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Wal-Mart creating jobs, encouraging competition

The contention supported by The News that the Western New York market cannot support any new retail business is deeply disappointing, statistically unfounded and sends the wrong message to the community and potential investors ("Wal-Mart's expansion heats up grocery wars," May 24).

Wal-Mart plans to create approximately 850 construction jobs and close to 2,000 full- and part-time associate positions over the next few years. We think competition is a good thing, because the consumer benefits by saving money. We are encouraged by the recent openings and/or expansions of the Walden Galleria and retailers such as Kohl's, Wegmans, Target, Metro Mattress, Price Rite, Christmas Tree Shops and others.

We, too, see potential in Western New York and will continue to deliver unbeatable value, create quality jobs and support local non-profit organizations.

In Western New York, our stores co-exist with dozens of small, medium and large businesses; just drive around in the vicinity of our stores to see how Wal-Mart fosters opportunity for others. This is not surprising. The CATO Institute recently studied Wal-Mart's impact, dispelling the popular myth that it destroys small businesses.

We soon will bring more grocery options to our customers in Western New York and will work with community leaders to make our new stores the best place to shop and the best place to work.

Steven V. Restivo

Director of Corporate Affairs

Wal-Mart Stores

United Way funding will improve birth outcomes

I have read with interest the responses of many non-profits who have been upset about losing funding through the United Way's new funding system.

The agency that I am the CEO of was one of the lucky 11 that did not have previous United Way funding, and received first-time funding from the campaign.

This year, agencies that participated in other communitywide efforts were invited to come to two sessions given by United Way. The first session explained the process it underwent to build a new strategic plan and the results of that plan. The next session reviewed the funding categories and explained in detail how to apply and what the United Way was looking to fund.

At our agency, we spent time studying its priorities and knew that we had a program that fit. The interviews that were conducted were thoughtful and results-oriented in their evaluations, which involved many volunteers.

We at Buffalo Prenatal-Perinatal Network are excited about this new opportunity to serve more families on the East and West sides of the city as we strive to improve birth outcomes in Erie County.

Constance M. Schweitzer

Chief Executive Officer

Buffalo Prenatal-Perinatal Network

Williamsville

Role of Probation Dept., courts is misunderstood

The May 26 letter by a school psychologist, which attempts to put the blame for the Curtis Byers case on the Probation Department, is a sad misinterpretation of the situation. The writer fails to understand the role of probation to the courts.

There are youth who appear in courts in the criminal justice system and the juvenile justice system who are beyond the scope of probation supervision. In these situations, they need to be confined so that they will receive the treatment they need to be rehabilitated.

The writer believes that probation needs serious reform. It would appear that he needs to learn the role that probation plays in both the criminal justice system and the juvenile justice system.

Mark Mogavero

Retired Director, Erie County

Probation Department

Montessori students can transfer to Nardin

The students at SS. Columba-Brigid Montessori School have an excellent alternative for Catholic Montessori early education next fall: Nardin Montessori School. Thanks to the support and cooperation of several generous benefactors including M&T Bank, the Department of Catholic Education of the Buffalo Diocese and the board of trustees of Nardin Academy, every SS. Columba-Brigid student, regardless of his or her ability to pay tuition, can attend our school.

Nardin Montessori offers an excellent 3- to 5-year-old early education program. With very little financial aid available, this premiere education is not accessible to everyone. The benefactors of SS. Columba-Brigid Montessori School felt their students deserved this level of excellence and have worked with Nardin to offer this opportunity.

Our diocesan Catholic Education system has faced rough times the past few years. Many dedicated individuals have worked tirelessly to create solutions that are effective and affordable. Nardin Academy, although independent, is committed to partnering in alternatives for families that seek Catholic education. Our mission, established by the Daughters of the Heart of Mary 152 years ago, to "come as called" lives on in the spirit of this exciting partnership.

Marsha Joy Sullivan

President, Nardin Academy

Gay marriage law won't threaten religious liberties

In a letter to the editor on May 27, a writer asserted that gay marriage will "imperil religious freedom or the rights of institutions or individuals to relate respectfully." He cited instances where businesses and religious institutions have been "marginalized, sued and forced to participate in practices that violate their consciences."

The writer fails to understand real respectful relations, and the limits of religious liberties and convictions. We are not so far from a time in our country when it would have been considered "morally objectionable" for a couple of different races to marry, and in that time these "threats to morality" were legislated against and used by businesses and religious institutions alike to cover what is today recognized as flagrant discriminatory practices.

In plain language, denying homosexuals access to the services of a business or institution on the grounds that they are homosexuals is simply not a religious liberty. It is a practice as sordidly discriminatory as denying access to Jews for being Jews, or heterosexuals for being heterosexuals. Will same-sex legislation threaten religious liberties? No. So long as we enjoy our liberties at the expense of others, we are just confusing liberty with oppressing those who make us uncomfortable.

Eric Tower

Buffalo

Why must some people rain on Owens' parade?

Did Terrell Owens cure cancer? Well, we all know the answer to that one. But just why is there always someone available to rain on everybody else's parade?

Bob Dombrowski

Buffalo

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