

letters

to the Editor



dsherman@beeneews.com
www.beeneews.com

Unsettled contract costing \$1 million

I attended the Amherst Town Board meeting held on July 2 and was shocked to learn that the taxpayers of Amherst are paying \$50,000 a month more in health insurance for the Highway Department than we have to for the other employees. Apparently, the union employees have been working under their old

contract for more than a year and a half. If my math is correct, that adds up to \$1 million. I was somewhat confused when Supervisor Satish Mohan stated he was negotiating the contract himself.

I was at the board meeting several years ago when our new personnel director was introduced. We were told he was a highly qualified labor lawyer and how lucky we were to have
(Please turn to page six)



Correction

Paul A. Willax was chairman of the board, CEO and principal shareholder of Empire Bank of America, formerly Buffalo Savings Bank, not M&T Bank, as reported in last week's Someone You Should Know.

EXCLUSIVE

Beepoll

www.AmherstBee.com

Click to vote on this Bee Poll TODAY!

Should the supervisor be involved in contract negotiations?

ONLINE POLL RESULTS
VOTE

Log onto
www.AmherstBee.com
today, to cast your vote
for next week's online poll!

Last week's question:

Would a multi-use project be good on Maple Road?

You said:

36% YES 64% NO

How to reach The Bee

The Amherst Bee publishes community news free of charge. Mail items to The Amherst Bee, P.O. Box 150, Buffalo, NY, 14231-0150. Our telephone number is 632-4700. Our fax number is 633-8601. Our Web sites are www.BeeNews.com and www.AmherstBee.com. Amherst Managing Editor David Sherman's e-mail address is dsherman@BeeNews.com. Amherst Associate Editor Jessica Finch's e-mail address is jfinch@BeeNews.com. Senders should state on their contributions whether their e-mail address can be published.

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.

Amherst Bee

Founded 1879

Trey Measer, Publisher/President, e-mail: tmeaser@BeeNews.com
John J. Evans, Executive Vice President, e-mail: jevans@BeeNews.com
David F. Sherman, Managing Editor, e-mail: dsherman@BeeNews.com
Jessica Finch, Associate Editor, e-mail: jfinch@BeeNews.com
Michael A. Measer, Circulation Manager, e-mail: mmeaser@BeeNews.com
Dean T. Hutter, Advertising Manager, e-mail: dhutter@BeeNews.com
Karl Scheitner, Production Manager, e-mail: karls@BeeNews.com
Mary Anne Cappon, Special Sections Manager, e-mail: macappon@BeeNews.com
Web sites: www.BeeNews.com & www.AmherstBee.com

Subscription rates:

	One Year	Two years	Three years
	\$39.00	\$72.00	\$98.00
Sr. Citizen	\$36.00	\$66.00	\$89.00
Out of county	\$55.00	\$91.00	

Adam L. Rinewalt, Publisher/Founder 1879-1907
George J. Measer Sr., Publisher 1907-1965
George J. Measer, Publisher 1965-1994
(USPS 024-300)

5564 Main Street, P.O. Box 150, Buffalo, NY 14231-0150

(716) 632-4700 ▲ FAX 633-8601

Circulation: 632-1791 ▲ Classified: 632-4712

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Amherst Bee, P.O. Box 150, Buffalo, NY 14231-0150

Published every Wednesday by Bee Publications Inc. Periodical postage paid at Buffalo, NY 14240

©Copyright Bee Publications Inc. 2007. All rights reserved. All advertising, news and editorial copy, including text, drawings and photographs published, are the property of Bee Publications Inc. and cannot be used without our written consent.

Who says columnists can't say nice things about politicians?

A funny thing happened to me last weekend when I bumped into a faithful reader of this column while strolling up and down Delaware Avenue at the Taste of Buffalo.

As I was scarfing on a vegetarian hot dog from Louie's (I'm telling you, folks, if you didn't tell me it was a veggie dog, I never would have known) and chasing it down with an ice-cold glass of Labatt's, a woman thanked me for "telling it like it is" and also "giving the business to those stuffed shirts."

So after I autographed an 8- by 10-inch glossy photograph of myself and presented it to her and accepted a gracious tip from my number one fan, I figured engaging in a brief conversation was the least I could do before asking her to fill out a nomination form touting my candidacy for a Pulitzer prize.

My first question was a simple one. I asked what she would like me to write about in the future.

Her answer was intriguing.

"Dan, as much as I like to read your column and love when you tear into people like Spitzer, Bruno and Silver, I wouldn't mind seeing something about the good things that some of our elected officials do."

So after we parted ways and I continued my jaunt down Delaware, feasting on chicken wings, roast beef sandwiches, rice balls and a couple of wine slushies, I arrived home and began flipping through my bulging Meyer's Musings file in an effort to find some "positive press" related to our local pols.

Sure enough, there were plenty of news releases and other literature pointing out the good things in which a handful of our elected leaders have had a hand.

Following the advice of one of my biggest fans, here's a brief list of some positive happenings that have occurred in the Empire State, with proper credit being given to the man or woman in power who saw it through:

- Sens. Charles Schumer and Hillary Clinton and Reps. Brian Higgins, Louise Slaughter and Thomas Reynolds recently joined together to

push the feds to compensate former Bethlehem Steel workers who were exposed to radiation while working on atomic weapons programs, subsequently getting cancer. The quintet has openly criticized the way the federal government's illness compensation program has been managed.

- Sen. Dale Volker recently unveiled what he calls the "Upstate Now" agenda, a comprehensive job creation and economic growth plan that he hopes will transform and revitalize our upstate economy by creating new jobs. The 10-point plan calls for the investment of nearly \$4 billion in economic development initiatives over the next three years, including new tax relief programs.

- Gov. Eliot Spitzer signed legislation just this week that calls for the extension of the Family Health Plus program to provide better access to low-cost health insurance. By keeping private employer dollars in the health-care system as a way to counter escalating costs associated with health insurance, the Family Health Plus program will soon be available to more residents.

- Lt. Gov. David Patterson helped mark the 35th anniversary of Title IX by encouraging Spitzer to sign an executive order that helps ensure the success of Title IX in promoting gender equality in all education programs and at the workplace.

(Daniel Meyer is a columnist for the Weekly Independent Newspapers of Western New York. WIN is a consortium of 19 community-based weekly newspapers in Erie and Niagara counties with a combined paid circulation of 75,000 homes, providing collaborative advertising and editorial support for member publications. For more information on WIN, or to provide feedback on this column, visit our Web site at www.wnynewspapers.com. Comments can also be sent directly to Meyer by sending an e-mail to: meyersmusings@gmail.com. Opinions expressed here are those of the author.)



DAN MEYER

Political Columnist

Pomp and circumstance end great year at Sweet Home

The 48th commencement of Sweet Home High School took place on June 22. It is always the most emotional and exciting event in a school year, the culmination of 13 years of work by students.

While all graduating classes are uniquely special, sometimes a particular group of students really stand out, not only academically, but also for the content of their character. Sweet Home's Class of 2007 was just such a group.

Their collective accomplishments, in the classroom, on the athletic fields, and in the concert halls are impressive as is their commitment to raising funds for charity and community service deeds.

The class raised more than \$6,000 for Carly's Club. They organized a blood drive for the Red Cross, and packed holiday presents for underprivileged families through the school's Share and Care program. The Class of 2007 also raised donations to make the Senior Lounge the coolest spot in the high school and worked with the teachers and administrators to facilitate a privilege pass system and emphasize a culture of respect and responsibility in the building.

At the Senior Awards night, 110 students in a graduating class of 262 received scholarships with a combined four-year award value of \$3,304,640. Eighty-eight percent of the graduating class will seek to further their education by attending either a two- or four-year college. Amazingly, 54 percent of the Class of 2007 earned a Regents Diploma with Advanced Distinction, signifying the most rigorous graduation standard, and 55 percent of the class finished their high

school career with an average of 85 or better.

Twenty-five of 28 sports teams at Sweet Home received scholar athlete recognition this year, meaning that the teams had an overall GPA of 90 percent or better. The Class of 2007 made the most of their opportunities at Sweet Home and their achievement speaks volumes about dedication and commitment of our faculty and about the core programs that successfully prepared them for the next level.

One month ago the Sweet Home community passed the 2007-08 school budget by a 3:1 margin. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the community for sending a clear message of support for the students of the district. I am also grateful for the support of the State Legislators who represent Sweet Home for the additional state aid that was part of the budget, allowing the district to keep our tax rate at an increase of approximately 2 percent. Our message to the community during this year's process

was simple; the budget we crafted was fiscally responsible and it protected the core programs of the district. I think our community took that message to heart and provided us with a referendum of support.

We are extremely grateful for a quarter century of successful budget votes at Sweet Home, especially in a year when Erie County faced enormous problems, and we recognize that with the support of the community comes the responsibility to provide the very best educational, extracurricular, and interscholastic programs possible. I don't believe you could find a better testament to fulfilling that promise than the success of the Class of 2007.



GEOFFREY M. HICKS

Superintendent Sweet Home Schools