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Everybody's Column

By Staff

Aug 12, 2006

Casino issue is headed down the same old path

I am not in favor of a gambling casino being built in downtown Buffalo. But what is going on now is an embarrassment and a symbol of why Buffalo is in decline and will remain so for the foreseeable future.

The Senecas, operating within their rights, sought to develop a casino in the Buffalo area. Their first choice, or at least the one we heard about, was Cheektowaga. But the then-mayor and others said that it had to be built in Buffalo. They went to court to prevent the Senecas from moving forward. So now the Senecas, in accordance with applicable laws, are trying to invest several hundred million dollars in downtown Buffalo, and it is made to seem that they are thieves in the night, intent on destroying the city.

I don't know how this casino project will affect the city in the long run, but I do know that no one else (such as Bass Pro) is lining up to invest that kind of money in this town. Worse, any businessman watching this would be crazy to do so. It should not be this hard for a project that seeks no public funds to get done.

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I am a supporter of the current mayor, because I assume that he can't be as bad as his predecessors, but if this is the best he can do, nothing has really changed.

William C. Gault

Buffalo

Vandals could stand a bit of true reform

I am outraged every time I read about the worthless punks who have nothing better to do with their time than to vandalize churches and their property. I also flipped when I read the statement in the Aug. 8 News: "If we get involved in these kids' lives, they'll start to take ownership of their neighborhood."

I realize these people have good intentions, however, the only way I would get involved in these kids' lives would be to slap a prison sentence on them for at least 25 years. During that time, they would be required to attend a church service, of any religion, once a day. In addition, they would be required to clean up all graffiti found on every church. Molly-coddling them won't work.

Sandra Hender

Buffalo

Toxic mold at court must be addressed

As a retired probation officer, I was well aware that the air quality in the basement of the Family Court building was terrible. Nonetheless, I was shocked during a recent visit to find that toxic mold was so prevalent that probation officers were instructed to wear rubber gloves and face masks before retrieving records needed to complete mandatory reports to the courts.

It is not as if these records are in a separate area; they are in an open area where people work. Apparently, this is not considered a problem because the entire section housing the clerical staff and the juvenile division is contaminated by this mold.

It is unconscionable that Erie County allows its workers to remain in an unhealthy and possibly dangerous situation. I am putting the county government and the county control board on notice that I am exploring legal recourse for any health problems that might arise from their negligence.

Gary W. Waldman

West Valley

Sweet Tooth's move enhances Allentown

My family and I sympathize with the writer lamenting Sweet Tooth's move, but we are delighted to welcome it to the corner of Allen and Elmwood. Our three children, ages 7, 9 and 13, are part of the eclectic foot traffic that heads to the Sweet Tooth and waits patiently in line for a cone or a cookie.

As the writer drove by the new location, did she notice that the regional treasure, Theatre of Youth, is located right next door? Was she so busy looking at the sidewalks that she missed the three free municipal parking lots on Allen Street? How about Days Park, a completely restored neighborhood green space designed by Frederick

Law Olmsted, and Kleinhans Music Hall at the Olmsted-designed Symphony Circle?
Or the architecture of the entire Allentown National Historic District, with the Buffalo
Medical Campus only a few blocks away?

Did she enjoy any of the delightful offerings of the recent Infringement Festival,
Garden Walk, Music Is Art or Allentown Art Festival? She might try the coming tour
of homes, Secrets of Allentown. There are vibrant family-oriented communities
everywhere along Elmwood.

Mary L. Simpson

Charles H.T. Saunders

Buffalo

Relocate concert site as crowds grow larger

I applaud Buffalo Place for bringing nationally recognized musical groups to
downtown Buffalo. Officials need to be aware, however, that the physical constraints
of Lafayette Square simply will not accommodate the crowds that such popular acts
attract. Last year, it was very crowded but manageable. This year, it has been a
completely different story.

All the concerts I attended were so crowded I struggled to enjoy any of them. The
India.Arie show in particular was an overcrowded nightmare.

Almost everyone agrees that moving the Taste of Buffalo from Main to Delaware was
a wise decision. The time has come for Thursday at the Square to do the same. My
suggestion would be three blocks down Court Street to Niagara Square. This would
provide triple the amount of space for the crowds to mingle, allow uninterrupted
operation of Metro Rail and permit the grass to grow once again in that traumatized
little park.

Chris Amo

Amherst

Wendt Beach mansion has several possibilities

Why can't we think outside the box with the mansion at Wendt Beach? The spot is gorgeous and the beach is great for families. A bed and breakfast will open this beautiful park to only a few wealthy clients. Why can't we find a way to utilize the facility and open it up to a wider audience?

I would like to suggest that the culinary arts students at Emerson Vocational and Erie Community College take over the mansion. They could run a lakefront family restaurant with banquet facilities. The students would gain valuable work experience and the community would get another restaurant on the water -- something that is in short supply. Imagine a summer wedding reception with the chance to stroll on the beach in the moonlight. Or a quaint and comfortable place to take the family for Sunday brunch, and stay for a swim. This type of public use would not interfere with use of the beach.

The possibilities as a student-run project are endless -- architecture students to redesign the facility, carpentry and electrician apprentices to do the actual work, interior design students to decorate the mansion, landscape students to design the grounds and hospitality students to manage and oversee finances. We need to find uses for waterfront sites that open it up to the public, not restrict its use to a privileged few.

Patricia "TC" Ferrito

Angola