to combat this eventuality. Native trees and large shrubs include: eastern hemlock, scarlet oak, black gum, butternut and shagbark hickories, black and paper birches, sugar and silver maples, dogwood, rhododendron maximum, and service berry among others.

To keep our town beautiful and to maintain healthy air quality, we must keep our trees. Some may appear "odd" for a while, but they will grow. Proper trimming will go a long way to save these necessary treasures.

Caroline Duax
Snyder

Fire company stood
by residents

I want to take the opportunity to express my thanks to our Village of Williamsville Fire Department for expediting a potentially serious electrical problem as a result of our recent snowstorm. Several times I called the electric

company about my power line being partially down and creating all sorts of weird problems in the house circuitry.

After five days, I gave up and called the Fire Department. Five minutes later, two firefighters showed up and assessed the situation. They immediately recognized the seriousness of the problem and contacted National Grid. Within two hours, a National Grid truck arrived and took care of the problem.

A few years ago, my wife had a life-threatening medical problem and again, fast action by the Fire Department prevented serious complications. I trust all you village residents realize how fortunate we are to have a responsive and fast-acting group of firefighters who are well trained and know what to do in emergency situations. Just make sure you are all very generous when the firefighters have their fund drive. Thanks guys.

Don Weimer
Mill Street
Williamsville

Assistant fire chief
helps restore power

I am writing to thank Getzville Assistant Fire Chief David Nowak for his extra effort in helping to restore power not only to my home but the entire first block of West Klein Road in Amherst. I must say that I realize this storm was an unprecedented event and that all of the workers were doing their best, but after nine and a half days I had become very frustrated with the daily high hopes given by National Grid of a time when my power would be restored only to be let down by misinformation given by the same National Grid.

We were told by many different people from National Grid our power would be restored by Wednesday, then Friday, then told we were not even on a work schedule for Saturday. I would rather have been told they didn't know when power would be restored. When I found out work was being done to repair four streetlights and not the power to my home I had had enough. So I decided to call the Getzville Fire Hall with the hopes that they may have a telephone number or contact person to talk to.

Not only did David personally come immediately to my home, he drove around the neighborhood to find workers and got them to work on my area. It turns out National Grid only had to "throw a switch." Without David's extra effort we could still be without power. It gives me peace of mind knowing my annual donation to the Getzville Fire Company can make a difference. People like David make a difference too.

Susan Cracchiola
West Klein Road

Contracts should be
reviewed

On Wednesday, Oct. 18, I was listening to the radio to hear Supervisor Satish Mohan's address to Amherst residents regarding the damage from the recent storm. Dr. Mohan explained everything that he was doing and going to be doing. Then (Council Member) William A. O'Loughlin Jr. stepped to the microphone and started his nonsense. Mr. O'Loughlin continues to berate Dr. Mohan, even though Dr. Mo-

han conducts himself with dignity and class, and treats all the Town Board members with the same respect. Mr. O'Loughlin should realize that Dr. Mohan is his superior. If he cannot conduct himself as a business professional, he should resign his post. If he was in a private business, he would be fired for treating his supervisor in such a manner.

I personally do not care if my branches stay on my lawn for another day, if I know that Dr. Mohan is personally checking all contracts, bids and business practices of the 30 contractors who bid on this project to remove debris. I expect the job to be done right the first time, as opposed to losing money on a crooked contractor and then handing out another \$20 million to get the job done right the second time. Mr. O'Loughlin, the money that you are easily handing out is my money. I work to pay taxes. I expect that money to be handled efficiently.

Barbara A. Burgett
Old Spring Lane
Williamsville

Scandal does not
pertain to Reynolds

As a member of the Republican Party, I couldn't be more disgusted with the actions of Florida Rep. (Mark) Foley and the repercussions those actions have had on the party and on other representatives. It angers me that the despicableness of one man has endangered the reputation of our party and of other Republican representatives who have done nothing wrong.

The fact that people want to tie this horrible situation to Rep. Thomas Reynolds infuriates me. Reynolds did everything he was supposed to do regarding the matter, and the fact that people are pointing a finger at him is just uncalled for and unjustified. Reynolds did what any of us would do in the same situation, and once the severity of the matter was realized fully, it was Reynolds who immediately called for Foley's resignation.

Reynolds is a force for this area in Congress, and how anyone could jeopardize the needs of this district by not supporting him is beyond me. We need to remember during this trying time when representatives like Mark Foley cause us to lose faith in our political system, it's representatives like Tom Reynolds that we can count on to bring it back.

Marjory Jaeger
Pasadena Place
Williamsville

Reynolds does job,
works with FEMA

I understand that people have been somewhat frustrated with the recent response efforts to the storm. However, I think it's important to make sure that those few people who have stepped up to take action do not go unnoticed. I for one can say that I am pleased with the efforts that were made by our congressman, Tom Reynolds, and that I am appreciative for all the work he has done.

Not only was Reynolds one of the first elected officials I heard addressing the problem, but he was also the one I saw working to secure \$5 million in emergency funding to our area. On top of that, he's been out there with FEMA and in communications

with them, in addition to working with Congress to get us the best assistance we can get. It seems to me that much of what got done this past week was because of the diligence and dedication of the person we have representing us.

So again, in the midst of some criticism and frustration regarding the storm response, let's also be sure to give credit where credit is due and compliment Rep. Reynolds, for all that he has done.

Pat Krzesinski
Hunters Lane
Williamsville

Voters should not
reward negativism

Rep. Thomas Reynolds will say or resort to anything to keep his job. If only he cared as much about middle class jobs. Last night I was the recipient of a "push poll," the same kind used by Karl Rove against John McCain in South Carolina in 2000. A push poll isn't a poll at all but disguised questions designed to skew thought like, "Would you vote for a business man who just laid off 10 percent of his employees?" or "Would you vote for someone who claims he wants to raise taxes?" Of course the premises aren't true, but the poison has entered your mind.

When I asked the young fellow who he works for, he didn't know. It was clear to me that the line of questioning was derived by Republican dirty tricks strategists. When will we voters demand that this kind of negativism end? I guess only when we stop voting for these kinds of candidates.

Leonard Gross
Breezewood Common
East Amherst

Complaining never
gets the work done

I couldn't believe the recent criticism by Rep. Brian Higgins of the FEMA response effort to the storm. His accusations of its response as "inexcusable" and "bordering on negligence" are completely false.

FEMA Regional Director Stephen Kempf Jr. explained that FEMA teams were on the ground last weekend before the official disaster declaration had even been released. They were here setting up, gathering data, dispatching shipments of generators, and doing everything they could as soon as they could. I applaud their efforts.

I'd also like to point out that while Higgins was standing around complaining, it was Rep. (Tom) Reynolds that was stepping in to get things done. It's been publicized that Reynolds provided FEMA with the necessary letter requesting emergency funding to ultimately allow for FEMA to notify Congress of the additional funding it will need to help the area. Additional funding because Reynolds has already worked to secure \$5 million for the area.

It just makes me proud to be represented by someone who makes things happen. Tom Reynolds should be an example to every other legislator that what matters most is not criticism, but how hard you'll work to deliver to the people.

Arthur Mahsh
Brenridge Drive
East Amherst