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ERIE COUNTY LEGISLATURE

1998 DEC 23 P 3: 25

To: Clerk of Legislature

From Legislator Marinelli

Re: Article regarding bribery offenses
to be clocked in to Comm. Ethics
Committee

1E-7

Bee Editorial

Library closings a negative force

The announcement of the possible closing of three Town of Tonawanda branch libraries has many residents up in arms.

Those libraries facing a possible shutdown are Brighton, 999 Brighton Road; Kenilworth, 318 Montros Ave., and Parkside Village, 169 Sheridan-Parkside Dr. Already, residents have been expressing their concerns to local officials including Town of Tonawanda Supervisor Carl Calabrese and Erie County Legislator Lynn Marinelli. All three libraries are in Marinelli's district.

The good news is that the libraries will remain intact for 1999. No closings will take place in the immediate future.

However, that future is uncertain.

The Buffalo and Erie County Public Library System is looking for a way to smooth things out and to consolidate and use its resources in

the most efficient way possible. It sounds like a good idea in theory, but when that plan calls for the closing of neighborhood libraries, that idea should be examined more closely.

Already residents from the Sheridan-Parkside area have expressed their concern over their branch closing. A negative blow such as this could do even more damage in an already delicate neighborhood.

What has local officials concerned is the fact that these neighborhood libraries serve their respective neighborhoods and if they close, that's a service that is unavailable. Yes, those residents could travel a few miles to get to the other libraries, but to have something at your disposal and then have it taken away is worse than never having it at all. Residents near these neighborhood libraries realize that they may not be state-of-the-art facilities, but they serve their purpose

all the same. People come to rely on the libraries for extracurricular activities with their children. Storytime, craft programs and holiday activities are a mainstay for Tonawanda branch libraries.

Although closings may be inevitable, residents should still express their concern to local and library officials. Many voices are surely stronger than one.

Marinelli has a long road ahead of her as she begins the quest to save Tonawanda branch libraries and the services they provide. It's a battle she welcomes though. She says she has received some handwritten notes from residents concerned about the state of the libraries.

"You know it's an issue that's hitting home when someone takes the time to sit down and write a letter," she said.

It this day of super technology, it sure is.

Libraries

(Continued from page one)

and not neighborhoods.

"This is a huge shift in philosophy," Calabrese added.

He also added that Erie County is one of the lowest spenders on books for its libraries.

"It's simple," Calabrese said. "People want their libraries stocked as full as possible with books — that's what a library is."

"If you read the report its the library staffs that have the most complaint with the exist-

ing library system not the people who use it," he added.

The town board also expressed concerns that with the possible closings of three of its libraries, there is a loss of identity as a town and what it has to offer its residents.

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C NN M MARINELLI

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Libraries deemed OK for 1999

by **CARRIE FASCIA**
Editor

The three Town of Tonawanda branch libraries facing possible closings will be protected in 1999, thanks to the recently passed Library Protection Act. *See editorial on page four*

The act will insure funding for the libraries in 1999 which includes those libraries in the hot seat — Brighton, 999 Brighton Road; Kenilworth, 318 Montrose Ave., and Sheridan-Parkside, 169 Sheridan-Parkside Dr.

"Our libraries are centers for learning and gathering in the community and the Library Protection Act will keep those centers strong in the coming year," said Eric County Legislator Lynn Marinelli.

The three libraries targeted for closing are in Marinelli's district.

"I've gotten some calls and letters from my constituents about the closings — people are worried," Marinelli added. "You know it's an issue that hits home

when people take time to write you a letter."

"This is tough but it's one of those issues that is pleasing to work on," Marinelli added, "because everyone knows how important our libraries are."



Calabrese



Marinelli

Although the recent study commissioned by the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library System called for consolidation of those neighborhood libraries, Marinelli contends that no funds were allocated to implement those plans.

"The library study was just that — a study," she said.

She also noted that nothing will be enacted until the Legislature, local government and residents have a chance to review and comment on the study.

The Tonawanda Town Board is also feeling the

heat from the possible branch closings. Town Supervisor Carl Calabrese said he has received calls from concerned residents, asking for his help to keep the li-

braries open.

"Kathy Russell of the Sheridan-Parkside Neighborhood Watch group wrote me a note saying she didn't want their branch to close," Calabrese said.

"These closings will create hardships, especially in that

(Sheridan-Parkside) area," added Councilman David Rider.

According to Calabrese, the report, submitted by consultants based in Croton-on-Hudson in downstate New York, supports the idea of libraries serving regions *(Please turn to page five)*