



NIAGARA SINCE 1854 GAZETTE



FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2008

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NIAGARA FALLS, NEW YORK • 50 CENTS



MONDELLO IN TOWN

State GOP chair pushing for Gov. Palin visit. **LOCAL, 3A**

3 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW TODAY

1 Forward Jason Pominville signed a five-year contract extension with the Buffalo Sabres on Thursday. **SPORTS, 1B**

2 The lack of a pool cover at Niagara Falls High School has caused \$15,541 of taxpayer money to evaporate each year. **STORY, 3A**

3 Two separate ghost walks will be running every weekend until Halloween in Lewiston. **STORY, 3A**



COMING SUNDAY ARMORY AUCTION

Historic Main Street structure is looking for a new owner.

WHERE TO TURN

STATE LOTTERIES
Please see page 3A

AREA OBITUARIES
Please see page 4A

WEATHER
Please see page 2A



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WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM? THIS WEEK: Lewiston woman says neighborhood campfires are threatening her health ...



DAN CAPPELLAZZO/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

HEALTH CONCERN: Kline Road resident Phyllis Fending gasps to catch her breath outside her Town of Lewiston home last week. Fending has been pleading with neighbors to stop having camp fires in their backyard because it impacts her health.

BURNING ISSUE

Lewiston woman upset about lack of enforcement of fires in neighborhood

BY RICK AHRENS
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LEWISTON — Backyard barbecues and evening campfires are common sights during the summer months and act as harmless excuses for a gathering of friends. However, one Lewiston woman sees those backyard burnings as dangerous variables that have seriously threatened her health.

Phyllis Fending suffers from a severe form of asthma that can render her breathless in all but the most ideal environments. Her home air-conditioner is crucial in keeping the inside of her house cool and dry enough to ease her breathing woes.

But Fending says her asthma is regularly challenged by the incursion of smoke that drifts over from her neighbors' backyard bonfires. The fires burn as close as 150 feet away from her air-conditioning unit, she said, and the smoke's disruption of the air-conditioner's flow has triggered asthma attacks.

CONTACT US

Do you have a problem in your neighborhood that needs to be addressed?

■ Contact Gazette Managing Editor Dick Lucinski at 282-2311, Ext. 2241, e-mail him at lucinski@gnewspring.com

■ Or write to: Niagara Gazette, 310 Niagara St., Niagara Falls, NY 14302. Attn: What's Your Problem?

Although her neighbors have been burning fires for the past seven years, the smoke has had a more irritating presence in recent months.

"For the past two weeks, it seems like they've had fires every night," she said recently. "Some attacks I've had were so severe, I had to call an ambulance."

"I don't understand what my neighbors are thinking," she continued. "If you see an ambulance come to your neighbor's house two weeks in a row, why would you continue to burn?"

Attempts to contact Fending's neighbor were unsuccessful.

To make matters worse, Fending alleges her complaints against her neighbors' activities have inspired acts of vandalism. Her house has been splattered by paintball ammunition. The siding on her house has been pulled up. Dog feces have been put in her air-conditioner.

The Lewiston Police Department has told her they require concrete proof to support her allegations before they can take any action. Fending said she is in the process of installing security cameras on her property to collect evidence of vandalism.

"They think no one is going to take their right to having a campfire in their own yard, but I didn't ask to be born with this," she said. "I'm just asking people to be considerate."

For several years, Fending has spearheaded legislation to eliminate residential burning from her neighborhood. However, at least

SEE **PROBLEM** ON PAGE 5A

SENECA GOLF

Course probe touches Falls

FBI: Investigators request documents from NCIDA attorney.

BY MARK SCHEER
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FBI agents investigating a land deal in the Town of Lewiston also paid a visit last week to an attorney in the City of Niagara Falls.

Mark Gabriele, a lawyer with the firm Harris Beach who serves as legal counsel to the Niagara County Industrial Development Agency, confirmed Thursday that investigators looking into the property sale for the Seneca Gaming Corp.'s Hickory Stick Golf Course met with him at his Main Street office where he answered questions and

SEE **PROBE** ON PAGE 5A

FALLS SCHOOLS

Back to class for absentees

TRUANCY: New program will closely monitor students missing school.

BY CAITLIN MURRAY
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The Niagara Falls City School District is launching a new program to battle truancy that will include interventions and home visits to students habitually missing school.

The program, Be Cool, Be In School will target absentee students in four schools that have the highest rate of truancy in the district: Niagara Falls High School, LaSalle and Gaskill preparatory schools, and Harry F. Abate Elementary. These schools have a 15 percent rate of daily absenteeism on average — the districtwide average is half that.

SEE **ABSENTEES** ON PAGE 5A

N.Y. state could lose 40,000 jobs, \$3 billion

INSIDE

Dow makes big comeback. NEWS FLASH/7A

Schumer proposing relief for banks. STATE/8A

Attorney General launches probe of stock short-selling. STATE/8A

ECONOMY: Projection worse than Gov. Paterson's prediction.

BY MICHAEL GORMLEY
The Associated Press

ALBANY — A new projection shows Wall Street's meltdown could cost New York state up to 40,000 private sector jobs and \$3 billion in tax revenues over the next two years, two state officials said Thursday.

The revised numbers in the snapshot of worst case estimates was done Wednesday at

the highest levels of New York's state government.

The internal projection stated that New York job losses could reach between 25,000 and 40,000 private sector jobs and tax revenues could drop as much as \$2 billion to \$3 billion.

The projection is worse than Gov. David Paterson predicted just Tuesday when he said the state could lose some \$1 billion in revenue because of upheaval in the financial sector.

Wall Street is a major economic force in New York state, generating one-fifth of the state's revenues each year.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to comment on the fiscal analysis.

Both hits would be substantial. The total New York state budget including federal funds is about \$120 billion, and the state has about 7.25 million private-sector jobs.

State officials used the model of the fiscal damage to New York after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Then, Gov. George Pataki said it was the worst financial hit to New York since the Great Depression 70 years earlier.

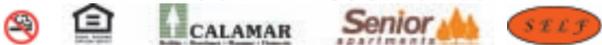
The new analysis includes the stock market drop, lost revenue from transactions and projected lost income tax revenue from Wall Street jobs.

Three of the five major U.S. investment banks — Bear Stearns, Lehman Brothers and Merrill Lynch — have either gone out of business or been driven into the arms of another bank. The two remaining banks, Goldman Sachs Group Inc. and Morgan Stanley, are under siege.

Paterson's office issued a statement later Thursday saying there was no new projection for public release.



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