

 Meetings

World Trade Celebration slated for May 8

World Trade Center Buffalo Niagara and Speed Global Services will present the 13th annual "World Trade Celebration 2008" from 4:30 to 10 p.m. Thursday, May 8 at the Buffalo Convention Center, 153 Franklin St., Buffalo. The celebration is an annual networking event attended by more than 500 American and Canadian executives. This year's event will feature a keynote address by Joe Loughrey, president and chief operating officer of Cummins Inc, who will share ideas and strategies with local business executives on how to compete and succeed globally. Online registration is available for the event at www.wtcbn.com or by calling 852-7160. Single tickets are \$175; a table of eight costs \$1,195.

Empire State College sets information event

Empire State College will hold four area public information sessions about its undergraduate degree programs at 12:30 p.m. Monday, May 5, at its Niagara Frontier Center in the AppleTree Business Park, 2875 Union Road, Cheektowaga. College representatives will be on hand to answer any questions about flexible associate, bachelor's and master's degree programs. For more information on the sessions or to reserve a space, call 1-800-847-3000 or visit www.esc.edu.

BNSME to hold new product development night

Buffalo Niagara Sales and Marketing Executives is holding an event for business people whose companies often miss goals when launching new products. "How to Improve Your New Product Development Success Rate" will begin at 8 a.m. — with registration at 7:30 a.m. — on Wednesday, May 7, at the Millennium Hotel, 2040 Walden Ave., Cheektowaga. Tickets are \$15 for members and students and \$25 for non-members. For more information or for tickets, call 662-2279 or e-mail bnsme@bnsme.org.

Harden Furniture focuses on quality, design

by ANDREA KIMBRIEL
Editor

Main Street in Clarence was the first choice for Harden Furniture's Northtowns relocation, said owner David Gardner. The store opened at 8316 Main St., east of Transit Road, on March 1.

Gardner said the town has a long history and smart philosophies of growth, as does Harden Furniture.

Harden Furniture was based in the Southtowns for about about 60 years before being relocated to Clarence, he said. Gardner's grandfather started it in East Aurora, and the store was later in Elma. Gardner has been in the furniture business since he was 10 years old. He started by sweeping the warehouse and eventually became the owner.

The company sells products made by Harden Furniture, a separate manufacturing company based in McConnellsville, N.Y. Gardner said it is the oldest family owned furniture business in the United States.

"One of the key things that separates Harden from other companies — they have a saying, 'We were green before it was cool,'" he said.

The manufacturing company has won a number of environmental awards for its practices.



David Gardner, owner of Harden Furniture, stands outside the new store location in Clarence.

Photo by Jim Smerecak

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One innovation is the use of soy-based seat cushions instead of the typical oil-based product, he said.

Another distinctive aspect of the furniture offered at Harden Furniture is that 99 percent of it is made in the United States.

Gardner said an increasing number of customers have been calling to ask for products made in this country, perhaps motivated by the lead paint found on certain items made in China, and other safety issues.

"For years no one seemed to

care. All they cared about was the price," he said. Now that trend seems to be changing.

Gardner said the move was prompted by the Harden manufacturing company's desire for a distributor in the Northtowns. That market was growing while the Southtowns market was remaining the same. Gardner said his business was receiving calls from residents in the Northtowns who wished to view products but did not want to travel to Elma.

"The first thing we noticed — the people of Clarence have welcomed us with open arms, and it's been refreshing," he said.

Making an investment in quality furniture is a cost savings in the long run, Gardner said. It lasts, while cheaper products must be replaced frequently.

Harden Furniture offers the opportunity to customize the pieces available. It offers 30 hand-rubbed finishes, 1,000 types of material for upholstery and a variety of other choices.

Three designers are available to give advice, even visiting homes and other spaces to assist customers with the design process.

"When you're buying this quality of furniture, why not get it the way you want it. It's not going to be on the curb in three years," he said.

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Eagle House's history places it on state map

by JESSICA L. FINCH
Associate Editor

The Eagle House Restaurant, 5578 Main St. in the Village of Williamsville, has been selected by the National Society of Colonial Dames of the XVII Century, New York Chapter to be recognized as a historic site for helping preserve American history.

The 181-year-old establishment and Main Street icon will be honored during the society's September meeting by presenting the owner, Bud Hanny, with a historic marker permanently recognizing the site.

"The Eagle House carries historical significance as a political and social gathering place," said Tricia Browne, whose family has owned it since 1982.

The objective of the Colonial Dames of the XVII Century is to aid in the preservation and marking of significant historic sites and to commemorate the virtue, courage and patriotism that the country was founded upon.

The members share a common interest in American history and love and respect for our country, Browne said.

The Society's Web site is www.colonialdames17c.net.

Browne said its longevity makes the restaurant a significant part of history — and one of the reasons it was selected by the society.

"Its mission, this year, is to ID and recognize significant historical buildings in the State of New York," Browne said.

Built in 1827 by Oziel Smith, The Eagle House has always operated as a restaurant and tavern and holds one of the longest running liquor licenses in the state. At one time it rented out hotel rooms upstairs.

"It originally opened as a stagecoach stop for travelers going from Buffalo to Batavia," she said. "It was a pivotal stop on the wagon and stagecoach lines as Williamsville grew from its pioneering days into a bustling community."

Browne also learned that Joan Klenk, a member of the state chapter who contacted Browne, has a connection to the family.

Browne's great-great-grandfather was the best man in Klenk's grandfather's wedding in 1903.

"We hold a place in town history. The vote to incorporate the village was taken here," she said, adding that the founder, Smith, was the first supervisor in Amherst.

The Eagle House has also taken great strides to preserve that history, she said.

There is some evidence that the restaurant may have served as a station on the Underground Railroad.

For more information on the Eagle House's history, visit www.eaglehouseonline.com.

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 Business News

Melinda Rath Sanderson of Snyder has received a Dr. I. Joan Lorch Award, presented annually by the Women's Studies Program at Canisius College. The award recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions to women on the campus. Sanderson is executive director of the college's Women's Business Center. Since the WBC opened in 2003, she has provided more than 2,000

women with the resources they need to accomplish their goals.

Joan Weichmann of Williamsville is the chairwoman for the Women's Associates of the Buffalo Power Squadron's Night at the Races for members and their friends on Saturday, May 3, 2008, at Fairgrounds Gaming & Raceway in Hamburg, starting with the Kentucky Derby live on TV at 5 p.m. and trotters racing

live in person at 7 p.m.

The Parachute Group, a networking group for individuals who are in career/job transition and for people who have lost their jobs, will meet at 10 a.m. Wednesday, April 30, at Harlem Community Center, 4255 Harlem Road. The group meets the same time and place every week. Contact Katy or Valerie at parachute-group@msn.com or 276-1117.

Perry Miceli, account executive for Largo Real Estate Advisors Inc., recently arranged first mortgage financing in the amount of \$1.47 million for an office property in Amherst. Built in 2007, the property is located at 1416 Sweet Home Road. It is 88 percent occupied and houses Marshall & Ziolkowski, Firescience Inc., RGIS Inventory and GEJ Capital as its main tenants.