

letters

to the Editor

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Thanks to all who supported us

Last Memorial Day was one to remember. It was sunny and warm. The parade was great. It is hard to express the feeling we of the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars had as the spectators applauded us and Old Glory as we passed by. And the ceremony at the Veterans Park was exceptional, very moving and not very long. The main speaker, a veteran of the Iraq war, was eloquent describing his involvement in the military and his feelings toward our great country.

The singing of the national

anthem was outstanding and was sung with feeling and heart. The young lady performed it correctly. I wish those stars who abuse the anthem at the Super Bowl were here to see how it should be sung. Even the young lad who recited the "Gettysburg Address" had everyone spellbound with his recitation. And when "Taps" was played, there were many misty eyes in the crowd. Finally, all proudly joined in the singing of "God Bless America" to end the ceremony. It was a morning not to forget.

All the above mentioned were stars that day. But so, too, were the many citizens of Orchard

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Valid hydrofracking information emerges on the Internet

A few weeks ago, WPX Energy drilled more than a mile below the surface of the earth in Susquehanna, Pa., in search of natural gas. A deposit was reached through hydraulic fracturing, or hydrofracking, a process as controversial as it is complex.

Instead of bringing picks, shovels and dynamite to the site, crews were armed with tributyl tetradecyl phosphonium chloride, methanol, sodium persulfate and hydrochloric acid.

Tributyl tetradecyl phosphonium chloride is nasty stuff, according to details on its Material Safety Data Sheet.

"Liquid is corrosive to skin and eyes and may cause permanent eye damage, including blindness. Mist may cause irritation of eyes, nose, throat and lungs. Avoid contact with skin, eyes or clothing," it states. "This product is toxic to fish and aquatic invertebrates."

It acts as a biocide, in much the same way that chlorine is added to swimming pools.

Sodium persulfate sounds fairly safe but becomes unstable in the presence of heat or moisture. Contact with combustible material may cause fire, according to its MSDS information.

Work on this one well in Pennsylvania required almost 3.5 million gallons of fresh and recycled water.

All of this information is available through FracFocus, a joint project of the Ground Water Protection Council and the Interstate Oil and Gas Compact Commission.

The website has been praised by members of Congress, industrial groups and some environmentalists for "taking the lead in disclosing the chemicals used in hydrofracking," according to the news source Politico.

Some states have written FracFocus into their "fracking" regulations by name, providing serious legitimacy. The Interior Department is also considering using the site as it develops fracking disclosure rules for wells on federal land, Politico said.

FracFocus gives the average American a first step in understanding an issue that remains impaled on the distant edge of the national energy debate. It is voluntary to post information on the site, so some firms will linger in the shadows, but information from March shows that 212 companies had signed up for the service, and informa-

tion was available for 13,000 wells in 20 states.

Meanwhile, the University at Buffalo's Shale Resources and Society Institute recently issued a report that offers a significant review of Pennsylvania's regulation of hydrofracking of natural gas. It examined 2,988 violations from nearly 4,000 natural gas wells from January 2008 through August 2011. Researchers found that 62 percent of the violations were administrative and preventive in nature. The remaining 38 percent were environmental in nature. The environmental violations were the result of 845 events, with 25 classified as "major" environmental events.

A press release from UB states that the report suggests that Pennsylvania's regulatory approach has been effective at maintaining "a low probability of serious environmental events and in reducing the frequency of environmental violations." UB found that the proposed regulatory framework in New York could help avoid the 25 major events identified in Pennsylvania.

Another sign that Western New Yorkers are taking an avid interest in the issue was Saturday's "People's Hearing on Fracking" at the Burchfield Penney Art Center. Organizers stated "Fracking has been cited as a threat to surface and ground water throughout the region, and has been blamed for fatal explosions, the contamination of drinking water, local streams, the air and soil."

The framework for Saturday's gathering was provided by a collection of artists and activists familiar with the Elmwood Village. Anyone who was bored with the environmental topic could drift over to live music and theatrical performances. Brad Wales, an associate professor at UB, said the goal was to "create a synergy that will draw as many people as possible to engage in clean water issues."

There's nothing like folk guitars and face painting to get people motivated about saving the planet. I'll stick with more traditional forms of research.

(David F. Sherman is managing editor of Bee Group Newspapers and a columnist for the Weekly Independent Newspapers of Western New York, a group of community newspapers with a combined circulation of 286,500 readers. Opinions expressed here are those of the author. He can be reached at dsherman@beeneews.com.)



DAVID F. SHERMAN

Managing Editor

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Last week's question:
Will you attend Orchard Park's Memorial Day parade?

You said:
61% YES 39% NO

How to reach The Bee

The Orchard Park Bee publishes community news free of charge. Mail items to The Orchard Park Bee, 5564 Main St., Buffalo, NY, 14221-5410. Our telephone number is 632-4700. Our fax number is 633-8601. Our Website is www.BeeNews.com. Orchard Park Editor Naomi Spencer's email address is nspencer@BeeNews.com. Senders should state on their contributions whether their email address can be published.

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Our deadline is 5 p.m. on the Friday prior to publication.

Orchard Park Bee
Founded 1986

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Subscription rates:

	One Year	Two years	Three years
	\$35.00	\$65.00	\$89.00
Sc. Citizen	\$32.00	\$59.00	\$80.00
Out of county	\$50.00	\$86.00	

George J. Measer, Publisher/Founder 1965-1994
(USPS 001-703) (ISSN 0896-9876)

5564 Main Street, Buffalo, NY 14221-5410
(716) 632-4700 ▲ FAX 633-8601
Circulation: 632-1791 ▲ Classified: 632-4712

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Orchard Park Bee, Buffalo, NY 14221-5410

Published every Thursday by Bee Publications Inc.
Periodicals postage paid at Buffalo, NY 14240

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Plenty of things to do this summer throughout Western New York

New York State recently launched its new tourism campaign, replacing the heart in the well-known slogan "I Love NY" with residents' favorite things and activities about New York. Using inspiration from Erie County's many outstanding events and places, we could compile an impressive list, from beaches to golf, outdoor concerts to baseball, summer in our region is busy.

Wendt and Bennett beaches top many families' "things to do" list for the summer months. Located in the Town of Evans, the beaches are less than two miles apart and will be connected by the Evans Bike Path, suitable for walking, running, inline skating or biking, when the path is complete.

To make the use of the beaches as safe as possible, the county is currently taking applications for lifeguard positions at both beaches. Applicants must be 16 years of age or older and possess all certifications, including waterfront. For additional information, please contact the Erie County Parks Department at 858-7037.

If you prefer the green grass over sand, the county's parks system also has two golf courses: Elma Meadows and Grover Cleveland. This summer, the Grover Cleveland Golf Course, in partnership with the PGA's Western New York Section, is hosting the 2012 Erie County Amateur Championships on July 7 and 8. The event marks the 100th anniversary of the course hosting the 1912 U.S. Open Championship. Combining our

region's rich and interesting history with modern day events truly makes Erie County unique.

Continuing this month is the annual Guided Walks in County Parks series. Four walks remain: Saturday, June 9, in Akron Falls Park; Saturday, June 16, in Emery Park; Saturday, June 23, in Times Beach Nature Preserve; and Saturday, June 30, in Sprague Brook Park. Registration for the walks begins at 9 a.m. Signs will be posted at park entrances directing attendees to the starting points.

If you are planning a family reunion, picnic, birthday party, wedding or any other occasion, county shelters are available in a variety of sizes and feature various amenities. From fully enclosed with bathroom and kitchen facilities, to economical, open space shelters, the county has spaces available to fit your specifications. Reservations are required to use a shelter. Visit www.erie.gov/parks for information.

When the inevitable question, "What do you want to do today?" is asked, don't forget about camping at Sprague Brook Park; driving along the WNY Scenic Byway and visiting the sites; or attending one of the many festivals planned throughout the summer. Our region is also commemorating the anniversary of the War of 1812 this summer with some observances already held, and information can be found online.

For information on any of these events, please contact my office at 858-8850 or email john.mills@erie.gov. Have a safe and enjoyable summer.



JOHN MILLS

Erie County Legislator