Three in a three-part series
Bethlehem Central School District voters will decide on the largest bond issue in district history on Tuesday. Voting on the $80 million boost, more than half of which will be reimbursed in state aid, will be from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. at the middle school on Kenwood Avenue.

At the high school, the project is critical to ease overcrowding, improve safety and moderate facilities to prepare for students of 21st century careers, according to district officials. "All of our school are crowded but the high school is jam-packed," said Principal Michael Tebbano. "We really need the additional classroom space and perhaps needed to have an open plan that would allow students access to the outdoors was a great idea."

"Our building is currently like a spider, with a central hub and legs," he said. "Many years ago, it was thought having an open plan would allow students to move from one wing to another more quickly, students bypass the severe congestion in the hub by going outdoors. Tebbano said he wanted to accommodate them, doors need to be left unlocked.

"Here we are in the post-Columbine age and we have to worry about people in your eyes, you went to the nurse," he said. "Now, each classroom has to have an eyewash and shower stations. Our science rooms are woefully out of date."

Instrumental music is another idea. By LINDA DeMATTHIA

Safety sale

BC voters head to polls

By LINDA DeMATTHIA

By KATHERINE McCARTHY

Bethlehem site wins $1M from county

Today, it's woods and fields; but in five to eight years, 370 acres west of the Slingerlands Price Chopper could be home to LaGrange Technology Park.

In March, Albany County Executive Michael Breslin pledged $1 million toward the development of a tech park in Albany County. On Monday afternoon, a crowd gathered under a tent on LaGrange Road to hear that the site, located in Bethlehem and New Scotland, has also created the need for different layouts and science classrooms, Tebbano said.

"In the 1960s, if you splashed something in your eyes, you went to the nurse," he said. "Now, each classroom has to have an eyewashes and shower stations. Our science rooms are woefully out of date."

"We'd like to lock (the doors) but we just can't." Although the current high school student population is about as high as it was at the peak of the baby boom in the late-1960s and early-1970s, mandates have reduced the number of regular classrooms, he said.

We have had to convert regular classroom space to accommodate special education class, physical therapy, occupational therapy and academic intervention services, Tebbano said. "There has also been an increase in regular educational mandates. In the 1970s, students needed two years of science, now most students who want to go to college really need four."

The federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration has also created the need for different layouts and science classrooms, Tebbano said.

"In the 1960s, if you splashed something in your eyes, you went to the nurse," he said. "Now, each classroom has to have an eyewashes and shower stations. Our science rooms are woefully out of date."

"Instrumental music is another idea." By LINDA DeMATTHIA

Zach Eck and Brian Bentley try on helmets at the annual Sports Mart sponsored by Boy Scout Troop 75 Saturday at the high school. Jim Franco

During an election campaign that brought Bethlehem's willingness to accept growth into question, both candidates for town supervisor also wrote letters supporting the project.

At Monday afternoon's meeting, everyone in attendance was looking forward to the possibility of almost 800,000 square feet of technology and research development space in the towns of Bethlehem and New Scotland. The tech park, which will be accessed by the Slingerlands Bypass Extension that is slated for completion in 2005, could support 2,900 jobs and will require $131 million to fully build.

"This is great for our tax base," Tucker said, "and it's consistent with our residential nature."

"This will have a substantial economic impact on the town," Supervisor Sheila Fuller said. "The project will bring jobs and tax dollars."

Fuller said she has tried for years to bring high-tech industry to the town, and as the nears the completion of her final term, is glad to see the tech park's proposal on the drawing boards.

"I'm happy to be sharing this news a few days before Thanksgiving," Fuller said. "This is something I've been working to get for the town."
Librarian receives award

Youth services librarian Polly Hartman has received the New York Times Librarian Award for 2003. Hartman is one of just 21 librarians in the country to receive the award this year.

Police arrest 3 for DWI

Bethlehem police recently arrested three people for driving while intoxicated.

Amy Weishelt, 20, of 119B Weishel Road, Glenmont, was stopped by police on Nov. 22 at 2:28 a.m. for weaving and crossing the hazard markings on Weishelt Road.

Police said Weishelt was also speeding and failed sobriety tests. She was charged with DWI.

Susan Tucker, 26, of 5 Nixon Road, Highland, was stopped by police on Nov. 15 at 1:41 a.m. at 822 River Road in Glenmont.

Police said Tucker was operating an unregistered motor vehicle without an inspection certificate.

Elizabeth Millett, 32, of Four Seasons, Lot 29, Ravena, was stopped by police on Nov. 16 at 2:06 a.m. on River Road near Beaver Dam Road.

Police said Millett turned without signaling and crossed the double yellow line.

Police said Millett failed field sobriety tests and was charged with DWI.

Cancer support group needs support

To Life! is in immediate need of handy volunteers of all sorts to help the breast cancer support group prepare to move into its new home at 410 Kenwood Ave.

This building needs some sprucing up, minor prep work and renovations to make it a welcoming and permanent home for To Life!'s services for women (and their families) who are dealing with breast cancer.

Phase Two work began last weekend and will be ongoing to prepare the building for the anticipated move in date of Jan. 2.

Phase Two will flow directly from Phase One and will continue into 2004 to facilitate the actual move.

Phony 20s hit town

It didn't take long for counterfeit versions of the new $20 bills to begin circulating in Bethlehem.

On Nov. 5, fake $20 bills were passed at Petro-frac on Route 9W and at Hess Express on New Scotland Road in Slingerlands.

At least one of the bills did not have a watermark or security thread. Bethlehem police believe the same person may have passed both bills.

A counterfeit $20 bill was also passed at Price Chopper in Slingerlands. It was later determined the fake bill originally came from an ATM machine.

Counterfeit money isn't uncommon in Bethlehem around the holidays, according to police. They typically collect about 10 fake bills a year. So far, five counterfeit $20 bills and one fake $10 bill have turned up.

"With the hustle and bustle of the holidays, people don't look at their money," said Bethlehem Detective John Cox. "The store doesn't notice it right away or it may go on to the bank."

Police advise patrons to check their change closely at stores and look for bills missing a security thread.

Those responsible for passing fake bills could face a felony charge of criminal possession of a forged instrument and petty larceny, a misdemeanor.

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Sunday, December 14th
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Santa Arrives on a Tractor-Drawn Hay Wagon Each Day at Noon

Garden Gnome Calendar Signing with Dietrich Gehring
Gourmet Food Tastings
Check out the Holiday Menu in the Yellow Rock Cafe
Live Holiday Music
It's Time to Order Apple Gift Packs & Gift Basket Ideas for the Holidays

Garden Greens Barn Christmas Trees, Wreaths, Fresh Garland, Bouquets, Holly, Mistletoe
Buy a Locally Grown Tree to Benefit the Albany County Land Conservancy

The foundation provides financial support for St. Anne Institute in Albany, which offers a range of programs for young girls.
To-do about Ado

The test of "Much Ado About Nothing" rehearsals at Bethlehem Central High School. The play is set to run Dec. 5 to 7 and 12 to 14.

Jim Franco

Baron wins New Scotland board seat

By MARTIN J. BANNAN

The waiting game is over in New Scotland's town board race. Democrat Deborah Baron, 51, won by 22 votes after absentee ballots were counted Nov. 14 at the Albany County Board of Elections.

Baron of Scotland town board discussed an annual salary of $6,711. She said, "I have to adapt to changes in the economy. Changes have to be made."

Baron, who ran on Clark's platform of fiscal reform, did best in the town's southern precincts including Unionville and Clarksville. Baron ran strongest in Voorheesville. "

I gained some issue-oriented support," LaGrange said. "Considering it was a close race in a campaign where the odds were against me, I can't complain. I congratulate Deborah and Richard on their victory. I wish them the best.

LaGrange added that he has learned a lot during the past year and is open to either another run for town board or a try for a seat on the Albany County Legislature.

Fund seeks donations

The Bethlehem Festival Fund, formerly known as the White Christmas Festival, is beginning its annual holiday appeal for cash and food donations to assist Bethlehem residents. Greg Jackson, president of the fund, hopes to raise at least $15,000.

Begun in 1942, the fund aims to fill a temporary need otherwise met by traditional assistance programs. It plans to deliver about 80 turkeys and food baskets again this holiday season and encourages community involvement. BC students participate in the food drive by depositing canned goods and other supplies into boxes located in the schools. School nurses and social workers sort the donations and coordinate delivery in time for the holiday.

The fund has assisted nearly 150 community members this year. School personnel and the Senior Services Department identify individuals and families who could use assistance. It can range from covering the cost of eyeglasses or hearing aids to enabling a child to get tutoring services or attend school-related activities. This year the fund will award $1,500 scholarship to a graduating BCHS student who demonstrated outstanding community service.

The fund is a nonprofit organization operated by volunteers with minimal overhead. Mail tax-deductible donations to: Bethlehem Festival Fund, P.O. Box 360, Delmar 12054. State employees can contribute by putting SEFA number 50-200 on their pledg cards. Federal employees can put CFC number 9576. For information or to make food donations, contact Jackson at 438-7828 or e-mail him at BethlehemFund@aol.com.

NS board spars over budget amendment

By MICHELE FLYNN

Party lines crossed as the New Scotland town board discussed the 2004 budget at their regular meeting. Disagreement centered over a budget amendment proposed by Supervisor Ed Diegel. Houghtaling, granting a $500 stipend to the parks and recreation program. Newly re-elected Town Supervisor Ed Clark was the first to comment.

"I oppose paying people separate stipends for separate jobs. We should not do this in bits and pieces," he said. "But we do have policy, not individual, Clark said, though he noted, "Pat works very hard."

The current coordinator, Pat Geurtze, works as highway clerk for the town.

"She's done an excellent job on the program and the brochure. She's the nuts and bolts of the program," said Councilwoman Andrea Gleason.

Councilwoman Cathy Connors opposed the measure. "If we are giving a stipend in the last four years. Based on the discussions we've had, I don't think it's a good idea," she said.

The amendment passed, 3-2, with Republican Gleason and Democrats Houghtaling and Reilly voting in favor. Connors, a Democrat, sided with Clark, a Republican, in voting against the stipend. The amended budget then passed unanimously.

Due to the escalating cost of health insurance, the town is considering changes in benefit plans for employees.

Houghtaling offered particulars of the plan. Town employees working 20 to 40 hours per week would receive partial health insurance coverage; those regularly working less than 20 hours will not have subsidized coverage but could purchase health insurance through the town. The legality of the proposed plan will be investigated before the board decides the issue.

Houghtaling also presented a change to the length of Service Award Program (LOSAP). The LOSAP committee at the New Salem Fire Department requested a change in the allocation of investments, with equal parts going to equities, corporate bonds and fixed-rate investments. The investments were previously split 30 percent, 50 percent and 40 percent, respectively.

"This is the first time in four years that we've looked at a change in the allocation," Houghtaling said.

In other business, Heather Connors was appointed as a member of the Onesquehanna Fire Department. The regular meeting will be on Wednesday, Dec. 10, at 7 p.m.
Gratitude is mixed with hope this year at Thanksgiving

By KATHARINE MCCARTHY

This week, we will gather with family members we are happy to see again and family members who set our teeth on edge. Our bathrooms are scrubbed, the good dishes are out and if there really is a God, none of the kids will announce that creamed onions make them barf. We will bow our heads over the table and each be grateful for something different.

My own Thanksgiving list is long this year, and it’s mixed with prayers for the future and prayers of gratitude to the people that help to make my own life so wonderful.

I’m grateful that in the two years since Sept 11, there haven’t been any more terrorist attacks on American soil. I’m grateful to all the soldiers who are fighting to cut off terrorism where it grows, and I pray that they will all come home safe and sound, sooner rather than later.

I’m grateful that the people who oppose the war can state their opinions publicly. I’m grateful that they can gather on village corners, main streets and in front of public buildings. I pray that they will not need to protest long.

I’m grateful that my own sons are too young to go to war, and I pray that they grow up in more peaceful times.

I am grateful for this family that surrounds me, I pray that my boys never stop using the brains that they currently employ to test and push me and that they always face the world with inquisitiveness.

I am grateful that first-quarter report cards are more cause for celebration than concern, I pray that their teachers have the patience and strength to motivate them and all of their classmates through the coming school year.

I pray that I’m able to encourage them to do their best and that I can see beyond who I want them to be — or who I wish I had had the chance to be — to recognize them for who they are.

I am grateful for the dog that we’ve had for over six years now. She’s wild and exuberant and loves our children with a fierceness that sometimes seems stronger than ours. She allows our children to exhibit love and affection and act like silly kids again, even when they prefer to be aloof and diffident. I pray that they continue to have spontaneous moments when they throw their arms around her.

I am grateful that we are content with the space we have. I pray that I can make it seem bigger by clearing out the clutter that has taken on a life of its own in the seven years we’ve lived in this house. I pray that people who don’t have a place to call home are not those who must find a permanent place to shelter.

I’m grateful that the television Chris bought with his first paycheck 18 years ago still works.

I pray that I never see the need to spend thousands of dollars on a television with a screen so big that our neighbors can watch it from their houses.

I’m grateful for technology, especially the Internet, which lets me stay in touch with family and friends scattered far and wide. I pray that I retain the mental agility to keep up with our ever-changing world. Barring that, I pray for the brain power to understand my children when they explain to me something that an MPT player does, why we need a digital camera and what the heck a pixel is anyway, and how to send a text message from the cell phone.

I also pray that somebody invents a VCR that tapes things with voice command, so that nearly 20 years after owning a VCR, we’re finally able to tape shows that we might want to watch later.

I’m grateful for the friends who make my life so rich with their humor, their insights and their companionship. I pray that they stay happy and healthy and in touch all of the days of their lives.

I’m grateful for the food that is available to us with such great ease, and I pray that we can be mindful of our hungry brothers and sisters this Thanksgiving, and throughout the year.

When we bow our heads over our food on Thursday, I pray that we all can bring to mind something that has made us happy this past year and that joy sustains us throughout the days to come.

I am grateful that 17 years later, I’m still grateful that we are happy this past year and that that newness sustains us throughout the year.

I am grateful that for nearly 17 years, I’ve been able to move into our children’s teenage years, and continue to feel the love for them that we still say “I love you” when we turn out the light. I pray that as we move into our children’s teenage years, we continue to feel close.

I am grateful for my health and I pray that I can appreciate it enough to maintain it. Maybe this will be the year I finally lose the weight I’ve been vowing to lose for so many years, and this will be the year that I exercise consistently. I pray that everyone I know and love who is not in good health soon will be and that comfort comes to them and their families.

I am grateful for the coziness that shelters us, and I pray that we can keep it in good shape and that its value increases for a good long time yet.

I am grateful for this family that set our teeth on edge. I’m grateful for the parents who taught me to give them the love that they currently employ to test and push me and that they always face the world with inquisitiveness.

I am grateful that my husband and I can finish each day with a giggle about something in our lives, and that we will say “I love you” when we turn out the light. I pray that as we move into our children’s teenage years, we continue to feel close.

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New Scotland Supervisor Ed Clark was equally happy with the news. About one-fifth of the park will be in New Scotland.

"The residents planning advisory committee has been trying to find ways to reach out and bring this sort of business to town," he said. "This stands for the tax support, support for the school system, jobs and economic development that does not contrary to our rural atmosphere. I congratulate the people for what has happened and look forward to it." Bethlehem Central school board president Robin Storey was pleased with the announcement, especially as Bethlehem faces a vote on a $39 million bond issue on Dec. 2.<br/>

"We're thrilled," Storey said. "It should help with school taxes, and bring down taxes in town.

County Legislator Charles Dawson, D-Glenmont, said the tech park will be a great boon for the towns and the county as well. He believes the park can be built without having a negative impact on traffic.

"High tech can be low intensity, low density and won't add to the traffic congestion. We'll be able to address any problems that arise. The fact that we can make this happen means we can make other things happen."

Bill Herbert of BBL Construction Services said that having business and government work side-by-side sent a powerful message and brings together many companies and jobs to the area. Herbert said that BBL had been analyzing the LaGrange site for sites years. While the county's $1 million sales came to the estimated $11 million to build out the site, Herbert said the county money gives the site visibility to attract companies to the tech park.

Herbert said that the completion of the Singerlands Bypass will help, since it will bring the LaGrange Technology Park to within a few minutes drive of the University at Albany, SUny at Tech and the CESTM site, and provide for good traffic flow. Herbert said that, despite a lengthy approval process looming with both towns, he hopes to have the park completed in five to eight years.

For Bethlehem's Supervisor-elect Theresa Egan, the tech park is good news.

"I'm ecstatic, and look forward to making it a reality," she said. "It fits our Blueprint for Bethlehem and will bring in tax dollars and help support our schools."

Egan said the tech park fits with the moratorium she proposed during the campaign. She said that since it would only affect residential growth in the town, it would be a "win-win" for environmentally sound business for the town.

Egan hopes to find new ways to attract business.

"This was a printing of the pump," Egan said. "When private businesses see how beneficial this is, I hope they will come forward and make similar investments."

Liberty

Library

D$1M D

(From Page 1)

program that does not have the space necessary for optimal learning, Tebbenbo said.

"Instrumental music is taught out of the old wood shop," he said. "It never really had its own room. It's one of the best programs, as attested by the accolades and awards they receive, but the facilities are not conducive for the kind of program we have."

Improvements to the physical education facilities will benefit not only students, but the entire community, Tebbenbo said.

"We are trying to educate students for the kinds of jobs they will have in the high-tech world of the 21st century in a building that was built in the mid-20th century," he said.

Bethlehem resident Lamar Clark, who is involved with the Tech Valley initiative, said good quality schools are essential to attracting the talented work force is the future of this region.

One of the key issues for this region to be successful in transitioning our economy is our K-12 program," he said. "Access to a talented work force is the No. 1 issue for technology-based companies. The quality of life in a region is also important and quality schools are key to quality of life."

Tebbenbo said he hopes residents will look toward the future when they vote on Dec. 2.

"We can only hope that the community will see that this educational program is an investment in the future of this whole community," he said.

"We want to have students eating lunch around noon," he said.

Tebbenbo said the community needs to look at the building project as an investment in the future of not only the school district, but also the entire community.

"We are trying to educate students for the kinds of jobs they will have in the high-tech world of the 21st century in a building that was built in the mid-20th century," he said.

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"We can only hope that the community will see that this educational program is an investment in the future of this whole community," he said.
In a pre-holiday frenzy, the federal Congress worked overtime to produce a piece of turkey sausage that purports to help seniors pay for prescription drugs.

The bill is complicated and expensive, more than $400 billion in money that the government, in its current parlous fiscal state, will have to borrow from future taxpayers.

And, while some of this money will help some seniors buy drugs, most of it will go to drug and insurance companies which have thoroughly corrupted any legislative consideration of health care issues.

A strange part of this bill's story is the alliance of AARP, the nation's pre-eminent lobbying group for senior citizens, with those who plainly want to privatize Medicare. But perhaps it's not so strange, since AARP is as much an insurance company as it is a group that wants to help seniors, and is now clearly siding with its fellow insurance companies against its members.

Consumers Union, which has no such conflicts of interest, has analyzed the bill and come to the conclusion that this bill is not even half a loaf, but more like a moldy crust or two.

According to the nonprofit, non-insurance company consumer group, the bill will cover less that a quarter of drug costs.

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Bond issue deals with town’s explosive growth

Editor, The Spotlight:

Bethlehem is growing! According to town records, as of December 2002, 1,552 new dwelling units had been approved for development, but not yet built. An additional 1,616 units have been proposed and are under review by the town.

Traffic on Elm and Cherry avenues is expected to increase by up to 60 percent, while traffic on Feura Bush Road is projected to almost double.

And the Capital District, newly dubbed “Tech Valley,” is poised to boom economically, leading to the high likelihood of additional residential growth in Bethlehem.

All this growth is why the Bethlehem Central school board, Superintendents Loe Loomis, Assistant Superintendent Stephen O’Shea and a 22-member committee spent the last year carefully projecting the impact of potential residential development and weighing possible plans of action.

What they ultimately recommended was a $55 million bond that will, if approved, protect and preserve Bethlehem’s continued commitment to the high quality of education our children now receive.

At a cost of under $44 million to district taxpayers, the bond leverages more than $49 million in additional state funding to build a needed elementary school near the high school, add a fourth “house” onto the middle school, and upgrade each elementary school and the Early Learning Center, among other improvements.

That’s an across-the-board set of needed upgrades for every area of the district, all at a cost of about $45 per year for each $100,000 of assessed value. For the owner of a $200,000 home, that’s about 25 cents a day. Clear for what we get.

And at the same time, to make sure that this is the last such bond of its size for a long while, we as a town need to aggressively address the issue of growth, especially residential development.

Supervisor-elect Theresa Egan has promised to do this in the years ahead. I would like to see, as part of this effort, a proposal to require residential developers to contribute, in a fair and equitable way, to the infrastructure costs of development, which would include a component that offsets the additional costs of that development to the Bethlehem school district.

In the meantime, kudos to the committee; their recommendations make a lot of sense to me.

That’s why I support the excellent, deliberative and careful work of these dedicated Bethlehem residents. On Dec. 2, I will vote “yes” to approve the school bond.

Caleb Wistar

Delmar

Letters policy

The Spotlight welcomes letters from readers on subjects of local and regional interest.

All letters must include the writer’s name, address and phone number.

Write to Letters to the Editor, The Spotlight, P.O. Box 190, Delmar 12054. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

Your Opinion Matters

fact, Moody’s Investors Services recently issued a report on the Fiscal Challenges Facing New York’s Counties, in which they studied and rated 53 of New York’s 62 counties.

Nine counties had been downgraded, 10 received negative outlooks, and two had been placed on a watch list for potential downgrade. Further, the report indicates that financial pressures facing New York’s counties will likely lead to additional downgrades in the future.

The Moody’s report notes: “Much of this pressure is driven by the most rapidly expanding expenditure: Medicaid — dictated by the New York state government — will likely lead to cost share allocation with New York counties.”

The situation will only grow worse, unless decisive action is taken. Many of my colleagues in counties across the state, Republicans as well as Democrats, have joined the call for a major reform of the Medicaid system.

We have called for a cap on the local share of Medicaid costs at 2001 levels. Had this cap been implemented, Albany County’s Medicaid appropriations for 2004 would be reduced by $50 million.

In order to increase awareness of the Medicaid crisis, and to encourage the governor and state Legislature to address the problem, I have begun a petition drive to cap Medicaid now!

I’m asking people to fill out a coupon they can find on our web site at www.albanycounty.com. You can also call me at 447-7404 if you would like more information about Medicaid or about the petition drive.

I plan to deliver these signatures to the governor and the state’s legislative leaders to demonstrate clearly that the people want a change in the way we fund Medicaid in this state. It’s not right for so large a portion of the costs to be borne by our homeowners, and it’s not right that Medicaid costs are forcing local governments to choose between service cuts, layoffs and property tax hikes.

It’s time to shift these costs back to the state level, and pay for them with the state and federal government’s much broader tax base. Otherwise, we will continue to tax many of our residents out of their homes, out of the county, and out of the state.

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(518) 634-7764
Route 67
Freehold, NY
Editor, The Spotlight:

I've heard many people discussing why they will or will not support the school bond. Many lament another rise in taxes of any kind. Others complain of the imbalance in our tax base, putting too much of the burden on residents to support our schools. Some feel that the town should wait and require future developers to foot some of the bill through public improvement fees or other initiatives common in high growth areas around the nation.

Having moved to Bethlehem from out of state three years ago, I must admit that the reputation of the schools was a significant draw. I spent countless hours on the Internet "touring" towns in upstate New York to find one that felt like a good place to live.

Bethlehem has grown significantly in the short time that I have been here. I can't imagine what it must be like for the long-time residents. We haven't even seen the boom yet from all of the "Tech Valley" talk. And I believe we will.

Bethlehem is so attractive to those looking in from the outside. They will be willing to pay for our good schools, for our community, for our tremendous assets.

The growth will happen regardless of the bond issue outcome, so we need to be prepared for it.

I will definitely vote for the bonds on Dec. 2, as well as encourage the town leaders to adopt a plan that allows for the new developers and businesses to participate in funding the future infrastructure needs of the town and the school district.

Most would be glad to do so; they, too, know the value of the area and its schools.

Mary Judd
Delmar

Letters policy
The Spotlight welcomes letters from readers on subjects of local and regional interest. Letters are subject to editing for length and clarity. All letters must include the writer's name, address and phone number. Any anonymous letter receive no consideration.

Write Letters to the Editor, The Spotlight, P.O. Box 170, Delmar, 12054.

Letters can be faxed to 459-7861 or emailed to spotlight@verizon.com.

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Bond supporter is willing to pay more for good schools

Editor,

I've heard many people discussing why they will or will not support the school bond. Many lament another rise in taxes of any kind. Others complain of the imbalance in our tax base, putting too much of the burden on residents to support our schools. Some feel that the town should wait and require future developers to foot some of the bill through public improvement fees or other initiatives common in high growth areas around the nation.

Having moved to Bethlehem from out of state three years ago, I must admit that the reputation of the schools was a significant draw. I spent countless hours on the Internet "touring" towns in upstate New York to find one that felt like a good place to live. Bethlehem schools continually ranked high, and the small size (class size and district size) was refreshing.

You see, we had been living in an area that was called The Tech Center, south of Denver. When my son started second grade, he was in a brand-new school housing roughly 400 students, grades pre-K through six.

After the first year, the enrollment had grown to about 600 (all district schools were growing at the same record pace) so the board decided to embark on a year-round schedule—nine weeks on, three weeks off. The student body was randomly divided into four "tracks." One fourth of the students were on vacation at a time.

This allowed for less crowded classes, but split the community—friends and neighbors could have dramatically different schedules. Some people liked the variety, others missed the traditional calendar.

The following year, the enrollment reached more than 900 students in my son's school. (This was in a three-year time period.)

The year-round schedule remained, but the schools were still packed. "Temporary classroom" buildings covered much of the huge grassy playground.

My point is this: Growth can happen faster than we can ever imagine.

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The growth will happen regardless of the bond issue outcome, so we need to be prepared for it.

I will definitely vote for the bonds on Dec. 2, as well as encourage the town leaders to adopt a plan that allows for the new developers and businesses to participate in funding the future infrastructure needs of the town and the school district.

Most would be glad to do so; they, too, know the value of the area and its schools.

Mary Judd
Delmar
BC board member argues for 'yes' vote

Editor, The Spotlight:

I support the bond issue proposed by the Bethlehem Central School District. I think we all agree that our schools, presently, are overcrowded. Given the current and proposed rates of growth in our district, this problem will become worse.

I understand that there are concerns regarding specific points in the bond proposal. However, careful review of the bond proposal shows that the district's strategy will solve the problem of overcrowding in the schools, increase overall security at the schools and strengthen the science program at the high school.

The proposed cost ($33 million) is high and we will have to bear the burden of increased taxes. However, the district is to be commended for maintaining a fiscally responsible approach towards improving our schools.

The proposed maximizes the 53 percent of costs to be reimbursed by the state Education Department. As a result, Bethlehem school district taxpayers will be responsible for $44 million.

I think that voting for the bond issue today guarantees continued excellence in our schools of tomorrow.

Arlene Ramsingh Vice president, Parents for Excellence in Glenmont

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Low interest rates, state aid make bond timely

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The current economic conditions, with low interest rates, impart a sense of urgency towards the bond issue.

Should the bond proposal be voted down, there will be a significant delay in developing and approving a revised proposal. If interest rates increase, the delay may ultimately prove to be more costly.

Additionally, a scaled-down version of the proposal will not sufficiently address the current problems of overcrowding, security and updating the science labs.

As a relative newcomer to the town of Bethlehem, I have been impressed with the commitment and dedication of parents, teachers and administrators in supporting our schools.

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Arlene Ramsingh Vice president, Parents for Excellence in Glenmont
Bond issue addresses high school overcrowding crisis

Editor, The Spotlight:

On Dec. 2, the polls will be open for residents of the Bethlehem Central School District to vote on the bond issue. I have lived in this vibrant community for 27 years with my husband and two children. When my children entered the Bethlehem school system, I took an interest in participating in their school's PTA by serving on numerous committees and ultimately serving as president at all three school levels. I currently serve as co-president of the Bethlehem Central Community Organization (BCCO) at the high school.

I have observed that all of our schools are seriously overcrowded. The halls at the high school and middle school during "passing time" become a hazard to anyone in them. The number of students per classroom has gradually increased to the point that some classrooms do not adequately accommodate all students as well as sections of curriculum.

I was one of the members of the Enrollment and Facilities Planning Committee. Through careful, conscientious consideration, we provided options for consideration to the school board. There are numerous items on this bond dedicated to the high school. A partial list includes two additional classroom wings, a new gymnasium, a larger cafeteria, a new orchestra and choral rooms, renovation of the current science classrooms, renovated art classrooms and locker rooms, and an expanded counseling center.

These are not wish list items. The bond proposal will also accommodate safety updates, including replacement of the fire alarm system, upgrade of the electric power system and lighting and heating, and partial replacement of the roof.

Postponing these updates can only result in increased costs while seriously jeopardizing the safety and well-being of our students.

A visit to the school district's Web site at http://bcsd.k12.ny.us provides complete information about the proposed building project and upcoming bond vote.

I feel, as a resident and Enrollment and Facilities Planning Committee member, that the school board has put forth a very responsible bond. I encourage you to vote "yes" on Dec. 2. This is an investment in the future of our community and our children.

Karen Graziaide
Slingerlands

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Bond will help home values

Editor, The Spotlight:

Contrary to the well-known real estate adage, "location, location, location," when a family is considering relocating into a community, their real concern is "location, location, education."

The fine reputation of Bethlehem Central schools has for so many years been the key reason why so many families have moved to town and why all have been the beneficiaries of a favorable appreciation of our home values.

I believe that the approval of the upcoming bond issue will continue to assure that our schools, community and home values will remain strong into the future.

Bill Alston
Delmar
Editor, The Spotlight:

The numbers and quotations in this letter are derived from five articles on the bond issue provided by the Bethlehem Central School District.

In Article 1, the current student population can be calculated at 4,210. The predicted increase in enrollment over the next five years would be 7,610 students. Article 2 states that enrollment had already reached 6,470... by the mid 1990s and that "student numbers already approaching 5,100." Article 3 refers to the student population found in Article 1. Figures found in Article 4 indicate the projected increase in students for the next six years will actually be less than the increase for the past six years.

Yet, we are warned of "rapid rates," "record levels," and "outstriped projections." A fifth article on student numbers sets enrollment numbers. Which enrollment numbers are the real ones?

A table of the BC Planning Report contains Enrollment Projections. The (official) number total number of expected new students over the next five years is 9 percent larger than the one presented in one study adds the column numbers. Which numbers are the real ones?

The inconsistencies and inaccuracies in these BC numbers raise serious questions as to the validity of all the numbers used to derive bond issue figures.

Can the taxpayer assume the errors presented above are the "only errors"? That is a $94 million assumption.

Generalizations provided by BC through vague improvement descriptions gloss over many actual student expenditures. Here is a sample from the BC Planning Report. Do we really need to exceed State Education Department standards by 44 percent for a gym?

There are $6 million for athletics at a high school alone. Do we really need to burden the taxpayer by including new ticket booths for the football field? One option would spend $365,000 on network access from home, broadcast video to classrooms and video conferencing stations.

Elementary students will be able to document "field trips using IMovies using digital cameras." Elementary students will use 35 digital camcorders and 35 digital cameras. Students can "take advantage of opportunities to create full-length movies," to incorporate streaming video clips and allow teachers to "use technology to take attendance each period." (Do not believe the "new state mandate on attendance" necessitates this electronic attendance option.)

Do we need 15 Smart Boards so teachers can "email absent students"? Do we need 150 Palm Pilots to "get immediate feedback from students" and "to distribute documents or Web site information to all students"? Is it really necessary to "give electronic quizzes and instantly find out if they understood the lesson"? Do we need 180 laptops on mobile carts and 45 mobile documentation cameras? What theft insurance will be appropriate here?

If the infrastructure is "crumbling" in spite of regular increases? At this rate, the school district seems to be on the cu of collapse and needs immediate construction. Why were such long-term maintenance costs not planned and offered as smaller 'bond issues'? Some items also seem inappropriate as long-range debt: "Building lacks smoke detectors on visual devices," "carpet is wara (sic)," "existing walls are sticky to (sic) and "existing roof is deteriorating."

The new proposed parking lot will only generate more traffic congestion, parking problems and safety issues, not solve current ones. Why does every driving student require his/her own fee card — no family sharing, environmental or expense concern?

Improvements to athletic fields are desired so that the school can "keep pace... with increase... our community users. Why are the taxpayers asked to support community recreation and non-school activities with school tax dollar increases? At this rate, the school budget will so soon be requesting money for traffic signal repairs.

A quick glance at the state budget problems suggests we should not assume continued state aid at its present rate. Moreover, Bethlehem will be facing other increases in our local school tax requirements. This includes probable increases in funding employee pension funds and health benefits. Remember, these annual budget increases will be in addition to the proposed bond increases over the next five to 25 years.

Virtually all BC tax impact numbers are preceded by the words: "about." I have discussed the data provided by the district with various financial experts, including MBAs, CPAs, lawyers and other persons familiar with IDA bonds. All of them state they cannot answer the question with the published data.

Please note the BC comment, "After the fifth year, there will be no more tax increases to pay for the debt issued to fund this project. While there will be no increases for this project, the bond tax will be in addition to any and all annual tax increases in the annual school budget for the next five years.

I support education and education improvements — but this bond is excessive and far beyond what is required to maintain our outstanding educational facilities. Not all of Bethlehem's citizens have unlimited financial resources and cannot easily absorb such tax increases. Many are senior citizens with fixed incomes.

There are times of tight money for many Bethlehem citizens. This proposal contains a wasteful and hugely inappropriate budget.

Floyd Henderson
Delmar

BC bond proposition is larded with unnecessary spending
An RPS for New York

The New York State Public Service Commission has initiated a process for developing a Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) to ensure that within 10 years at least 25% of the electricity purchased in New York State is generated from renewable resources. These renewable resources may include wind, solar, photovoltaics, biomass, tidal, and others. The RPS proceeding is intended to increase and diversify New York State's generation capacity portfolio with electricity from renewable resources.

Developing an RPS provides an opportunity to lower air emissions, reduce wholesale prices, increase capacity, and increase customer choice by reducing dependence on imported fuels and help diversify the state's electricity generation mix. In addition, there are economic development benefits to attracting renewable technology manufacturers and installers to New York State.

The RPS Proceeding

An important step in the Commission's proceeding is to gather input from a wide range of interested parties on how to best to achieve the 25% RPS. Because the RPS proceeding impacts a broad range of industry, competitor and consumer advocate interests, the Commission established a collaborative effort for interested parties to identify and overcome obstacles to meeting the 25% RPS within 10 years.

Key issues being examined by the parties in the collaborative working groups include: eligible renewable resources; compliance mechanisms; methods for energy suppliers to procure renewable resources; and, the appropriateness of a renewable trading system.

Also there are discussions related to the appropriate methodologies for assessing the benefits and costs of an RPS. The meeting agendas and notes of the collaborative working groups are available by visiting the Commission's www.AskPSC.com Web site.

Comments and Opinions

The public is encouraged to comment on the RPS initiative. Your input as well as your evaluation of the RPS proposals and alternatives under consideration, are integral to Commission deliberations in developing policies concerning alternative energy resources for the state.

More information on how to comment on the RPS proceeding is available by visiting the Commission's www.AskPSC.com Web site.

How to Stay Informed

The Internet: You can stay informed about the Renewable Portfolio Standard Proceeding by visiting the New York State Public Service Commission's www.AskPSC.com Web site. If you have questions or wish to informally express your views concerning an RPS for New York, you may do so by filling out a Comment Form on the Commission's consumer Web site. Many libraries offer free Internet access.

Toll-free Opinion Line: If you wish to informally express your views on a Renewable Portfolio Standard for the state, you may also do so by calling the toll-free Opinion Line at 1-800-335-2120. This phone line is set up to receive comments from in-state callers, 24 hours a day.

Participation: Anyone interested in seeking active party status in the Commission's RPS proceeding can do so by writing Administrative Law Judge Eleanor Stein, New York State Public Service Commission, 3 Empire State Plaza, Albany, New York 12223. Active parties attend hearings and negotiations, and file legal briefs and formal comments. Letters seeking active party status should reference the "Renewable Portfolio Standard" (Case 03-E-0188).

For more information on the New York State Renewable Portfolio Standard, call the New York State Public Service Commission's Business Advocates at 1-877-661-9223 or the New York State Public Service Commission's Consumer Information Line at 1-888-Ask-PSC1.

Environmental Disclosure

Related information on the fuels used to generate electricity and the air emissions is now sent to customers. Twice a year, you receive from your energy supplier environmental disclosure information about fuel sources used to generate the electricity you use and certain air emissions resulting from its production.

The RPS. A natural choice for New York State.

New York State is currently developing a Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) that requires within 10 years at least 25% of the state's electricity is generated from renewable resources. These may include wind, solar, photovoltaics, biomass, tidal, and others.

An RPS should lower air emissions, including greenhouse gases, and reduce other adverse environmental impacts. It may reduce New York's dependence on imported fuels and help diversify our generation fuel mix. Also, attracting renewable technology firms to New York will have economic benefits, as well.

The Public Service Commission is working collaboratively with other organizations and parties to develop New York State's RPS.

To participate in New York State's RPS proceeding:

• Stay informed by visiting www.AskPSC.com
• If you have a question or would like to informally express your views, visit www.AskPSC.com and provide your comments on the PSC Comment Form.
• Leave a comment on the PSC's toll-free Opinion Line at 1-800-335-2120.
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BCMS teacher: Smaller classes create needed rapport

Editor, The Spotlight:

As a community of learners, we are at a crucial juncture. Next month, we have the opportunity to cast a vote of confidence for our district.

The result of this vote will not only affect how our community is perceived, but it will affect profoundly, the quality of our children’s education.

Please read all the information you can concerning the bond issue; for the kids, you must be informed. Remember, the ones most affected are those who can’t vote; and at this time, they are the ones who are most vulnerable.

This is my eighth year teaching as a full-time art teacher at Bethlehem Central Middle School, and each year just seems to get better.

There are many reasons for this: my colleagues are imaginative and fun to work with; the kids are cooperative and enthusiastic; and frankly, I’ve gotten better at my craft.

This particular school year, however, has been exceptional because my class numbers have been lower, and while I’d heard about the advantages of smaller classes, I’d never really experienced those advantages firsthand.

When class size is smaller, there is more space to work. Last quarter in Room 51 at the middle school, I had two classes of 18 students. In those classes, I could seat two students at each table. They sat across from each other with plenty of space to work.

As any artist knows, the quality of studio space is crucial to the creative process. Last quarter, my students had space to spread out and focus on developing their ideas without the distractions and interruptions caused by another person competing for the space.

In a class with smaller numbers of students, discipline is not as much of an issue. Students aren’t tripping over one another, as they are, literally, in overcrowded classes; and consequently, there are fewer arguments and better concentration during lessons.

If I spend less time on management issues, that gives me time and energy to interact with the kids and develop the kind of relationship so crucial to learning.

Also, when kids, materials and time are more manageable, I can devote more energy to developing and implementing even more exciting lessons, which, of course, will lead to deeper learning and the encouragement of lifelong learning. Come and see the wonderful artwork displayed at our school.

Everyone knows the real cost adapts that goes: "The three most important things to consider when buying a house are: location, location, location." Well, the educational equivalent is: "The three most important things to consider when teaching kids is: rapport, rapport, rapport; or as a colleague of mine has said, "They must know that you care before they care what you know."

When a school has adequate facilities, and class size is reasonable (dare we say small), it is a joy to build rapport.

Rapport is about personal interaction, and in large groups, the opportunities for meaningful interaction are compromised.

With a small group a teacher can relax, joke around, ask kids about their lives and have fun with smaller groups, a teacher can take time to ask and answer questions and kids can be asked to elaborate more and delve deeper. In large groups, too often it’s all business.

Teachers love kids and look forward to coming in to a school where the facilities are such that those human interactions are easy and natural.

As the student population rises, and facilities age, for the middle school, our school will become an understaffed, overcrowded institution with less and less confidence in the support it may have from its community.

In such a place, stress runs high, enthusiasm runs thin and I’d want to run away. We’ve been talking about the affective domain and well, how would kids feel in such an environment? How could it ever be a mistake to provide a richer, more nurturing educational environment for the children of our community?

Here at BCMS, over the years, I’ve had the privilege of knowing so many wonderful kids, and they’re worth every penny.

Peter Ruggiero
BCMS art teacher
Take advantage of state aid by passing bond issue now

Editor, The Spotlight:

Please come out and vote "yes" for the bond issue on Tuesday, Dec. 2. We need to vote for this bond issue for two important reasons.

1. To continue the high quality education Bethlehem is known for. This bond issue is absolutely necessary to handle the continuing increased number of students that we have seen over the last 15 years, as well as what is projected for the next 10 years.

2. To take full advantage of the current state funding of 52.9 percent of the cost. The need for additional classrooms will not go away, nor will the maintenance items that have been included in this bond issue.

If this bond issue is not approved, the school district will be forced to either raise critical time and prepare a different bond issue for approval or be forced to try to do many of the improvements through significant increased school taxes every year.

I believe that the amount of state aid for school bond projects will continue to decrease, thus even a delay of one year may cause us to pay more in school taxes than we will if this bond issue is approved.

I would much rather pay the estimated 1.8 percent tax increase each year for the next five years for this bond issue than the approximately 20 percent increase in school taxes that we will have if this bond issue does not pass.

Many communities across the Capital District have seen annual school tax increases of 10 percent to 20 percent over the past few years. Voting for this bond issue is the best way for Bethlehem to avoid huge annual school tax increases and keep delivering the high quality education that our children deserve.

Please vote "yes" for the bond issue on Dec. 2 at the middle school.

Bill Cushing
Delmar

Teacher-parents support bond issue

Editor, The Spotlight:

We are parents and teachers in the Bethlehem Central School District who are concerned about maintaining the high quality educational standards that exist in Bethlehem.

Our children have benefited from having a community's commitment to small class size, advances in technology, support services and programs that contribute to a well-rounded educational experience for each child.

It is our hope that this legacy of excellence will continue for current and future students. This community has always valued quality education. We need to create appropriate facilities and meet diverse student needs, in order to ensure their continued academic success. Appropriate facilities support today's toughest learning standards and are mandated by New York state.

Many buildings that are included in this bond issue will need to be done regardless if the bond issue is approved.

Without this bond issue, the school district will be forced to either raise critical time and prepare a different bond issue for approval or be forced to try to do many of the improvements through significant increased school taxes every year.

I believe that the amount of state aid for school bond projects will continue to decrease, thus even a delay of one year may cause us to pay more in school taxes than we will if this bond issue is approved.

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Bill Cushing
Delmar
Pare: Your Opinion Matters

Science rooms need bond-funded improvements

Editor, The Spotlight:

During this year's open house at Bethlehem Central High School, several parents who were former biology students from 25 or 20 years ago stopped by to say, "Hi." In reminiscing, some said that they had not changed, and neither had the school. A compliment for me, but not for a biology classroom.

A science room should have changed over this period of time. In another science classroom, a guest speaker remarked to a colleague that he couldn't believe science was being taught in such a small, sparsely equipped room.

Due to increases in student enrollment, as well as higher graduation requirements, the number of students taking science courses has grown by more than 60 percent in the past 10 years. New York State now mandates that students must take three years of science, a generation ago, students needed only one year of science.

Despite these changes, the number of science rooms has increased by only about 30 percent over the past decade. This year, many science teachers are sharing laboratories and some are teaching in as many as three different classrooms each day. Such room sharing results in teachers teaching off a cart in a room not designed for their subject.

The school district needs the support of the residents so that our children and grandchildren can be provided with the educational environment necessary to meet the standard.

We will vote "yes" for the proposed construction and renovation projects on Dec. 2, and we urge our fellow citizens to cast a vote for their children and grandchildren's future.

Robert Raslander
Delmar

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As we all know, Bethlehem has experienced significant growth in the last decade.

But the school district is responsible for educating the children of Bethlehem whether or not we have the room for them.

In fact, 46 percent of this bond issue is devoted to the students who are already here. Our schools are not going to become overcrowded if the bond issue does not pass; they already are that way.

Many of us with students in the district moved to Bethlehem because of the quality of its schools. If we want this level of quality to continue it is important for this bond issue to pass. Please support it on Dec. 2.

Kara Graziano and Sandra Taddeo

BCCO

Helen Smith

BCMS PTA

Peity Lane and Paula O'Donnell

Glenmont PTA

Jean Figueroa and Lissa Allendorf

Slingerlands PTA

Lori Wagner

Elmerville PTA

Tacy Gibbas

Guilderland PTA

Anthony DeRosa

Parents for Excellence

Rebecca Morris and Ronnie Siegel

Bethlehem Music Association

Theresa Barrowman

Bethlehem Athletic Association

in Delmar.

The Spotlight is sold at
Delmar Marketplace, Stewart's,
Mobil, Getty and the Sunoco at
Elm Avenue.

To remain a first-rate school, Bethlehem must have the facilities to support the increase in enrollment, as well as higher student enrollment. A bond issue with its proposed building construction and projects to expand and upgrade facilities will supply the required support. Without the additional classrooms and renovations, the programs will suffer.

The problems in science are not unique, but are shared by the other departments. Overcrowded classes result in students feeling disconnected and unable to get needed attention.

Motivated students, a talented and caring faculty, a supportive administration and community and a strong diversified curriculum have brought distinction to Bethlehem's science program.

But much of this progress will be undermined unless our facilities provide the conditions essential for quality science teaching and learning.

The improved science facilities, renovations and technology upgrades in the bond issue will begin to solve the current problems that threaten the excellence of our programs and our children's education.

Thomas Cunningham

biology teacher

Kelly

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Easy Christmas gifts for the men in your life

By MICHELE FLYNN

If you're a woman who dons a Santa hat and heads out shopping at 7 a.m. on Black Friday, this article isn't for you. I'm going to make it easy for those of you who sleep in after a long day of cooking and eating. Here are some ideas for Christmas gifts for the man in your life, and I won't even mention ties or slippers.

You can start shopping in your jammies, browsing the American Automobile Association travel store at www.AAA.com. If you want more of a selection, visit an AAA office in Albany, Troy or Hudson. They offer accessories for emergency purposes such as shovels, flares, solar flashlights and first aid kits.

Robert Soroka, of AAA, said, "Gift membership is probably one of the most popular items for the holiday."

Besides memberships, AAA offices offer gift checks, gift cards and travel certificates. And, pick up some stocking stuffers while you're there: discounted tickets for the Regal and Spectrum theaters.

Next stop is for a smaller motorized engine. Powerrama, on New Scotland Road in Slingerlands, specializes in outdoor power equipment that makes the room woom noise men love. They keep lawnmowers, riding tractors, weed trimmers, hedge trimmers and leaf blowers in stock year round.

Manager Joe Roberts notes, "Last year was a big year for snowblowers and chainsaw." Many people cut their own wood for fireplaces and wood stoves.

Maybe your husband is the only man on earth who isn't into machines. Try the Open Door Bookstore and Gift Gallery on Jay Street in Schenectady for a recently released book. If he's not much of a reader, pick up a book of photography: American Music Photographs by acclaimed photographer Annie Leibovitz, or America 24/7, a collection depicting one week in the life of our country, with pictures taken by over 25,000 photographers.

Does he have a funny bone? Try the boxed set of The Onion, The Complete Far Side Collection, or the compilation Christmas at the New Yorker. Baseball fans will like Yogi Berra's book, Ten Rings. For the history buff, Jimmy Carter's first novel, Howett Nest, set during the Revolutionary War.

While you're at the Open Door, you can pick up a set of book ends, and some sweets from the Chocolate Gecko, because the way to a man's heart...

But there are other routes to a man's heart. El from Colosse Leather Fashions on Central Avenue, said that he'd be happy with a new winter jacket. Besides winter jackets, his store sells American made leather goods, including fashion jackets, boots, pants, chaps, vests, gloves and boots. And there are jackets and saddlebags for your biker guy.

So, sleep in on Black Friday, start your shopping when you're ready. Rest assured, on Christmas night, hubby will be snoring on the couch in his new leather pants, after having used his new chainsaw to cut enough wood for fires for the whole winter, The Complete Far Side Collection open on his chest, and dreaming about that trip you'll both be taking, using his AAA travel certificates.

Peace on earth, peace at home.

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There's no place like home for the holidays
10 tips to make time with loved ones special

The holiday season is a time to step back from daily routines, reflect and spend time with loved ones. This year, take time to truly feel the holiday spirit by gathering family and friends together to decorate the home for holiday festivities. Try these 10 special yet simple activities to be enjoyed with loved ones:

- Fill your home with the warm, beautiful light of candles. During the holidays, candles are available in all shapes, sizes and styles — often decorated with glitter and sequins for an even more glamorous effect. Cluster them together in a fireplace as an alternative to a cracking fire.
- Create festive table decorations — a fun and easy project to do with the little Grab some plain salt and pepper shakers, slather on some glue, then add glitter, sequins, silver stars and puffy paint... voila, these shining shakers are sure ada nona! color and sparkle.
- Bake cookies. Use fun holiday-themed cookie cutters to create different shaped treats and decorate them with colored sugars and glossy icing.
- Catch the light. Hang multiples of the same crystal ornament from a mantel, interspersed with greenery, colorful berries and candles creating a personalized holiday display.
- Cover throw pillows with festive slipcovers or purchase simple ones and add on beads in holiday colors. All that is required is a needle and thread, some beads, trim and lots of creativity.
- Fashion napkin holders out of crystal ornaments and now place them around fancy cloth napkins to top off a festive holiday table.
- Sprinkle glitter on flat surfaces to make a holiday table, mantle, shelf, window sill twinkle.
- To make the new tradition of decorating together even more special, give memorable gifts to each participating member this year, such as a special ornament.
- Fun with loved ones is what holiday spirit is all about. Celebrate each other. Make memories and traditions this year that will last forever.

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HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE • SPOTLIGHT NEWSPAPERS
November 26, 2003 — PAGE 3
Consider Christmas gifts with a unique flair

By LINDA DeMATIA

If you are on the lookout for unique and unusual gifts this year, you need not hop on a plane and fly to an exotic location yourself. Many local merchants began last spring to bring the hot items for this holiday season to the Capital District.

Truly exotic gifts can be found at Staghorn Valley Alpaca in Delanson, according to Jerry Weisgran, who co-owns the business with Judy Pfaff. As it to emphasize how exotic his wares are, Weisgran was in Arquita, Peru, South American during his phone interview. He was there to sell at the Staghorn Valley gift shop.

“We try to go to (South America) once every couple of years,” he said. “We are working on setting up our own network to import items ourselves.”

From clothing to teddy bears, gifts for sale are almost exclusively made of alpaca fiber, he said.

“Alpaca is a very unique fiber. It’s about the finest fiber or superior to what you can get in a department store, and the prices of Peruvian products are very reasonable,” he said.

His hottest item this season is a woven alpaca blanket that is reversible. It comes in natural colors in king and queen sizes.

“Teddy bears of alpaca fiber are handmade,” Weisgran said. They have a complete line of blankets, throws, capes and other clothing items from Peru that are either handmade or factory attractive too, he said, because there are no custom duties.

“The craftsmanship is equal or superior to what you can get in a department store, and the prices of Peruvian products are very reasonable,” he said.

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It’s about the finest fiber available, and when it is spun or knitted, it is a phenomenal fabric,” he said. “It is three to five times warmer ounce for ounce over wool, it’s not scratchy and doesn’t have the oil that can cause allergic reactions in some people.”

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Give the gift of health & fitness this year

In many parts of the country, when the temperature drops, so does our activity level. When the snow falls, it is often hard to participate in favorite activities like hiking, biking and swimming — so a lot of people cocoon. Inactivity often leads to weight gain and the winter "blahs," but there is something you can do to brighten the outlook for yourself, your friends and family.

"Give a gift that promotes health and fitness this holiday season," says Karen Righthand, director of marketing at Atlas Snow-Shoe Co. "Pick up a pair of snowshoes for someone you love for a season filled with healthy fun."

Since anyone who lives in a cold climate can participate in the sport daily, snowshoeing has steadily been gaining in popularity with nearly six million participants in the United States. "It's like hiking, only you can go places you never dreamed possible in your hiking boots," said Righthand. And while hiking will only burn about 340 calories per hour for the average person, snowshoeing will burn twice: 680 calories.

"Snowshoeing is the best bang-for-your-buck fat burning workout you can get in the winter," said Cathy Sasson, a world-class adventure racer, personal trainer and nutrition consultant who cross-trains year round. Not only do you burn calories, you improve your core body strength and balance and get an aerobic workout. Snowshoeing raises your heart rate and compares favorably with activities such as running, swimming, cross-country skiing and bicycling. In fact, many cyclists, mountain bikers, trail runners and adventure racers snowshoe as a way to cross-train and improve their cardiovascular fitness during the winter months.

Snowshoeing can be done anywhere there are a few inches of snow on the ground. Backyards, local golf courses, hiking trail systems, national parks and forests are all accessible to people with snowshoes.

"One of the great things about this sport is its affordability," said Righthand. "You don’t have to pay a lift fee each time you want to go down a hill, just strap on your snowshoes, grab your poles and get out there."

An added bonus, there are no limitations. Snowshoes go anywhere your feet can take you — where there is snow. So, this winter, give a gift that will be remembered and enjoyed for seasons to come. The revitalizing outdoor experience and fitness benefits of snowshoeing are guaranteed to provide the healthiest present of all for mind, body and soul.

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**HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE**

Saturday, December 20th
Nutcrackers add a whimsical touch

The holidays are like no other time of year — warmth and good cheer are in the air as friends and family gather to celebrate. It is also a chance to turn your home into a fairy tale version of itself, with twinkling lights, gauzy ribbons and glittery garland to capture the love, tradition and joy of the holidays.

"Decorating your house for the holidays is all about your personal touch," said Sherry Pounds, senior buyer for the Bombay Company, a home decorating and accessories retailer.

Whether you're known for your elaborate Christmas trees or for your whimsical home decorations, don't be afraid to use this opportunity to express your personality.

"Just like other decorating decisions you make year round, it's all about the details," said Pounds.

The possibilities are endless, and that may seem intimidating to some people. Here are some hints to help you create your own winter wonderland. You may want to choose a theme as the foundation for your decorating plan. Your theme can be as simple as a color scheme, or it can focus on a specific object.

For example, you can focus on snowflakes, Santas or complete with a magnifying glass; and McIntosh the golfer, who is accompanied by a caddy wearing matching tartan plaid. These collectible nutcrackers are 15 inches tall, made of solid wood and meticulously hand-painted.

There's also a 12-inch soldier nutcracker that is a perfect way to greet guests in your front hall. He also looks good standing guard in front of your fireplace or Christmas tree.

The nutcrackers can serve as a focal point in your living room or family room. Line them up on your mantle surrounded by garland for a built-in conversation starter. Another option for mantels and under the tree are Bombay's hand-painted Nativity sets.

Once you've chosen your theme, try to come up with some unusual twists. Consider swathing your banister in netting and lights, then festooning it with ornaments for a bright, festive glow.

Ornaments are also great hanging from the chandelier in the dining room. Gifts wrapped in ribbons and bows and adorned with ornaments add an extra sparkle to your Christmas tree.

If you're serving food, make sure your table is set for the occasion.

"There are so many ways to make a table sparkle," said Pounds. "Use a pretty table runner, your best china and crystal and plenty of candles. This is the time of the year to go all out."

The nutcrackers can also play a starring role in your tabletop decorations. Group them together and surround them with colorful wicker candle holders.

Now that the main areas of your house are covered, don't forget the kitchen and the powder room. Chances are your guests will be spending time in these rooms as well. And if you're hosting out-of-town guests, add some holiday touches to the guestroom. Simple extras like holiday-themed hand towels and soaps go a long way to say "welcome."
Teaching kids the true meaning of the season

Teaching a child that the holidays aren’t only about receiving is not always easy in a materialistic culture. Passing on values of giving back to make the world a better place can be a challenge, especially with the pressure of holiday expectations.

However, "Kids get pleasure from seeing someone else happy," said Charles A. Smith, Ph.D., a professor of family development at the School of Family Studies and Human Services at Kansas State University. "The act of giving unselfishly helps the other child touch someone’s life."

Teamming up with Heifer International, an organization that provides animals to poor families in 48 countries around the world, is a great idea for parents seeking an experience in which their child can find pleasure in bringing happiness to someone else.

While kids might have difficulty in understanding what it means to write a check to charity, they can easily grasp the power of giving an animal — such as a goat, flock of chickens, cow, llama or honey bee hive — to families with extremely limited resources. Children delight in earning their own money to help make them of an animal possible for families to improve their lives through the benefit of milk, eggs, wool, fertilizer or honey.

Some participate in Read to Feed, an educational program that teaches about places in the world where children’s lives are much different from their own. Others “Carol for Cows” or make and sell animal ornaments and cookies; or decorate cans with Heifer International catalog pictures.

The cans are then placed in stores and restaurants and money is collected to help end world hunger.

From Hanukkah to Christmas to Valentine Day, there is a unique way to teach a child about giving back to help the less fortunate. This year, let Johnnie or Lizzie High Services at Kansas State University. "The act of giving is truly a unique way to teach a child about giving back to help the person else. Cows” or make and sell animal ornaments and cookies; or decorate cans with Heifer International catalog pictures.

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When people need pampering, they’ve long retreated to their favorite spas, treated themselves to special gifts and savored their favorite foods. With increasing frequency, more and more pets are enjoying the same kinds of tender loving care. In a recent survey by the American Animal Hospital Association, a majority of pet owners said they had cooked special treats for their pets, given them holiday and birthday gifts, and played special music for their animals.

According to the survey, 93 percent of pet owners said they felt that love and attention contributed more to their pets’ quality of life than anything. “As a longtime pet owner, I know what an important part of the family pets can be,” said Sandra Lee, creator of the Semi-Homemade philosophy. “People do more for their pets sometimes than they do for themselves, and they’re always looking for new ways to shower their pets with affection.”

By combining affordable items with personal creativity — the foundation of Lee’s Semi-Homemade philosophy — pet owners can indulge their pets with flair. Sandra Lee offers the following tips for dog, cat, and bird lovers:

• All dogs love to eat. Cook a special meal to celebrate your pet’s birthday, to celebrate a special holiday, or to soothe pets sometimes than they do for themselves, and they’re always looking for new ways to shower their pets with affection.”

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GIFT GUIDE

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PARFAIT BONEZ BONES
Makes 10-12 dog bones
Ingredients:
1 jar (6ounce) turkey and rice baby food
1/4 cup prepared savory beef gravy
1/4 cup water
2 1/2 cups whole-wheat flour
1 egg, beaten
1 egg yolk mixed with 1 tablespoon whole milk (optional egg wash)
Directions: Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line a cookie sheet with parchment or wax paper. Mix all ingredients (except egg wash) together in a large mixing bowl until a dough forms. Place dough on a floured work surface. Roll out dough to 1/2 inch thick. Using a bone-shaped cookie cutter, cut 1 1/2-2 inch bones. Transfer bones to prepared cookie sheet. Brush bones with egg wash (optional). Bake for 30 to 35 minutes, or until golden brown. Cool completely.

Storage and leftovers: Store in a resealable bag in the refrigerator for up to five days.

PET PAMPERING POPULAR WITH ANIMAL LOVERS
Hoop teams welcome new coaches in 2003-04

By ROB JONAS

The three local boys basketball teams have new coaches guiding them this season.

Ravena-Coesmans-Selkirk and Voorheesville opted to turn to former coaches when their positions opened up after last season. Bruce Stott moves from the RCV varsity girls team, which he guided the last five years, to the varsity boys team, while Rob Crandall returns to the Voorheesville varsity sidelines for the first time since the late 1980s.

"I coached boys for 15 years before going over to the girls," said Stott, who replaces Mike Sigambrelli. "I had a wonderful time coaching the girls, but now is the time to switch back over."

Meanwhile at Bethlehem, Jeremy Klugman moves up from the boys junior varsity program to take over for Chuck Abba, who resigned after last varsity season.

"It's been challenging," Klugman said. "I've learned a lot from coach Abba in terms of technique and fundamentals. I think I've learned from one of the best in Section II."

Crandall has coached at the junior varsity level at both Voorheesville and Guildersdale since leaving the varsity program in 1985. He takes over for Shane Clary, who moved to Middletown, Mich.

"They had a lot of success late in the season," Crandall said of the Section II, Class CC finals last year. "They had some frustrations early (with injuries), but they had a lot of success late."

Here is a capsule look at the three boys basketball teams.

Bethlehem


Key newcomers: Craig Orner, John O'Brien-Carrelli.

Outlook: The Blackbirds go in for a layup during last Friday's Bethlehem boys basketball team practice. Rob Jonas

Ravena

Key returning players: Ricky Rider, Victor Bermudez.

Key newcomers: Joey Fisk, Paul Eddy.

Outlook: The Indians have two top scorers back in Rider and Bermudez, but they will have to rely on such newcomers as Fisk and Eddy to keep them competitive in the Colonial Council. "It's an interesting blend of a few seniors with some young players up from the JV," Stott said. "It will depend on how well we come together as a team."

Voorheesville

Key returning players: Mark Carson, Greg Kloper.

Key newcomers: Andy Catellier, Nick Duncan, Mike Jones, Greg Kloper.

Outlook: Crandall is hoping to avoid the slow start the Blackbirds went through last year. "With a young team, I think it's important that we get off to a good start," he said. "The kids are working hard in practice."

Essex County

The 20th Annual Craft Fair

Hamagrael Elementary School
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TO REGISTER
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Saratoga Springs, NY 12866
(518) 584-7701

For Directions: http://www.hedc123.net

RCS Soccer Club

slates registration

The Ravena Coeymans Selkirk Soccer Club is holding its final registration session for the 2004 recreation program season Saturday, Dec. 6, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the middle school cafeteria.

For information, call Mike Mine at 761-9202 or Cathy Smith at 756-1749.

Letters Policy

The Spotlight welcomes letters from readers on subjects of local and regional interest, whether critical or supportive of our editorial positions. Letters should have a caption, include the writer's name, address and phone number.

Write to Letters to the Editor, The Spotlight, 101 Adams St., Delmar, 12054

Sports

views on Dental Health

Sensitive Teeth

There are numerous causes and ranges of sensitivity that people experience with their teeth. Often, the simple procedure of having a new restoration (filling) placed can cause cold or pressure sensitivity.

Sensitivity to cold that is short in duration can be tolerated easily. This fleeting sensitivity, especially on the root surfaces of the teeth, is usually related to excessive function on the teeth (clenching and grinding).

Although it may not seem to be a problem that needs treatment, long clenching and grinding can damage the temporomandibular joint, wear teeth down, cause teeth to break, disrupt sleep patterns, and cause chronic headaches. The most common indicator of nocturnal disturbances is cold and touch sensitivity along the gum line of one or more teeth.

Having sensitive teeth is NOT normal or healthy and should be checked by your dentist. There are treatments for many causes of tooth sensitivity and your dentist will be able to guide you in the right direction.

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Schools closed Thursday and Friday for Thanksgiving

Schools in the Voorheesville school district will be closed for the Thanksgiving holiday on Thursday and Friday, Nov. 27 and 28.

Thacher Nature Center to host holiday workshops

Thacher Nature Center is holding two holiday workshops, the first on Saturday, Dec. 6, from 10 a.m. to noon. Participants will construct holiday wreaths from holly and other natural objects. The workshop is appropriate for ages 14 and older. There will be an $8 fee per wreath. The second workshop will be held on Saturday, Dec. 13, from 10 a.m. to noon. Participants can choose from several craft projects as this program offers something for everyone. Bring a favorite photo if choosing to make a picture frame. There is a $2 fee per craft to cover the cost of materials. Space is limited to 20. For information or to register, call 872-1237.

Kiwanis to hold tree sale

The New Scotland Kiwanis Club is holding its annual Christmas tree sale beginning Tuesday, Dec. 2, in the parking lot of SuperValu in Voorheesville. Decorated and plain wreaths will also be available. The cost of the trees is between $30 and $40 depending on the size. Proceeds will be used to support Kiwanis youth service projects.

Garden club to meet

The Holdervill Garden Club will have its holiday party and grab bag on Thursday, Dec. 4, at Albany Country Club. The cost is $22 for members. For information on the time or any other questions, contact Kanny Gainor at 765-2570.

Village board to meet

The next Voorheesville board of trustees meeting will be on Tuesday, Dec. 2, at 7 p.m. at village hall, 29 Voorheesville Ave.

Nursery school has openings

The Voorheesville Nursery School at the United Methodist Church has openings for the preschool program. For information, call 765-2951 or 654-2541.

Kids Club program has openings

The Kids Club program at Voorheesville Elementary School has openings for the before- and after-school program. For information, call 765-2043.

Friends add bus for NYC trip

Two busloads of holiday revelers will be traveling to New York City from Voorheesville Public Library on Saturday, Dec. 6.

Friends of the Library have confirmed they will be sending a second bus, so there are a few additional openings available.

If you would like to travel with the group, go to the library with your checkbook now. Reservations must be prepaid at $25 per person if you are a member of Friends of the Library or $30 for nonmembers.

The price is for transportation only. You are on your own to enjoy the lights and decorations, shop, visit museums, catch a theater matinee and/or have dinner.

The buses will drop off and pick up passengers near Radio City. Other details are available at sign-up. Bring the kids or the neighbors for a fun day together.

Lifelines prose writers meet on Monday, Dec. 1, at 7 p.m. No sign-up is necessary and newcomers are welcome. Bring a short prose piece—from a paragraph to a few pages—to any topic to read to the group.

The Best Christmas Pageant Ever by Barbara Robinson is the topic of book discussion for grades four to six on Tuesday, Dec. 9. Sign up at the reference desk and pick up a copy of the discussion book.

Adult book discussion meets at 7 p.m. on Dec. 3 to discuss Thirst by Thomas Hine. Sign-up is necessary.

Regular fall story times have ended. The darkest month will be a good time to read. Storytimes with the theme of "Light Up December" on Dec. 3, 5, 10 and 12 at 10:15 a.m. No sign-up is necessary.

The Alzheimer’s Caregivers Support group meets on Dec. 8 at 7 p.m. No sign-up is necessary. Call 765-5111 or 458-2217 for information.

The library will be closing at 1 p.m. on Nov. 26 and remain closed through Thanksgiving Day. Enjoy the holiday.

Sign up for library programs by calling 765-2701 or e-mail vooreh@ulhs.lib.ny.us. Visit the library Web site at www.voorheesvillelibrary.org.

All library programs are free, handicapped accessible and open to the public.

Barbara Vink
Give Education This Holiday Season

By ROBERT AGEL, Senior Vice President, McDonald Financial Group

Holiday gift-giving time will soon be upon us, and grandparents should consider giving higher education gifts to the young people in their lives, well before they approach college age. Investing in the higher education of children or grandchildren provides the recipients a remarkable return on investment through increased lifelong earning power. Making such investments also benefits the donors through important tax advantages. Higher education is the fastest-rising expense among the three major costs a family typically faces. It's increasing more rapidly than either retirement expenses or a new home purchase. For more than a decade, the cost of higher education has risen twice as fast as the consumer price index — jumping by 47 percent at state-supported, four-year schools and by 42 percent at private colleges and universities. Even with an inflation rate of only 5 percent, by the year 2020 the projected cost of a four-year education (tuition, fees, room and board) will be $83,816 at a public school and $226,472 at a private college — about 265 percent more than in 2000.

Today, Union College in Schenectady costs $30,573 per year, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy $55,960 to $86,314 depending on room and meal plans, and the University at Albany $37,702 for New York state residents and $16,922 for out-of-state students. If this weren't scary enough, college costs are higher in our part of the country than elsewhere in the United States. As a result of rising costs, and a decline in financial aid grants, more students must borrow to pay for their education. Although grants grew by 10 percent over the past year, students also borrowed 14 percent more.

Fortunately, parents and grandparents can use 529 College Savings Plans to help students afford higher education. Starting such a plan for a young person sure beats giving a new videogame system for a holiday gift. These plans allow contributors to save and invest on a tax-deferred basis in professionally managed, tax-advantaged portfolios through state-administered college savings programs, which also may help to reduce their estate tax exposure.

The 529 College Savings Plan may offer more flexibility than other traditional state-sponsored plans such as an Education IRA or gifts under either the Uniform Gifts to Minors or Uniform Transfer to Minors acts.

Contributions to 529 College Savings Plans are treated as completed gifts for federal tax purposes, and contributors may save up to $11,000 annually per beneficiary, or $22,000 for married couples, without exceeding the federal gift tax exclusion. In addition, contributors can give up to $55,000 per beneficiary, or $110,000 for a married couple, in the first year of a five-year period if no additional gifts are made during that same period. Anyone may contribute, regardless of income or state residency.

Finally, a person making a contribution to a 529 College Savings Plan can also make a contribution to a Coverdell Education Savings Account in the same year.

• Investment earnings accumulate tax deferred.
• Proceeds may be used at any accredited postsecondary school in the United States for part- or full-time education.
• Beneficiaries receiving 529 income remain eligible for the HOPE scholarship and Lifetime Learning Credit in the same year.
• The contributor, or owner, retains control over the withdrawals.
• Contributions are invested in professionally managed portfolios.
• Earnings used for qualified education expenses are tax free upon withdrawal. Scheduled to end in 2010, this provision may be extended.

Two basic restrictions apply:
• The earnings portion of any nonqualified withdrawal is generally taxed at the owner’s tax rate and is subject to a 10 percent penalty, and the owner will be required to recharacterize education expenses not covered by the scholarship, or can be left in the account for future use as an advanced degree.

A family also may withdraw part of the account the same amount as the tuition expense without penalty (though earnings on the amount will be taxable to the account owner at the owner’s tax rate). Finally, the owner may change the beneficiary to a family member of the original beneficiary.

The plan owner also has several choices if the beneficiary decides not to go to college, including leaving the money in the account for future use (either by the beneficiary if he or she decides eventually to go to college or by the beneficiary’s children). The owner also may change the beneficiary to someone who is a family member of the original beneficiary.

There also is the option of taking a nonqualified withdrawal from the account (though withdrawals used for noneducation expenses are subject to regular income taxes plus a federally mandated 10 percent penalty on the earnings). Finally, the owner may make a penalty-free withdrawal (however, the earnings on the investments are still subject to regular taxation).

Because anyone — parents, grandparents or other family members — can contribute, a 529 College Savings Plan offers an opportunity to reduce potential estate tax exposure. Annual gifts and any of the growth attributable to a 529 College Savings Plan are not included in an individual's taxable estate.

This feature makes the 529 College Savings Plan a powerful estate planning tool. Donors can give as much as $55,000 per individual and $110,000 per couple, removing those sums from their estates and thereby reducing estate taxes. Then those same funds accrue earnings tax free for the recipients.

Benefits and advantages of 529 College Savings Plans are uniform under the IRS code, but each state may provide different approved portfolio managers. Consult a qualified and licensed investment professional for information on 529 College Savings Plans.

About the author: Robert Agel is an investment consultant and senior vice president with McDonald Financial Group, a KeyCorp company, in the Capital Region office, and advises a variety of business owners with managing company and personal assets. He may be reached at 391-1480 or ragel@mcdinvest.com.
Retirement party set for Sheila Fuller

There will be a community celebration for Sheila Fuller on her retirement as the Bethlehem supervisor in Delaware on Saturday, Nov. 9, at Normanside Country Club in Delmar.

The social hour will run from 5 to 7 p.m. and dinner will be served at 7 p.m.

The cost is $85 for adults, $45 for children, and free for children under 12.

Tickets are $15 per person; RSVP by Friday, Dec. 5.

For information or reservations, call 393-9062.

Grange plans chicken/biscuits dinner

The Bethlehem Grange will sponsor a family-style chicken and biscuits dinner on Saturday, Dec. 6, from 4 to 7 p.m. at the hall on East Main Street.

Tickets are $8 for adults, $4 for children, and free for children under 5.

Takeset will be available and the hall is handicapped-accessible.

For information, call 762-3432.

Village Stage Slates 'Harvey'

The Village Stage will present 'Harvey,' a play by Arnie Morton, with its director, Sandy McDonald, and its rabbit friend, John, on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, Dec. 4 to 6, at 8 p.m., and Sunday, Dec. 7, at 2 p.m., at the Bethlehem Grange Hall.

The cost is $10 for adults, $8 for seniors and students.

For information, call 499-6900.

LEGAL NOTICE
NOTICE OF QUALIFICATION OF PET WELNESS LLC, a foreign limited liability company (LLC) qualified to do business in the State of New York, to be effective at 12:0011/26/2003.

Pursuant to 1001-CSSNY, the Secretary of State is hereby designated as agent of such LLC upon whom process against it may be served. The LLC is a sole member, limited liability company formed in Delaware (DE) on 7/21/03. Office location: 1713 Bth Ave., NY, 10011. Purpose: any lawful activity.

Legal Notice

The Bethlehem Grange will sponsor a family-style chicken and biscuits dinner on Saturday, Dec. 6, from 4 to 7 p.m. at the hall on East Main Street.

The cost is $8.50 for adults, $4 for children, and free for children under 5.

Tickets are $15 per person; RSVP by Friday, Dec. 5.

For information or reservations, call 393-9062.

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Legal Notice
Obituaries

Richard Switzer

Richard M. Switzer, 69, of Glenmont, died Thursday, Nov. 29, at St. Peter's Hospital. Bora in Glendale, Lewis County, he was a graduate of SUNY Oswego and earned a master's in education from Syracuse University.

Mr. Switzer began his teaching career in 1956 in one of the first public school programs for children with physical disabilities in Suffolk County. In 1961, he became headmaster of Human Resources School for the Disabled in Albion, Long Island.

In 1978, he was appointed assistant commissioner of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and later became deputy commissioner for training and employment for persons with disabilities. He was a member of the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped and the White House Conference on the Handicapped.

In his retirement years, he assisted in the pastoral care office for the Church of St. Thomas the Apostle in Delmar. He worked with the clergy in developing programs for seniors of the parish and provided assistance when needed to persons with disabilities. He also visited parishioners who were in nursing homes, hospitals or homebound.

He was treasurer of the board of directors at Good Samaritan Nursing Home and was a member of the Commission on Aging for the Albany Catholic Diocese, Marie Rose board and the DePaul Management board.

He had a lifelong interest in Boy Scouting, serving as past commissioner for the Fort Orange District, Scoutmaster for Troop 71 and merit badge counselor.

He received many awards, including SUNY Oswego's Distinguished Alumnus Certificate of Merit, the Al Felmet Award for Outstanding Achievement in the Field of Rehabilitation and the Clara F. Goerge Emblem, in recognition of outstanding service to the spiritual development of Catholic youth in the Boy Scouts, and the Good Samaritan Professional Award.

Survivors include his wife of 45 years, Patricia Conners Switzer; four sons, Richard Switzer, Christopher Switzer, Damian Switzer and Brian Switzer; a daughter, Mary Victoria Switzer; a brother, Arthur Switzer of East Orleans, Mass.; and eight grandchildren.

Services were from the Church of St. Thomas the Apostle, with burial in St. Peter's Cemetery in Oswego.

Arrangements were by Applebee Funeral Home in Delmar.

Contributions may be made to the St. Thomas the Apostle Senior Program.

Edith DeFlumer

Edith E. Murray DeFlumer, 84, of Eden Park Nursing Home in Utica and formerly of Delmar, died Friday, Nov. 22.

Born in Kingston, she was a graduate of Sage College, Albany.

She was a Navy veteran of World War II.

She worked for the state Office of General Services in Albany for many years.

She enjoyed reading and traveling and was a member of several miniature clubs.

She was wife of the late John S. DeFlumer.

Survivors include six daughters, Beverly Anthony of Delmar; two sisters, Marian DeFlumer of Mount Kisco, N.Y., and Joyce Palmer of Ridge, Tenn.; four sons, Richard Switzer, Damian Switzer, Christopher Switzer, and Brian Switzer of East Orleans, Mass.; and eight grandchildren.

Services were from the Church of St. Thomas the Apostle, with burial in St. Peter's Cemetery in Oswego.

Arrangements were by Applebee Funeral Home in Delmar.

Contributions may be made to the St. Thomas the Apostle Senior Program.

Marion Desoromeau

Marion Desoromeau, 91, of Slaterlands and formerly of Amsterdam, died Thursday, Nov. 20.

Survivors include two daughters, Darlene Leder and Gayle Markowitz.

A Mass was held at the Gutzeit-Pomykaj Funeral Home in Amsterdam.

Burial was in St. Stanislaus Cemetery.

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Student selected for fellowship

Keelin Purcell, daughter of Mary and Shawn Purcell of Delmar, has been selected as a Cornell Tradition Fellow for the 2003-04 academic year at Cornell University. The Cornell Tradition, a national recognized undergraduate fellowship program, was created in 1982.

Students are nominated for the fellowship based on their work ethic, volunteer service, extracurricular activities, and outstanding academic achievement during high school. Keelin is one of 150 freshmen nominated and selected for this program from a class of about 5,000 students.

Grand, Steil to marry

Jennifer Grand, daughter of David and Carol Grand of Delmar, and Daniel Steil, son of Robert and Linda Steil of Old Bethpage, Long Island, are engaged to be married.

The bride-to-be is a graduate of Bethlehem Central High School and the University of Delaware. She earned a master's degree from the University at Albany.

She is an English teacher at Bethlehem Central Middle School in Delmar.

The future groom is a graduate of John F. Kennedy High School and the University at Albany.

He earned a master's degree from Adelphi University.

He is a middle school special education teacher in the Hudson City schools.

The couple plans a July 11 wedding.

made to order. Price is $6.

Children under 5 eat for free.

The firehouse is five miles west of Delmar, off Route 443.

Community members reach out and take action

Since 1982, the Bethlehem Community Partnership has fostered a spirit of cooperation and activism for the benefit of our children. This coalition has brought together many different groups, including police, parents, businesses, schools, churches and local government in prevention of mind.

Last month, 20 dedicated people gathered on a Saturday morning for breakfast, brainstorming and break-out planning sessions at the annual Community Partnership Workshop. Many concerns were raised, such as teen depression and suicide, Internet safety, underage alcohol and tobacco use and binge drinking.

Two task forces emerged whose members will work together over the next year to address these issues with direct prevention efforts, community outreach and education.

Co-sponsors Bethlehem Networks and BOU would like to thank everyone who contributed to making this ongoing venture such a success, including everyone who could not attend but generously offered their assistance in the coming year.

We would also like to thank Hannaford supermarket in Delaware Plaza for its generous donation of refreshments.

To help out or be added to the Community Partnership mailing list, call Networks at 439-7740 or e-mail BethlehemPreventionProject@yahoo.com.
'The Sweepers' offers new take on ethnic humor

LINDA DeMATIA

For a new play about 1945 Boston that is having its first production outside New York City, "The Sweepers" has been selling to packed houses at Capital Repertory Theatre since opening on Nov. 14, according to Nancy Laribee, Cap Rep's Marketing and Public Relations Director. "We have sold out five performances and have had just a seat or two left for five others," she said. "The response has been phenomenal."

Set in the close-knit Italian section of Boston's North End near the end of World War II, the play tells the story of three Italian-American women whose families have been friends and neighbors since childhood.

In a changing world that threatens the traditions that bind them together, the women worry about children growing up and marrying "out of the neighborhood" and deal with the betrayal of friendships.

Because the play deals with war, it resonates with people today, Laribee said. "It is very timely, what with the war in Iraq," she said. "And the women do what they always do, sweep up the mess that is left behind. The play is funny and very touching, and very relevant to what is happening today."

Laribee said response to the play has been particularly strong from Italian-American and women's groups.

Playwright John Picardi, who lives with his family in Quincy, Mass., wrote "The Sweepers" for this master's thesis at Carnegie-Mellon. Based upon his first play, Picardi was awarded a grant from the National Italian-American Foundation to write a series of plays, each covering a 10-year period in the 20th century. The plays are designed to present Italian-Americans in a positive light, unlike the stereotypical mobsters or working class buffoons so common in TV and movies.

"Working class doesn't necessarily mean that you are unintelligent, involved with the Mafia," Picardi said in an interview with Cap Rep staff member Erin Johncox. "I guess my goal is to change - to put out a new image of Italian-American. We are not all criminals; we all have some link to organized crime.

"The Sweepers" stars Stephanie Cozart as Karen Faletti, Carole Healey as Bella Cichinel, Matthew Montelongo as Sonny McCarthy-Cichinelli, Brigitte Viellien-Davis as Dotty Larnino and Lori Wilner as Mary DeGrazia.

It is directed by Frances Hill, who will be producing Picardi's new play "Seven Rabbits on a Pole" at Urban Stages in the spring.

The show runs through Dec. 14; showtimes are Tuesday to Thursday at 7:30 p.m., Friday shows at 8 p.m., Saturday at 4 and 8:30 p.m., and Sunday at 2:30 p.m.
Theater-goers can join a post-show discussion with the cast; artistic director and special guests on discussion night, Nov. 28 and Dec. 3 and 10.

For information, call the box office at 445-7469.

(Right) Mary DeGrazia (Lori Wilner - back left) and Dotty Larnino (Brigitte Viellien-Davis - back right) wonder and speculate about where their friend Bella Cichinelli (Carole Healey - front) goes when she leaves their Italian neighborhood in Boston's North End and what secrets she might be keeping from them.

Photos by Joe Schuler
MUSIC

LIVINGSTON TAYLOR
The Van Zandt, 230 Fifth Ave., New York, Dec. 7, 8:30 p.m. Ticket: $12. Information: 758-9090.

MARK LINDSEY

ALABAMA INSTITUTE OF HISTORY AND ART

SCHUYCTADY MUSEUM

ALBANY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT GALLERY

LOCAL COLOR ART GALLERY
565 Troy-Schenectady Road, Latham, Holiday Show and Children's Art Exhibit, through Jan. 31. Information, 793-4557.

THEEurement


MIRACLE ON 34TH STREET
New York State Theatre Institute, Schenectady Civic Players, 125 Church St., Dec. 5 and 7 at 8:30, $25. Tel. to seniors and snowbirds, $10 for children under 13. Information, 714-2329.

BABES IN ARMS
Rogers and Hartz musical, Schenectady Light Opera Company, 656-Sabre St., Dec. 5 to 7 and 11 and 14, 8:15 for seniors and snowbirds, $10 for children under 13. Information, 703-5722.

COMMUNICATING DOORS
American comedy, Schenectady Civic Players, 125 Church St., Dec. 5 to 7 and 11 to 14, 8:15 for seniors and snowbirds, $7 to $12, $10 for students. Information, 362-2031.

VISUAL ARTS

NEW YORK STATE MUSEUM

HINDENBURG WIND MILL
SOLSTICE CONCERT

DURBAN TORRICI parent, painting works by Harvey Beckford and Chopin, Memorial Museum of Union College, Schenectady, Dec. 5 p.m., $5, and $2.50, information, 374-9653.

HOT TUNA

SCHUYCTADY MUSEUM

ALBANY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT GALLERY

LOCAL COLOR ART GALLERY
565 Troy-Schenectady Road, Latham, Holiday Show and Children's Art Exhibit, through Jan. 31. Information, 793-4557.

FRIENDSHIP SINGERS
Evenings in women's singing group, focusing on old favorites and show tunes, rehearsals, Tuesdays mornings at 10 a.m. Information, 758-9090.

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Town & county government.

BETHLEHEM
DELMAR ROTARY
Quality Inn, Route 9W, 7:30 a.m.
Information, 707-2930.

SOLID ROCK CHURCH
1 Komondor Ave., evening prayer and Bible study, 7 p.m., Information, 439-4314.

BETHLEHEM TOASTMASTERS
The Crafteroom, Adams Station Aprts., 1 Juniper Drive, Dinner, 7:30 p.m.
Information, 499-0671.

Banned American Legion Post, 16 Pripya Drive, 7:30 p.m, Information, 410-9018.

TESTIMONY MEETING
First United Methodist Church, 555 Washington Street, call for time, Information, 765-2199.

NEW SCOTLAND

FAITH TEMPLE
Bible study, New Salem, 7:30 p.m.
Information, 765-2870.

PRAYER MEETING
evening prayer meeting and Bible study, Mountainview Evangelical Free Church, 656 Feura Bush Rd., 7:30 p.m.
Information, 439-0679.

NEW SCOTLAND SENIORS
Wyman-Osterhout Community Center, New Salem, call for time, Information, 765-2199.

AA MEETING
First United Methodist Church of Voorheesville, 68 Main St., 9 p.m.
Information, 439-6179.

THURS. NOV. 27

Thanksgiving

BETHLEHEM

AA MEETINGS
St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, 90 Maple Ave., 7 p.m.
Information, 765-2791.

FIRST REFORMED OF DELMAR
10:15 a.m.
Information, 439-4314.

CRACKLEDOWN REFORMED
7:30 p.m.
Information, 439-6179.

ROYAL ARCH MADONS
Temple Chapter 16, Masonic Temple, 421 Kenwood Ave.
AA MEETING
Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 65 Elm Ave., 8:30 p.m.
Information, 439-8771.

NEW SCOTLAND

DELMAR ROTARY
Quality Inn, Route 9W, 7:30 a.m.
Information, 499-0679.

DELMAR BUSINESS WOMEN
Normanside Community Club, 215 Normanside Ave., 7 p.m.
Information, 765-2870.

DELMAR ELKS LODGE 2233
150 River Road (Route 14), Cedar Hill, 7 p.m.
Information, 795-2380.

TESTIMONY MEETING
First Church of Christ, Scientist, 555 Washington Street, 7:30 p.m.
Information, 765-2199.

TOASTMasters
Essex Elementary School, 247 Delaware Ave., 7:30 p.m.
Information, 499-1086.

ORDER OF THE EASTERN STAR
Oneata Chapter, Masonic Temple, 421 Kenwood Ave., 9 p.m.
Information, 439-2191.

NEW SCOTLAND

VLYE ZING BOIDNG
Village Hall, 29 Voorheesville Ave., 7 p.m.
Information, 765-2870.

NEW SCOTLAND SENIORS
Wyman-Osterhout Community Center, New Salem, call for time, Information, 765-2199.

AA MEETING
First United Methodist Church of Voorheesville, 68 Main St., 8 p.m.
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Spotlight on Dining

BETHLEHEM

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AA MEETING
First United Methodist Church of Voorheesville, 68 Main St., 8 p.m.
Information, 499-6179.
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Specialty Heating
Call a Craftsman forConscientious Service and Perfect Piping
Wm. Gregory 459-1752
Radiant New Speciality
HELP WANTED

18-40 HEAD DRIVER- The Bethlehem Central School District seeks a full time, twelve-month person with knowledge and skills as a 18-40 Driver and S&O and be able to travel the 30 hour basic route. Applicants must possess a New York State CDL class B with passenger endorsement. Responsibilities include bus maintenance, attendance to training, orientation and testing, knowledge and experience in school bus drivers. Knowledge of computer operations is a must. Apply in writing to Mr. Alford A. Karum, Director of Bethlehem Central School District Transportation Department. 82 Van Dyke Road, Delmar, New York 12054. Deadline is December 11, 2003.

AFTER-SCHOOL AIDS: 2:30-4:30 pm. Specialized, Paly or Parented student needed to work with high functioning non-verbal autistic students 5 yr old in Delmar (10 minutes from Albany). Help with after-school therapies and activities. Would also assist with 2 younger siblings. Mush-have-care, good reading/record and references. $10/hour. Aides must possess a New York State license. Please fax resume to 439-0609.

BUS DRIVER SUBSTITUTES WANTED: Voorheesville Central School District. $11.46 per hour. Earn extra income. Congenial working environment. Current bus license is a must. Experience preferred. Apply in writing to Mr. Alford A. Karum, Director of Bethlehem Central School District Transportation Department.

WANTED

Part Time Accounts Receivable Clerk

Duties include ad scheduling, processing payments and general office work.

Please fax resume to 439-0609

Attn: John Skrobela, Circulation Manager

SpotlightNewspapers

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Join the world's best retailing team, recognized by Fortune Magazine as one of the most admired companies in the world. As a member of the Wal-Mart team, you will receive competitive wages and enjoy benefits including: comprehensive discounts, 401(k), stock purchase plan, profit sharing, health benefits and career advancement opportunities.

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- Customer Service
- Stockers
- Sales Associates
- Department Managers

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You can reply specifically to Job #19154. Call us at 518-434-4110 x5 or x13. Air Products is an Equal Opportunity Employer M/F/D/V where diversity matters!
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The Spotlight • Colonie Spotlight • Loudonville Spotlight • Guilderland Spotlight In Schenectady County
Niskayuna Spotlight • Scotia-Glenville Spotlight • Rotterdam Spotlight In Saratoga County
Saratoga Spectator • Clifton Park/Affton Spotlight • Burnt Hills Spotlight

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All line ads must be pre-paid in order for placement. Ads will appear in all nine newspapers, as well as online for the internet for the number of weeks requested.

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Name: __________________________
Address: _______________________
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Look Who's Back In Town!
As an experienced real estate professional, my client's needs, interests and objectives come first!

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SALMON RIVER- 300' Riverfront $25,900 Lake Almar access. 52 ac. $16,000 Lake Pleasant- 100' lake 100 acres. $16,000-$45,000 properties. Financing 1-888-683-2626

**REAL ESTATE FOR RENT**
CORVANAS: 1 bedroom, washer/ dryer hookup, $450+ utilities, Available Immediately. 966-6061.


DELMAR- 1 Bedroom, Apartment
439-9958

DELMAR- 2 Bedroom Apartment,
1st Floor, granite, garage. Available 1/1. $710 + 448-5332.

DELTA- Shes A 2 Bedroom, 1/2 Bath, Duplex Off East Pope.

300' Lake/100 ac. $180k

SALMON RIVER- 300' Lake/100 ac. $19,900-$39,900

www.tand-first.com

**COMMERCIAL FOR LEASE**
DELAWARE PLAZA- DELMAR-
Retail space available. For leasing information call Delaware Plaza Associates at 459-9230. OFFICE SPACE: 436 Delaware Ave, Delmar. Suites from $400.00 per month gross. Rick 475-0123. Prime 1st Floor Offices, 284 Delaware Ave.

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All Utilities Included, No Lease, Available Immediately. $490/ Month. 598-5404.

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**LAND FOR SALE**
LAND BARGAINS, FREE LIST

**RENTAL PROPERTIES**

**VALENTINE RENTALS**
MARCO ISLAND, FLA: Available 1/2/03. 2BR, 2BA Condo. Heated pool. Desirable location. Walk to beach, washer/dryer hook-up. $2,200 per month. 459-1002.

NAPLES FLORIDA- CONDO.

SOUTH OF FRANCE: Two bedroom villa with flower garden, enclosed treed yard. 600K from Koblenz. 518-448-8866.

**Albany County Public Auction**
Tax Foreclosed Properties Saturday, December 6th Empire State Plaza Meeting Room 6 Albany, NY Registration begins at 9 a.m.
Call for a FREE brochure (518) 447-7079 Visit our website to pre-register www.albanycounty.com

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With over 100,000 readers every week, Spotlight Newspapers are the best place to advertise your services and sales.
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The RealtyUSA team is pleased to announce the expansion of our Delmar Office. Designed to compliment the character of our community and accommodate the needs of our clients and associates, this addition offers high visibility, generous general/private offices and will continue to make your home buying/selling a pleasurable and successful experience.

Also, a few positions are available on our team. Flexibility, excitement and high satisfaction define a career in real estate sales.

For a confidential conversation call Bill Alston at 448-5306.

**Your dream home...**

is just a phone call away

Spotlight Newspapers' Real Estate Classifieds
Functional wiper blades clear the way for winter driving

Ask anyone to name their vehicle's most important safety feature and most people will mention anti-lock brakes, seat belts, or air bags. One important vehicle safety feature that many people take for granted, however, are effective windshield wiper blades.

Advanced safety features such as traction control, ABS, and dynamic stability control greatly enhance vehicle response when emergency stopping or maneuvering is required, but having a clear view of the road ahead in all types of weather and driving conditions reduces the potential for such dramatic driving.

How many times have you experienced a windshield that is crusted with ice and snow or smeared with insects, bird droppings, road grime or other messy deposits? Removing them with worn wiper blades is nearly impossible. Usually, you wind up smearing the mess and obscuring your view even more. Changing your wiper blades regularly can help you avoid these problems and keep your eyes on the road.

Know When To Change Blades

Wiper blades should be considered like engine oil, and you wouldn't wait until you have engine trouble before you change your oil. Despite National Highway Transportation Board recommendations that drivers change their wiper blades every year, the average US vehicle owner replaces his/her wiper blades only once every 2.5 years. Typically, a worn blade shows physical wear signs like cracking or discoloration. Also, streaking, noisy operation and unwiped areas are dead giveaways that your blades have reached the end of their useful life.

If you frequently change your wipers, however, you won't need to examine them by looking for these signs of possible failure, said Greg Palese, brand manager for Old World Industries which markets SmartBlade, the world's first and only premium wiper blade that actually alerts the driver when replacement is needed. According to Palese, SmartBlades' advanced design includes Duotec dual rubber technology that provides superior wiping quality and long lasting durability. In addition, SmartBlades feature an exclusive wear indicator that, over time, reacts to environmental conditions causing the indicator to turn from black to yellow. "Our revolutionary wear indicator takes the guesswork out of blade replacement by telling the driver, at a glance, whether the blade will be ready when it is needed most to effectively clear the windshield."

So if you've been procrastinating about changing your windshield wiper blades, take a few minutes to change them with SmartBlade. It's easy to do and will give you the peace of mind that when bad weather comes, you'll be able to see where you're going.
MARSHALL'S
Chrysler • Jeep • Subaru • GMC

Gobble up the Savings Marshall's

NEW 2004 JEEP
LIBERTY SPORT
- 28B PACKAGE
- 3.7 LITER V6
- AM/FM/CD
- SPEED CONTROL
- TIL-T TOW GLASS
• 2 AVAILABLE

NEW 2004 JEEP
GRAND CHEROKEE
- POWER WINDOWS
- POWER LOCKS
- SPEED CONTROL
- TILT WHEEL
- AM/FM/CD/MP3
- DEEP TINT WINDOWS
• 2 AVAILABLE

NEW 2005 CHRYSLER
TOWN & COUNTRY
- 3.3 LITER V6
- QUAD SETS
- REAR HAT & A/C
- 4 WHEEL DISC BRAKES
- ROOF RACK
- AM/FM/CD/MP3
- DEEP TINT GLASS
• 2 AVAILABLE

BRAND NEW 2004 JEEP LIBERTY SPORT
MSRP: $22,995
Discount: $1,500
Retail: $21,495

BRAND NEW 2004 JEEP GRAND CHEROKEE
MSRP: $25,495
Discount: $1,500
Retail: $23,995

BRAND NEW 2005 CHRYSLER TOWN & COUNTRY
MSRP: $28,495
Discount: $2,000
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4X4, 29,976 MILES
$13,495*

2002 DODGE RAM 1500
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$15,995*

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35,240 MILES, 6,977 MILES
$10,995*

1999 CADILLAC DEVILLE
47,877 MILES
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67,366 MILES
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22,059 MILES
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2000 CRUSHER CIRRUS
16,888 MILES
$8,995*

2000 CHRYSLER CONCORDE
EXT. CAB, 47,700 MILES
$9,995*

2000 CRUSHER CIRRUS
4,696 MILES
$8,995*

1999 CIRRUS LXI
41,777 MILES
$8,995*

1998 DODGE RAM 1500
REG. CAB, 81,532 MILES
$20,495*

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