

## Summer driver education sessions set at Park School

The Park School of Buffalo will offer two driver education programs this summer.

The program is a comprehensive program providing each student with six hours of behind-the-wheel training, a minimum 18 hours in-car observation, 24 hours of classroom lectures, and a basic AAA membership for one year upon completion of the program.

Partnering with AAA Western and Central New York, the Park School's summer drive education program offers Monday through Friday sessions: July 5-30 and Aug. 1-24.

The cost of summer driver education is \$425 per student. Driver education requires each student to attend a daily lecture class as well as a driving lab.

Students must be at least 16 years old prior to the first day of the session they are registered for and must possess a valid driver permit or license.

For information, visit [www.theparkschool.org](http://www.theparkschool.org) or call 839-1242.

### Correction

Roy Wixson was not named in last week's paper as a candidate for Amherst Town Board. He will be seeking a seat in November.

**EXCLUSIVE**  
**ONLINE Bee Poll**  
[www.AmherstBee.com](http://www.AmherstBee.com)

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Last week's question:

**Should college buildings have metal detectors?**

You said:

**44% YES 56% NO**

## How to reach The Bee

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Letters to the editor must be typed, double-spaced and are limited to a maximum of 300 words. Names will not be withheld unless the author demonstrates a clear reason for anonymity. No unsigned letters will be printed. You must supply your name, address and telephone number for verification. Authors are limited to one letter every four weeks. Letters are subject to editing.

Our deadline is 5 p.m. on the Friday prior to publication. For engagement and wedding announcements, The Bee offers a form to list names and details. Call for a copy. There is no charge to publish engagements, weddings or anniversaries.

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## Spirit of Earth Day lost; plenty of trash remains in Albany

This past Sunday was celebrated as Earth Day, a chance for the socially conscious to scour parks, beaches and roadsides for beer bottles, syringes and hamburger wrappers.

It gets, deservedly so, oodles of feel-good media coverage. Big black trash bags flap in the breeze as kids excitedly rush from one pile of garbage to another in an effort to make New York State a better place to live.

This past Monday represented another day of "celebration," one also designed to collect and carry to the curb more big black bags of garbage. A day designed to clean out a cornucopia of compost which continues its uninterrupted rot. A day to kick to the curb the rubble and rubbish of decades of neglect.

There was comparatively scant media coverage, however, and few bothered to make any serious effort to drain the long stewing cesspool of swill. Monday, in case you didn't know, was the 2007 Reform New York Day of Action, the third annual such observance, no less. Perhaps it should be renamed Moving Heaven and Earth Day instead.

Front and center, naturally, was Gov. Eliot Spitzer, who talks a good reform game but who has so far repeatedly stumbled when it comes to the walk, as the state's recent budget process confirmed. The state's new CEO is fond of saying meaningful change is like turning the Titanic in a bathtub. Problem is, even Spitzer is yet to see the iceberg, much less call for full engine reverse, despite whatever political claims of meaningful change might exist.

There is one bottom line which everyone can understand, a one-year budget spending increase of 9 percent, approved a few weeks ago by Spitzer and his legislative enablers. That despite the fact that everyone in Albany knows, including the guy who sweeps the legislative chamber floors, that New York's looming deficits are circling like buzzards over a landfill.

In fact, Albany's own budget monitoring office figures our deficit at more than \$3 billion next year and a robust \$7.3 billion in 2010 unless someone caps the craziness.

And the budget process was as transparent, yet again, as used coffee grounds. Lawmakers might

as well have been voting on Iraqi weapons of mass destruction intelligence legislation as budget bills. "As we voted on them, they were still warm," Assemblyman Toby Stavisky told the Queens Ledger recently. Spitzer's budget hammer, as it turned out, was made of memory foam, reinforcing and not reforming the painful processes of the past.

Also released last week was a listing of those dastardly little legislative member items, as if that somehow was a major reform step. The true issue isn't the money itself — lawmakers are generally smart enough to funnel those millions to groups and organizations that are individually hard to rail against — but the breakdown of just who brazenly takes what is what should make the body politic bristle.

Take the Democratically controlled Assembly, where Speaker Shelly Silver commandeered some \$7.5 million to sprinkle among his constituents. Assembly Minority Leader James Tedesco's cut of the same pie? Try \$544,000. In fact, of the \$85 million in member items, Democrats took \$80 million, Republicans \$5 million. Although the final financial breakdown hasn't gone public yet, in the Republican controlled Senate, GOPers grabbed almost 3,200 of the 4,440 listed items.

Spoils are one thing, but ballot box blackmail is another. In New York, to the victor go the votes.

And while Spitzer now wants to target campaign finance reform — despite the fact unions and political parties employ people just to find more loopholes regardless of what such efforts might bring — a true reformer would find a way to stop the grotesque gerrymandering that every election season keeps the 212 piles of mostly dysfunctional debris under the rug.

Our capital is a lot like waterfront development, so glacial is the progress and transformation of both. The garbage piled up on each are eyesores waiting for action. And Albany, like our waterfront, is still most notable for its filth. Time to make every day Earth Day in New York. Time to get serious about taking out the trash.

(Brian Ackley is a columnist for the Weekly Independent Newspapers of Western New York. Opinions expressed are those of the author.)



**BRIAN ACKLEY**

Political Columnist

## Foundations of American society found in our families

In addition to Waco and Oklahoma City, our country has, in the recent past, suffered from two heinous massacres: Columbine and now Virginia Tech. They were all committed by our own citizens. The latter two happened in a school and a university, and the cause was not wealth or religion.

All of the above are inexcusable acts of crime, have no rationale, do not represent this great free society and must be condemned. A society that was, and is, an example of freedom is unfortunately open to attack from within. We must search for the root causes and come up with real solutions.

Our children should be taught to understand two very important changes that are occurring in our society: First, we now live in a very diverse society with U.S. citizens from many countries, and second, we are in an era of global competition, and we must work very hard to protect our most advanced nation status.

The mix of students in schools and colleges today is very diverse. Thirty years ago, most schools had all Caucasians, or all blacks, or a mix of the two, and they had learned to attend classes together.

Today, the mix, both in schools and colleges, includes children of immigrants from many nations. They may look different, but most were born here. America is their country of origin and is their future; they know of no other country. Our children have to be educated on this change in the citizenry mix.

All of our young now face global competition, which their parents did not. Because of the high salary base of our workforce, U.S. businesses have exported much of the manufacturing and jobs to other countries. This will gradually decrease our value-added wealth and lead to fewer high-paying jobs.

Our research and development advances in manufacturing technologies will decelerate, placing our most advanced and industrialized country status at risk. Therefore, while our business continues to export manufacturing and jobs, we must develop a prediction model and let our businesses and leaders know the consequences after five, 10, 20 or 50 years.

Our family demographics are also changing. Many families have both parents in the workforce, giving them little time to spend with their children.

Some TV games and toys include violence rather than mental or physical exercise. We should attempt to change this by setting firm rules and standards in our homes.

These are all writings on the wall, and prudence dictates that we should prepare to protect ourselves before we crash into the wall.

As the town supervisor, I am always looking and planning for harmony in the town and to keep our safe-town status. I am always addressing hard questions and seeking their answers. What I have concluded so far is that we need a change of hearts, and our most valuable allies are the parents of Amherst's children.



**SATISH MOHAN**

Amherst Supervisor