

## letters



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Officer's actions  
upset driver

I am concerned about a recent traffic stop by an Erie County Sheriff's officer. I was ticketed for talking on my cell phone, but I was not on my phone. I asked if he would allow removing my phone to confirm that there was no recent activity on it. He would not.

I was cooperative, yet he was

rude and belligerent, repeating several times that it didn't matter what I said; he knew what he saw. My taxes pay this man's salary, yet he treated me very poorly. It is inexcusable that I was not allowed to show my phone log to prove that he did not see what he thought he saw. Now it will take up time in the courts.

My friends and I find it disturbing that a person can be ticketed

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## Correction

Sen. Mary Lou Rath serves in the 61st District. The number was incorrect in last week's article, "Senator Rath will not see re-election."

EXCLUSIVE

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Click to vote on this Bee Poll TODAY!

## Is America ready for a female president?

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Log onto  
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Last week's question:

**Is it possible to freeze a town budget for two years?**

You said:

**49% YES 51% 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.



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# Giuliani's withdrawal may impact state GOP's Senate majority

As New Yorkers continue to recover this weekend from the aftermath of the ongoing celebration of the Giants' improbable Super Bowl victory over the New England Patriots and what took place at the polls on "Super Duper Tuesday," here's some food for thought on how the disappointing run by Rudy Giuliani for the Republican nomination may ultimately cost the GOP their decades-long majority in the state Senate.

Just a few months ago, Republican chairmen from across the state were licking their chops at the thought of having "America's mayor" at the top of the GOP ticket in November, but Giuliani's decision to pull out of the race and throw his support to the campaign of John McCain has close observers of the state's political scene thinking this may be the year that Democrats wrestle away control of the state Senate.

Expect the Democrats to pump a lot of cash into the campaigns of their candidates running this fall in some of the key downstate districts as the loss of Giuliani as the GOP's presidential candidate, coupled with the Dems' growing voter advantage statewide, have Republicans wondering if their small majority in the 62-seat Senate may cease to exist.

I still think that McCain as the presidential candidate may provide the opportunity for more independent and conservative voters to be intrigued enough to head to the polls, especially since McCain has different views than Giuliani on certain hot-button issues like abortion.

Right now, Republicans have just a one-seat majority in the Senate, thanks in large part to Sen. Mary Lou Rath's decision to not seek re-election, a move that angered some grizzled veterans of the state GOP committee who tried to convince her to instead immediately resign so a special election could have been held at some point this month.

Rath's decision is the second jab to the jaw for Republicans in recent weeks. Sen. Jim Wright also has announced his retirement, meaning the state GOP has to put forth a great effort to find new candidates and then support them financially in districts where Democrats believe they can be victorious in November.

## Spitzer's budget raises taxes, spends too much

Gov. Eliot Spitzer recently released his 2008-09 budget, which proposes to spend a record amount of \$125 billion, an increase of 5.1 percent over last year and almost twice the rate of inflation. The plan relies on \$1.1 billion in nonrecurring revenues (a risky budget practice commonly known as "one-shots") and proposes 46 new fees and fines that are expected to generate more than \$300 million. At the same time, the plan allocates less money for our local schools and adds hundreds of millions of dollars of debt to the state credit card.

Just one month ago, during the State of the State message, the governor made a promise not to raise taxes this year, yet his budget plan relies heavily on raising taxes and fees and targets everyone from motorists to online shoppers. Specifically, the governor's budget proposes a new driver "endorsement fee" and a new "insurance fee" payable to the Department of Motor Vehicles; new mortgage recording fees for home buyers; a newly constituted tax on gasoline; new taxes on health insurance policies and even a hike in tuition at community colleges.

What's worse is his recommendation to cut the increased tax rebate amount that was promised to recipients of the Middle Class STAR program last year.

It's a tax and spending plan that will cost the average middle class family more than \$400 in needless new fees and charges. It will go into effect unless major changes are made by the Legislature during upcoming budget deliberations.

These proposed budget increases come at a time when most Amherst families are already

feeling the pinch of higher prices at the grocery store, higher tolls on the state Thruway and outrageously high prices at the gas pump due to higher oil prices and New York State's exorbitant gasoline taxes. It will almost certainly be made worse by the demands of the big spenders in the Assembly who are expected to add hundreds of millions of dollars more to the budget before its final adoption on April 1.

It's the wrong approach and as the ranking member of the Assembly Ways & Means Committee, I will be leading the fight against it. With economic storm clouds gathering and the nation teetering on the brink of a recession, New York should be cutting spending and cutting taxes. A bipartisan effort is already under way in Washington to enact a sizeable tax cut, in the form of a rebate, to help stimulate the economy and help overburdened families. New York should do the same. Instead, Gov. Spitzer's proposed cut in the Middle Class STAR tax rebate program is in direct opposition to the bipartisan effort in

Congress to cut taxes now. In order for the Western New York economy to grow jobs, state government must reign in spending, pay down debt and cut taxes to lower the cost of doing business in New York. While that goal seems to have eluded the governor in his budget proposal this year, it's the goal I'll keep fighting for as your representative in Albany.

As always, I appreciate hearing your views. Please feel free to contact me via e-mail at hayesj@assembly.state.ny.us or buy mail at 5555 Main St., Williamsville, NY 14221 or by calling 634-1895.



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