

letters

to the Editor



dsherman@beeneews.com
www.beeneews.com

Youths at risk when drivers speed

The street I live on is .2 mile long with a stop sign on each end of the street. People speed down our street all day long. This is a very dangerous problem. We have 11 children under the age of 8 on our street and

another six above the age of 9. If any of the younger children were to accidentally run into the street, these speeders are going to be unable to stop. I must point out that the majority of the speeders are people with minivans or they are elderly, not teenagers.

These drivers do not even
(Please turn to page six)

Correction

There was a misprint in last week's article, "Democrats call clerk appointment 'pure patronage.'" In Supervisor Satish Mohan's statement it should have said, "I am now a Democrat, while Marjory Jaeger is a Republican."

In last week's article, Board Preps for Sally Kuzon's Claim, the amount that the Village Board paid to Kuzon in September 2007 should have read \$72,875.

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Should the town and village merge?

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Last week's question:
Do you attend your class reunion?

You said:
25% YES 75% 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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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
Mary Anne Cappon, Advertising Sales Director, e-mail: macappon@BeeNews.com
Linda Crist, Advertising Manager, e-mail: lcrist@BeeNews.com
Karl Scheithir, Production Manager, e-mail: karls@BeeNews.com

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Bologna sandwiches help tell story of different economic philosophies

What a bunch of bologna. That's all I could say late last week after reading an online news article e-mailed to me by a friend about changes to the menu for inmates at a prison located in Central Florida.

To summarize, the article focused on recent decisions made by Polk County Jail Sheriff Grady Judd that saw revisions to the daily menu for inmates.

Gone from the daily docket of meal choices are fresh eggs, cornbread and a variety of beverages that included coffee, tea and juice, replaced with packets of crackers, frozen egg patties and water.

One of the biggest changes was the elimination of what was known as, "Peanut Butter Thursdays," as the popular peanut butter and jelly sandwich meal has been replaced with sandwiches featuring lunch meats such as bologna.

The reasons for the sudden changes in the jail's food services budget? Simple: It's an effort to help save money.

In this case, Judd has saved an estimated \$195,000, and he's vowed to continue to look at other ways to slash the costs of imprisoning convicts and shady people awaiting trial.

That's what has me saying what a bunch of bologna when I look at what's being done down in Florida and at its annual state budget process, especially when compared with the shenanigans that go on year after year in Albany when our elected officials put together their annual spending plan.

Given the current economic climate of the country, you would think any type of "thinking outside the box" would prevail in an effort to keep property taxes and other expenses down since you and I are burdened with so much in this day and age of more than \$4 a gallon for gasoline. Instead, we get the same-old, same-old.

For the record, Florida's budget for the current fiscal year is \$6 billion — yes, that's a billion — less than the spending plan they had last year.

I don't care who the governor is — Pataki, Spitzer, Paterson — we still have a totally whacked out mindset when it comes to trying to reduce the expenses that continue to chase people out of the state.

Meanwhile, down in Florida, they've gotten rid

of PB&J sandwiches, chocolate milk, and other extravagant food and beverage items in favor of the good old bread-and-water meal that we always heard was served up to the bad guys behind bars.

The moral of the story? Lawmakers from other states are actually making an effort to help reduce spending because they have already identified what could be the long-term impacts of the country's shaky economic climate on their local economy.

Down at Polk County Jail, Sheriff Judd allows reality and common sense to rule through this "cold cuts will cut costs" approach to doing a line-by-line analysis of his annual budget. Hopefully others — including the legislators who represent us — will learn from his example.

Now pass the potatoes before I take a bite of my PB&J sandwich with extra marshmallow Fluff.

* * *

Whether it's a syndicated political pundit, a late-night television talk show host or some celebrity who doesn't have a clue, it seems there's always someone making a crack about the City of Buffalo.

The latest swipe came on the eve of the one-month anniversary of Tim Russert's death. I found it quite ironic that the latest stab at our region's reputation was seen by millions of people from all across the country during a weekend of mourning for one of Buffalo's biggest cheerleaders.

With Dick Morris spewing all sorts of propaganda as a way to pimp his new book, the former aide of President Clinton was babbling on and on about how horrific Canada's health care system is when he let this line fly:

"Thousands and thousands of Canadians cross the border every year to Seattle, Chicago and Buffalo for treatment. You have to be pretty desperate to go to Buffalo."

Ouch.

(Daniel Meyer is a columnist for the Weekly Independent Newspapers of Western New York. Comments on this column can be sent via e-mail to: meyersmusings@gmail.com. Opinions expressed here are those of the author.)

Senate measure to preserve local naturalist's legacy

The state Senate has passed the "Bruce Kershner Heritage Tree Preservation and Protection Act." The measure, which I sponsored, is aimed at protecting the remaining old-growth trees and forests in the state.

Bruce Kershner, of Amherst, passed away in February 2007. He was an award-winning environmentalist and author of 12 nature books, including "The Secret Places of Western New York and Southern Ontario."

Mr. Kershner was a staunch advocate for preserving our natural assets, discovering more than 300 old-growth forests across the Northeast, where no one believed they still existed. By preserving and protecting these remaining forests, including the Zoar Valley, my bill is intended to carry on Mr. Kershner's efforts.

It is estimated that there are approximately 400,000 acres of old-growth forest in the state, primarily in the Adirondacks, but also in Western New York, including smaller areas, and the Zoar Valley, which has more than 700 acres.

Although most of the primeval forests that once covered the state and the entire Northeast were cleared many years ago as settlers first moved west to develop farms and communities, there still remain small vestiges of this original forest tucked away in overlooked corners of the state.

Originally, most remained uncut because the

terrain where they are located was so challenging that logging was impracticable and farming impossible.

Over the years, owners have continued to leave these woods essentially untouched either through oversight or a desire to protect this unique asset. Many exist within public lands across the state, including the Adirondack Park, Allegheny Park, Letchworth Park and parts of the Zoar Valley.

The bill focuses on the concept heralded by Mr. Kershner that if these forests are allowed to be destroyed, they are probably gone forever and are certainly not replaceable within our lifetimes, or the lifetimes of our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

The bill also adds old-growth forests to lands deserving protection in the State Nature and Historical Preserve — the highest protection afforded to

the unique treasures of our state.

In addition to providing a link to our past, these trees represent an important part of our future. From a tourism standpoint, people are attracted to these forests and the beauty and sense of wonder they inspire.

The bill has also passed in the Assembly, where it is sponsored by Assemblyman Sam Hoyt. Soon it will be forwarded to the governor, and should he approve the measure, it will become law — the first of its kind in the United States.



DAN MEYER

Political Columnist



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