

# Garrison Park to have new playground

by **JENNIFER SIKORA**  
Assistant Copy Editor

One of the five local parks in the Village of Williamsville — Garrison Park — will soon be completely revitalized, with a new playground that should be especially enjoyable for children.

At the Village Board meeting Monday night, Tracy Galuski, president of Friends of Williamsville, presented the board with the new design for the

park's playground, which was approved last week at the Parks Committee meeting.

Even though Galuski is not a member of the committee, she has taken the initiative to help coordinate and make recommendations to the committee and parents during the project.

She has also helped with creating the design of the forest green-colored unit. This is an opportunity, not only for her own 3-year-old to be able to play some-

where safe, but for other children as well.

"Generally, playgrounds are rated as either ages 2 to 5 or 5 to 12, and this is a public park, so we really need a 2-to-12-type item," she said.

After reviewing several catalogs, Galuski said she thought the playgrounds were dull and children wouldn't be interested in them. Eventually the committee found a design rated for children ages 5 to 12 and conservative enough that even the little ones can make it to the top without falling off, a problem with the existing playground.

The new unit would include a large platform on top, allowing parents to join their children, and a border or edging all around it so children would not fall.

A lot of mothers who have children between the ages of 9 and 11 looked at the design and commented on it, saying it would be interesting, Galuski said.

The playground which is bordered by Garrison Road, South Ellicott Street and Park Drive, would be the same size as the current one. Some new items would include a rock wall, tree climber, bubble climbing wall and "twisty" slide.

Also, a "gizmo wall" will be added for children ages 1 to 2. It is a wall at their height, where

they will be able to turn and knock on various devices as well as to sound buzzers.

"It is going to be something great for the community. They're excited to build it, and we have people volunteering. The Pizza Kitchen wants to donate food; we had people volunteer a band for the community build day. It would really be a nice community event to put this up," said Galuski.

The anticipated date for completion is Monday, June 23, with Friday, June 20, and Saturday, June 21, being the two days the community will spend putting the equipment together.

The budget for the playground is estimated to be around \$30,000. Some of the funds are being received from The Friends of Williamsville Park, which is donating \$6,000 and also Jolly Boys, which is contributing \$5,000. The rest of the funding is coming from the village's Parks Equipment Fund, which will give the committee enough money to put up the unit and have extra money for any unseen costs that may arise.

The budget also includes paying for a supervisor to be there for one to two days. The committee hired a supervisor from Titan Development, a certified installer. The supervisor will be there the

first day to give the community direction on where to dig holes, on what they need, how to prepare and how to get the soil ready. The cost is \$800. The second day he will spend at an additional \$600 cost, supervising the community volunteers who will install the unit.

It was suggested that during these two days, 10 to 15 people will each take a three- to four-hour shift, estimating that at least 50 volunteers are needed.

The new playground will be handicapped-accessible and meet all Americans with Disabilities Act standards.

Trustee Brian Geary remarked that residents — mostly younger couples — tell him that they are here because of the schools and parks.

"As long as you have good schools and good parks it really makes people happy, and that has been the No. 1 thing everybody has been asking for," he said.

The pool at Garrison Park will also have a saline system installed, which will save money on chlorine and in maintenance for the village.

"It just needed to be done; nothing's been touched in 20 years, actually that is 20-plus years," said Geary.

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## Village budget increases \$200,000 in 2008-09

The Williamsville Village Board presented its projected 2008-09 budget, totaling \$2.98 million, at Monday's meeting. The figure is an increase of \$200,000 from the 2007-08 budget.

Mayor Mary Lowther said the increase is due to the rising costs of utilities and gasoline, as well as contractual obligations involving garbage and refuse collection and disposal fees.

Overall, expenses rose by 4.7 percent and the board is planning to offset some of those costs with increased revenues, such as an additional 1 percent sales tax.

The tax rate is estimated at \$4.48 per \$1,000 of assessed value. For a home valued at \$100,000 the tax increase is \$31.72.

The tax rate is based on 92 percent assessed value, a drop from the traditional 100 percent. Had the village been able to base its taxes on 100 percent assessed value, the tax rate would have dropped from \$4.17 to \$4.13.

The village is expected to adopt the budget at its April 28 meeting.

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## Adirondack Mountain Club honors forest advocate

Referred to as an old-growth forest advocate, the late Bruce Kershner was honored recently with a tree symposium.

On three occasions during his life, Mr. Kershner was voted Environmentalist of the Year, first by the Adirondack Mountain Club, then by the Sierra Club and finally by Environmental Advocates of New York.

Mr. Kershner died about a year ago in the midst of the battle to save the old-growth trees of the Erie County forest and just as New York State was acting to forever protect the old-growth forest in Zoar Valley, for which he worked very hard.

He wrote a dozen books, including the "Sierra Club Guide to the Ancient Forests of the North East" and "Secret Places: Scenic Treasures of Western New York and Southern Ontario."

He led the successful fight to prevent timbering of Allegany State Park. He will be best remembered for his leadership of a small group known as the Old Growth Survey Team, who identified more than 300 remnants of old-growth forests in the northeastern United States.

In Mr. Kershner's honor, Sen. Mary Lou Rath, R-Amherst, with the support of other senators, has introduced S4637-A, the Bruce S. Kershner Heritage Tree Preservation and Protection Act into the New York Legislature.

In recognition of Mr. Kershner and to promote Rath's bill to preserve old-growth forests, the Adirondack Mountain Club held a tree symposium in the new building at Woodlawn Beach State Park in Blasdell on Saturday.

The symposium offered a discussion of the nature and value of forests to man and the planet.



Mr. Bruce Kershner

## Man robs bank after forcing employees into kiosk

As two M&T Bank employees were preparing to open for the day, a masked man was watching them.

The two employees walked from the main bank in University Plaza on Main Street at 8:45 a.m. Wednesday, April 9, to the drive-through teller structure in the center of the plaza, Assistant

Chief Timothy Green said.

According to the police report, a man came up behind the employees as they reached the building, pushed something hard into the back of one of them and ordered them to the ground.

He demanded the safe be open and left with an unknown determined amount of cash.

The man is described as 6 feet tall, weighing 200 pounds, and "possibly" black. He was wearing sunglasses and a bandana over his face. He wore gloves, dark pants and a grey long-sleeved shirt.

Anyone with information is asked to call the Amherst Police Detectives Unit at 689-1333.

## Rotary Club of Amherst East to host Mayor Brown

Buffalo Mayor Byron Brown will present at the Rotary Club of Amherst East's lunch meeting at noon Thursday, April 24.

The Rotary Club invites all members of the community to attend the event, which will be held at the Ramada Hotel in Amherst.

Brown will convey his "optimistic" viewpoint on

Buffalo and why residents should be confident living in Western New York.

The Ramada Hotel is located at 2402 N. Forest Road in Amherst. To register to attend, call Dick Hitzges at 632-0493.

For more information, visit [www.amhersteastro.org](http://www.amhersteastro.org).