

letters



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Many reasons to quit smoking

The cost of cigarettes went up by \$1.25 a pack on June 3. Smokers might want to take the time to smell the lovely June roses as they breathe more easily when they quit smoking.

Good things happen when someone quits: easier breathing, more energy, lower risk of heart attacks, a better sense of smell and taste, and walking without getting out of breath. Quitting

will bring on cleaner lungs and extra cash. There are all sorts of special savings for these quitters-starting with their lives.

High cigarette prices make lots of smokers quit. Smokers should take advantage of this money-saving idea. Help is available with the New York State Smokers' Quitline. It offers free coaching and quit plans, free nicotine patches, gum and lozenges, and free online help. The toll-free Quitline number is 1-866-NY-QUITS

(Please turn to page six)

Correction

Andrew Hopkins, not Nick Christman as reported in last week's Bee, won a Section VI boys title in the shot put.

**EXCLUSIVE**  
**ONLINE Bee Poll**  
www.AmherstBee.com

Click to vote on this Bee Poll TODAY!

**Does your home have drainage problems?**

**ONLINE POLL RESULTS**  
**VOTE**

Log onto [www.AmherstBee.com](http://www.AmherstBee.com) today, to cast your vote for next week's online poll!

Last week's question:  
**Will roundabouts on Harlem Road make traffic safer?**

You said:  
**31% YES 69% 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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Remembering Tim Russert

Shock and sadness. That was my immediate reaction when I first heard about the sudden death of Tim Russert.

A man whom I always trusted, admired and respected, Russert was someone I have wanted to interview for quite some time via e-mail, the telephone or face-to-face so he could help me craft a column for this space about his well-documented rise from a good old Irish Catholic boy from South Buffalo to the premiere political analyst of the television industry.

So much has been said already about Russert's life and the legacy he has left behind from his work as the moderator of NBC's "Meet The Press" and his topnotch political analysis on NBC and MSNBC.

After I left the office the day Russert died, I headed over to the public library and checked out the two books Russert authored.

I had already read "Big Russ & Me" but never got around to reading "Wisdom of Our Fathers," so I spent some time over the weekend reading excerpts from both books as I contemplated what exactly I wanted to write this week about this high-profile TV star who cherished his role as the unofficial ambassador and Chamber of Commerce public relations coordinator for the City of Buffalo and Western New York.

For all of the awards, accolades and accomplishments that Russert accumulated over the years, it's those little things that had some sort of connection to Buffalo that really made him smile with great delight.

For example, it was three years ago this month when Russert was honored at a Buffalo Bisons baseball game at Dunn Tire Park with what he believed was a truly prestigious honor, as 4,000 fans at the downtown ballpark received a complimentary Tim Russert "bobble-head" doll. Russert was tickled that the Bisons organization thought enough of his work as a broadcaster and proud supporter of the region that they had thousands of figurines of one of the most respected journalists in the country distributed to fans of a baseball team that he loved to watch as a child.

And just like Russert always promoted, even on a day when he was being honored for his individual accomplishments, it was family that came first. In this case, it was allowing his son, Luke —

named after former Bisons slugger Luke Easter — to throw out the ceremonial first pitch after Russert addressed the crowd.

Russert had an unbridled passion for the prose and poetry of American politics, but he also had a burning desire to never forget where he came from. As much as he respected presidents, secretaries of state and congressmen, he also had just as much admiration for his former neighbors on Woodside Avenue and the dedicated members of American Legion Post No. 721 on Cazenovia Street.

Manhattans and martinis with a European lobster and Wagyu steak dinner? Russert probably wouldn't push away from the table for an elegant meal such as that, but, if given the choice, he'd probably opt for a cold can of Genny Cream Ale and a shot of whiskey to help wash down a couple of hot dogs and an order of fries.

In my mind, Russert was a role model not only for aspiring broadcasters and political pundits but also for normal, average-Joe, everyday workers. His work ethic was extraordinary. He used that drive and desire to succeed, and the end result was his becoming the best in the business.

If we had more human resource managers, taxicab drivers, teachers and construction workers who were that determined to reach for the stars and do everything humanly possible in an attempt to be listed among the top performers in their profession, we'd be living in a much better place.

In addition to that determination, Russert was also honest and sincere. He always performed on the air with great charm, class and dignity, and his impeccable integrity is a character trait we all should strive to obtain and develop.

As most faithful readers of this column know, I love a good thought-provoking quote. So when I read in one news story about how big a fan Russert was of baseball legend Yogi Berra, I knew exactly how to end this column, considering the quirky and comical Berra is one of sport's most quoted figures.

You're up Yogi:  
"If you can't imitate him, don't copy him."  
No one will ever imitate or copy Russert.  
R.I.P., Tim.



DAN MEYER

Political Columnist

A lot to explore close to home

Family car trips are a staple of summer living. But with people experiencing sticker shock at the gas station lately, even a one-tank getaway can become an expensive way to relax. What better time than now to stay close to home and explore and enjoy all the world-class destinations New York State's tourism regions have to offer.

Since becoming the Senate's Chair of Tourism, Recreation, and Sports Development, I have met with tourism professionals from all across New York. From New York City to Niagara Falls, our state has something for everyone. And as a result, tourism is New York's second largest industry.

While there are plenty of destinations to the east of Western New York, our own community has plenty to brag about. Surprisingly, many of us who grew up or raised our families here tend to forget why Buffalo and its surrounding communities are being spotlighted for what we have to offer.

A must-do event is attending a Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra concert at Artpark. Whenever I listen to the first-rate orchestra on a warm summer night overlooking the Niagara River Gorge, I feel lucky to call Western New York home. When you combine the BPO, the well-respected local theater scene, and our headline-grabbing museums, zoo and architecture, we have what other communities only wish for.

Western New York boasts excellent recreation opportunities all year long, but summer is perhaps the best time to get out and play. People from all around the country come to fish and boat on Lake Erie. There are also many smaller lakes

and streams that families can enjoy. I recently ran into some serious bicyclists from Canada who were taking a weeklong bike trek through Western New York. These neighbors from the north told me they found our bike trails and sites along the way some of the best they have ever experienced. And for those who prefer keeping their feet on the ground, summer is a great time to just

walk around a new area and discover what is there. The Walk the Villages program, which I created, is designed for just that reason.

The Walk the Villages program stepped off on June 1 for year number four.

The free walking program runs now through October in Region One (Akron, Batavia, Clarence, Kenmore, LeRoy, City of Tonawanda and Williamsville) and Region Two (Alden, Angelica, Arcade, Cuba, East Aurora, Ellicottville, Hamburg, Lancaster, Olean, Orchard Park, Warsaw, and Wellsville).

In each community, walkers are encouraged to visit participating businesses to have their prize coupons stamped. In addition to village prizes, all entries will be automatically entered into a drawing for one of 15 grand prizes. Many people who participate in the program travel to new communities — some experiencing them for the first time.

The state's Tourism Division, which administers the "I LOVE NY" campaign, is offering a "Stay 2 Nights Get the 3rd Free" promotion at several hotels, motels and resorts throughout the state. In addition, rail and rental car discounts are available.

For more information, call 1-800-CALL-NYS or visit [www.iloveny.com](http://www.iloveny.com).



MARY LOU RATH

New York State Senator