

letters

# to the Editor

## Trees are loved

(Continued from page five)

to survive and are a danger to traffic. So far, hanging branches have been trimmed away and trees that need further evaluation have been tagged with orange ribbons. Arborists will prescribe pruning or removal depending on the percentage of crown surviving, the condition of the trunk and the species of the tree.

The rule of thumb will be that a tree with less than 30 to 50 percent of its crown gone and in good shape otherwise, will not be taken down. The Tree Emergency Manual for Public Officials developed by Cornell Cooperative Extension in Rochester uses 50 percent of crown loss as its guideline of survivability and says some trees may survive with up to 75 percent loss. Our rule leans toward safety rather than aesthetics, but this variance of expert opinion leaves room for negotiation.

If you have a particularly beloved tree in your front yard and it is wearing an orange ribbon, call Joe Speth now. Don't wait until someone shows up with a chain saw. Call now. You might want to consult your own arborist first.

**Larry Beahan**  
Forestry Chair  
Sierra Club  
Niagara Group



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## New development should be positive

I am writing in response to last week's Amherst Bee article, "Public hearing raises questions: are village residents anti-development." I am not anti-development but strongly believe that new development projects that require rezoning should have a positive impact on the residents and business owners of the community. This can be accomplished by providing a community with new services, by making a community more pleasant and/or by increasing the tax base, thereby lowering the tax burden of others.

Many residents of the village and members of the Village Community Plan Committee have indicated a desire to improve the accessibility of Main Street businesses to local residents, reduce traffic throughout the village and increase the number of village residences to improve the quality of life of village residents and business owners.

Last week's article in The Amherst Bee failed to report that the rezoning of the Stereo Advantage warehouse building at 56 South Union Road from residential to commercial was requested in order to tear down an existing house so that a parking lot could be constructed in its place. The project will also increase traffic on South Long Street, which is already soon to be impacted by a newly constructed Walgreens and other nearby businesses.

There are many examples of ill-conceived development projects in the village and in Amherst that have been rushed "through the system" and now must be tolerated by our residents and business owners for many years to come. In 2007, I expect that the Community Plan Committee will provide a set of creative and detailed (i.e., "smart") land use, architectural design and development recommendations that will strengthen the village's identity as a unique historic, cultural and natural resource. Before we demolish buildings for parking spaces, why not make sure that we get it right for a change?

**Victor Paquet**  
Howard Avenue  
Williamsville

## Questions remain about privatization

The Town idea for privatizing the golf courses appears to be a venture without knowing or having substantiated numbers for operating costs. For some 40 years, the Town has operated golf courses without having a history of accurate operating costs. It's obvious that there is no cost control or budget control for running the golf courses. Before any decision is made for privatization, the

Town should install cost control operations for golf operations this year to see what direction to take.

The Audubon golf courses are good public courses and don't need \$4 or \$5 million dollars to make them into country clubs. There is currently a need for good sand for the traps and some additional drainage, but we don't need any ponds or cosmetic changes, just a well-maintained course.

If the Town will develop reliable cost of operations, then proper

fees can be established to cover operating costs. Privatizing will only lead to higher fees for residents. Private operators will eventually want higher rates and fees will go up to \$30 to \$50 a round like other privately operated courses in the area. A Town-operated course will still be in the best interest of the residents as well as Town employees.

**Don Weimer**  
Mill Street  
Williamsville



# Heard

call: 632-0390

## Bee Heard

*(Editor's note: Call The Bee at 632-0390 and record a one-minute comment on our Bee Heard line. It gives readers an opportunity to comment quickly and candidly on items of local or regional interest. Callers do not have to identify themselves and no callers' names will be used. In the interest of fairness and good taste, The Bee will not publish derogatory or insulting comments. All comments are by our readers and are subject to editing.)*

✓I'm glad the town comptroller has finally come forward and admitted that the budget needs to be balanced. There were underspent accounts and unanticipated revenues to cover what Satish Mohan wrongly calls a deficit.

✓It's too bad, in the bus garage in the Williamsville School District,

that you can't even put up a decoration or have a Christmas lunch with your fellow workers.

✓Regarding a comment about school violence, the problem is also at Mill Middle. It's not just the parents. It's also the administration, so parents of Mill Middle students watch out and make the administrators accountable for what happens in their school!

✓I see that three town board members voted against raising the temperature at the Senior Center. What is the matter with these people? Don't they have a heart? Don't they know anything about older people? I am just appalled at the three of them.

✓Hooray, hooray, we're finally getting Wal-Mart built at Sheridan and Bailey. I heard two years ago that it was going in, and still nothing. Everything was about the Wal-Mart on Millersport, and nothing was being done about this

one, but I guess something was being done. It's an eyesore, and we need a Super Wal-Mart here. Come on, start digging and get it ready!

✓My name is Thad, and anyone who is interested in repaving of Maple Road from Hopkins west toward Niagara Falls Boulevard, please meet me at the next town hall meeting in January. I will be wearing a full-length coat, gold in color. Thank you!

✓I have been observing for the past two weeks the workers from a tree company from Indiana. On Woodbury and Hedstrom roads are 10 to 12 workers with each unit of three trucks, plus two white pickups wherein the drivers stay nice and warm while they keep the vehicles running. Eight men walked in the backyard; one climbed the tree and seven watched. It reminds me of an old joke I once heard. Exactly who keeps track of what they are doing? At the rate they move, it could take a long time before they finish. In the meantime, we the taxpayers foot the bills.

## Union contracts (Continued from page one)

Mohan said he is hoping to have all three of the contracts settled in the next two months.

The police contract is being sent to an arbitrator after the town was unable to settle the contract.

Detective Edward Guzdek Jr., the representative for the police union, said negotiations are at an impasse and the state has been asked to send a mediator.

"Both sides are just really far apart. It has been a difficult process," he said, adding that further comment is not allowed during negotiations.

Mohan estimated that negotiations were approximately halfway through the highway contract, and discussions about the AEA were just beginning.

Council Member Dan Ward pushed for the immediate settling of the highway contract in November, saying the town spends approximately \$50,000 extra each month in insurance costs due to the unsettled contract.

Once contracts have been agreed upon they need to be approved by the Amherst Town Board.

## Holidays affect Bee deadlines

Deadlines for Bee Newspapers will be moved up the next two weeks because of the observance of Christmas and New Year's Day.

The deadline for editorial material for the Jan. 3 edition will be 5 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 28 and classified advertising must be submitted by 3 p.m. Friday, Dec. 29.

The Bee office will be closed Monday, Jan. 1.

## Legals early deadlines

There will be early deadlines for legal insertions due to the

**New Year's Holiday**  
all legal insertions for the week of Dec. 25-29 are due by **5 P.M. Thursday, Dec. 28**

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**Marv Levy and his SPCA friend, Chloe.**  
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