

Economic benefits are in Olmsted Parks plan

In 2004, the County of Erie, the City of Buffalo and the Olmsted Parks Conservancy entered an unprecedented partnership that placed the conservancy at the helm of the stewardship, management, operations and maintenance of the Buffalo Olmsted Parks System. The conservancy was the first not-for-profit in the nation to manage an entire park system.

The vital role of parks in the quality of place in a community is demonstrated by the proposal for the City of Atlanta to invest nearly \$3 billion to develop an urban park system similar to the one that already exists in the City of Buffalo.

It is readily apparent that both public and corporate policymakers, even those who conduct their business in a robust economy such as Atlanta's, recognize the quality of place and competitive edge that a well-planned, designed and developed urban park system provides to a community. Beyond that, they are willing to make the investment to make it happen. There are ample reasons why this is a sound business decision.

Available data on property values in the City of Buffalo consistently reveal that properties, particularly residences, in the vicinity of an Olmsted Park, Parkway or Circle have held their value, and in most cases, appreciated in value to a much greater degree than properties in other parts of the city.

The Buffalo Olmsted Parks System offers the residents of our region an extraordinary experience of natural beauty, as well as an economic enhancement in the values of nearby properties. The system benefits the urban neighborhoods of North and South Buffalo, as well as those on the East Side and West Side of Buffalo. It has no equal in any other city in the nation.

The Olmsted Parks Conservancy, with the assistance of the University at Buffalo, has unveiled its 21st Century Plan, a bold and insightful strategy to preserve, restore and maximize the return on invest-

ment that has been made in the past and will follow in the future to protect the Buffalo Olmsted Parks System and demonstrate to the world our thoughtful, responsible stewardship of this sylvan jewel of national significance.

We in the County Legislature believe that the proper upkeep and provision of services for Erie County residents is vital, and we approved adding \$300,000 to the 2008 parks' budget to be spent evenly, \$150,000 for city parks and \$150,000 for parks in the other parts of the county, at our July 10 session. I am also proud to have been one of the county legislators who helped allocate funds to launch the Olmsted plan.

Hats off to everyone who helped the conservancy reach this milestone in the history of the Buffalo Olmsted Parks System. Let's do everything we can as a community to make the 21st Century Plan a reality.



LYNN MARINELLI
Legislature
Chairperson

Bee

Heard

call: 632-0390

(Editor's note: Call The Bee at 632-0390 and record a one-minute comment on our Bee Heard line. It gives readers an opportunity to comment quickly and candidly on items of local or regional interest. Callers do not have to identify themselves and no callers' names will be used. In the interest of fairness and good taste, The Bee will not publish derogatory or insulting comments. All comments are by our readers and are subject to editing.)

✓God bless America. As a nearly 40-year resident of this fine town, I wish to share my Independence Day observations. I have both criticism and compliments for my neighbors in

Dana Heights. Friday is our regularly scheduled trash pickup. My compliments to my neighbors who were thoughtful enough to not put their garbage out 24 hours early. In many cases, these folks were grateful and patriotic enough to fly our nation's flag. Criticism to the thoughtless neighbors who created unsightly and malodorous conditions for the many visitors and their hosts. Additionally, almost none of them flew a flag. Is there a connection? Thoughtless, rude and unpatriotic?

✓Several years ago, the Town of Amherst, in their quest to control deer, said high grass near all roads would be cut. I know that Tonawanda Creek Road is not a town road; however, the grass from Niagara Falls Boulevard to Windsor Court is probably over five feet high. Could whoever owns that road cut the grass down, so motorists might have a chance when animals run out into the road?

✓I am disgusted with Supervisor Mohan's attitude toward Councilman Marlette. I have had some dealings with Mr. Marlette, and he has been very helpful to me. He is genuinely interested in what is best for residents. Mohan's accusations are inappropriate and offensive. It is obvious Mohan

thinks he is the only one who knows what is best; I am tired of his know-it-all attitude.

✓I attended the Old Home Days Parade, but I left before it ended. My kids are grown, but I remember when how excited they would get when fire trucks would pass and the sirens would go off. Tonight, many of the groups were throwing candy out to the kids. I saw three kids run into each other headfirst, as they all went for one piece of candy, while parents weren't even watching. At one point, there were more kids running around the street than the parade walkers. The final straw was when I overheard one mother say, "I hate this parade; I only come so the kids can get the candy they throw out." I think this candy-tossing should be looked into before a child is seriously hurt.

✓To the caller who complained about paving work at Hopkins and Klein at 8:30 a.m., workers have to do their job. The time of day or drive time does not dictate when a man/woman does his work on his crews. They are given jobs to do throughout the town; they start very early in the morning and work right through the day. If they happen to get to that intersection at that time, well that's when it has to be done. It has nothing to be done with union rules.

✓Well, another week, another controversy in the Town of Amherst. This time it concerns the appointment of

Marjory Yager to town clerk to serve the remainder of the year before the next election, only this time it's Supervisor Mohan who makes the appointment and Democrats are accusing him of not being honest and of political patronage, and even going so far as to calling him corrupt. Then I see Dr. Mohan demanding an apology. It seems to me, Dr. Mohan, you did the same thing to Mr. Marlette last week. The shoe's on the other foot, isn't it, or is it that maybe your feet are a little too close to the flame? I wonder.

✓It is admirable and fitting that Jimmy Griffin will be honored by Buffalo naming a building or street for him. Whatever happened to naming the Rec Center in honor of our former supervisor, Jack Sharpe? Out of sight, out of mind?

✓To the person who referred to town

employees having benefits after retirement, you have been misinformed. Not all town employees receive health insurance when they retire, and they also pay into their retirement funds.

✓To the person who was upset about paving at 8:30 a.m. at Hopkins and Klein, I take great insult that the caller is blaming union rules for this. Apparently, this is a transplant to Western New York, who does not know that in Western New York, we have two seasons: winter and construction. In construction season, you leave early. I am a union person and take offense to that.

✓When are Amherst Police going to stop bicycles before someone gets killed? Bicyclists run red lights and stop signs, but if anything happens, they blame drivers. They should be fined the same as drivers.

letters

to the Editor

Youths at risk

(Continued from page five)

slow down when they see the children playing in the driveway or on the sidewalk. It only takes one mistake to take a life. Speeding is saving these drivers a second or two. I wonder if these drivers can live with themselves if, God forbid, they hit a child because of their reckless behavior. If they do not care about the

welfare of our children, maybe they should think about all the gas they use up by speeding on .2 mile of road.

It is summer and the children are out all day long. Please be considerate, obey the speed limit and slow down when you see the children playing outside. If you are unable to do so, please use another street to cut down.

Barbara Burgett
Williamsville

Political News

Michele M. Iannello, candidate for the 61st State Senate district, denounced the political committee formed by Tom Golisano, because, she claims that the contributions violate New York Election Law. Iannello called on the New York State Board of Elections and the Office of the Attorney General to begin immediate investigations.

Erie County Family Court Judge Lisa Bloch Rodwin of Amherst filed petitions to have her name placed on the ballot of all five major political parties holding a primary election on Sept. 9. Already endorsed by the Democratic, Conservative, Independence, and Working Families parties, Rodwin also received support to allow her to file on the Republican Party line as well. She is the only candidate for Family Court Judge to file on all five lines.

School News

ElderWood Senior Care presented a scholarship to Williamsville North High School 2008 graduate Mark Barbalato, a dietary aide at ElderWood Health Care at Heathwood. This fall he will attend Embry Riddle Aeronautical University for aeronautical science to work toward his professional piloting license. Allison Donovan also received a scholarship. A Amherst Central High School 2008 graduate, she is

a dietary aide at ElderWood Health Care at Wedgewood. Donovan will begin studying nursing at the University at Buffalo this fall.

Justin C. Kochan of Getzville was among the 198 graduates from the Loomis Chaffee class of 2008. Son of Douglas and Linda Kochan, Justin was an honor roll student and a member of the varsity hockey team. He will attend Canisius College.

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