



SNOW DAY FUN — Eastern Hills Mall threw a children's celebration this past Wednesday with entertainment from Glen Colton and Chicken Little. The fun-filled event was organized by mall officials in 24-hours as it was announced schools would be closed for an entire week following the snowstorm.

Photo by John Rusac

Study reports local government costs \$32 million annually

by **JESSICA L. FINCH**
Associate Editor

The number of politicians is excessive — and so is the cost that comes with them. That is the conclusion of a lengthy review of government in Erie County by attorney Kevin P. Gaughan.

A team of graduate students from the University at Buffalo School of Law, documented each town and village, as well as city and county government, based on the number of officials and salary, as well as pension and health care costs.

During his study Gaughan discovered the estimated annual cost of 439 elected officials in the county is \$32,140,386.

"We have too many politicians, and they cost too much," he said.

The study, "Paying Our Politicians: What 439 Elected Officials Cost Us" was released on Oct. 25 and is available for review at www.TheCost.org.

"The major finding in the study was the highest concentration of politicians in the region are in the suburbs," he said, adding that the amount spent on paying the officials could be put to better use.

His review of adopted town and village budgets and interviews with public servants in 45 governments, brought Gaughan to his conclusion that changes need to be made in local government when more than \$32 million is spent annually on the people holding the seats.

Based on town and village figures the average citizen to legislator ratio is 2,117 to 1 in the county. He said if the City of Buffalo had the same ratio the Buffalo Common Council would have 100 members.

In Amherst, Gaughan reported a resident/legislator ratio of 16,644 to 1. He said the total cost for 11 elected officials is \$587,164 annually. The Village of Williamsville spends \$43,208 on six elected officials. With a population of 5,315,

the village's resident/legislator ratio is 1,063 to 1.

"This report compels Western New Yorkers to view government not just as their individual town or city, but rather through a lens pulled back far enough to see the cost of the entire structure," Gaughan said.

He compared Erie County, which has 341 politicians (excluding judges) for 931,293 residents, to Greater Baltimore with a population of 1,670,119 and three governments totaling 33 politicians (excluding judges).

In New York City, a population of 8.1 million, there are 64 politicians, according to Gaughan's report.

Gaughan will be presenting the report at 6 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 25 at Hallwells at the Church, 341 Delaware Ave., Buffalo.

He said he has spent years researching government reform and works with the law firm Rupp, Baase, Pfalzgraf, Cunningham & Coppola.

Week long open house planned at Bornhava

Bornhava, the Specialized Early Childhood Center of Western New York, Inc., will be holding an open house.

"Leaves and Dreams" will be held from Monday, Oct. 30 through Friday, Nov. 3. Community members are invited to visit from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. for tours, observation of student activities and staff presentations.

Also during the open house event, a Halloween

party will be held at 10:30 a.m. Tuesday, Oct. 31 with costumes and a parade.

Bornhava is a New York State Education Department approved preschool program for children ages 3 to 5 with developmental disabilities. It is also an approved Early Intervention Program for infants to 3 years of age, and a NYS evaluation site for children birth to 5 years of age.

For more information, call 839-1655.



Catholic High Schools

Admission Exam

**Saturday,
November 18, 2006**

8:30 a.m. • Fee: \$20.00

Please call the school of your choice for an application.

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Cardinal O'Hara High School 695-2600 EXT. 306

St. Mary's High School 683-4824

BOYS' SCHOOLS

Bishop Timon-St. Jude High School 826-3610 EXT. 237

Canisius High School 882-0466 EXT. 204

St. Francis High School 627-1200

St. Joseph's Collegiate Institute 874-4953

GIRLS' SCHOOLS

Buffalo Academy of the Sacred Heart 834-2101 EXT. 311

Holy Angels Academy 834-7120

Immaculata Academy 646-9942

Mount Mercy Academy 825-8796

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