

Student accolades

Amsterdam High School students are awarded at an annual awards ceremony.

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Rams rally

Amsterdam came from behind to defeat Albany on Wednesday, 10-7.

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Skull session

Indiana Jones is back on the big screen in 'Kingdom of the Crystal Skull.'

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The Recorder

Thursday, May 22, 2008

VOL. 127, No. 234, AMSTERDAM, N.Y. 12010 • THREE SECTIONS, 24 PAGES

Serving the Mohawk Valley since 1878

Beech-Nut breaks ground

Officials grateful for community support

By LINDA KELLETT
Recorder News Staff

TOWN OF FLORIDA — While he's not fluent in Switzerdeutsch, state Sen. Hugh Farley, R, C-Niskayuna, during the groundbreaking ceremony for the \$124 million, state-of-the-art baby food manufacturing facility and corporate headquarters at the Florida Business Park Wednesday afternoon, made an attempt at saying, "Thank you very much" and "Good luck" to Hero/Beech-Nut company officials on hand.

It was an effort that President and Chief Executive Officer Christoph Rudolf and Edouard Feller, vice-president of business development for Hero/Beech-Nut — a subsidiary of Hero Group of Lensburg, Switzerland — acknowledged with smiles.

The 100 or so others in attendance, including Hero/Beech-Nut employees, dignitaries such as state Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, former state Assemblyman Paul Tonko, local officials and a host of others, responded to the gesture with laughter and applause as Farley admitted his daughter's mastery of the language was superior to his.

Although the moisture-laden skies rained on the white party tent erected for the occasion, the weather didn't dampen the spirits of those in attendance.

Empire State Development official Jane Thelen, who spoke on behalf of Upstate Chairman Daniel C. Gundersen, said, "It is a tremendous afternoon. Regardless of the rain, the sun is shining on us here today."

Additionally, she said agency officials were pleased to play such a vital role in the growth and expansion in the Hero/Beech-Nut company in the Mohawk Valley.

Hero/Beech-Nut spokesman Earl Wells, who served as master of ceremonies, thanked those who helped make the project possible and introduced the eight featured guests on the dais: Silver, Farley, Tonko, Rudolf, Thelen, Vito "Butch" Greco, chairman of the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors, Amsterdam Mayor Ann Thane and Florida Town Supervisor William Strevy.

Gov. David Paterson, who had been invited, was unable to attend the groundbreaking because of his recent hospitalization. "We look forward to



Patricia Older / Recorder staff

ABOVE: Left to right, Amsterdam Mayor Ann Thane; Vito "Butch" Greco, chairman of the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors; Empire State Development official Jane Thelen; former state Assemblyman Paul Tonko; Hero/Beech-Nut President and CEO Christoph Rudolf; Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver; and state Sen. Hugh Farley toss dirt during Wednesday's groundbreaking ceremony for the new Hero/Beech-Nut plant in the town of Florida. BELOW: Hero/Beech-Nut employees, including two employees of the month, Don Krieger, center, and Tony Lapi, right, were in attendance for the ceremony.

"We are grateful for our 100-year relationship and we look forward to maintaining this important partnership for years to come as we will remain a friendly neighbor in the county."

— Christoph Rudolf,
Hero/Beech-Nut president
and chief executive officer



having him here at the grand opening in 18 months or so," Wells said.

He recapped developments that made Wednesday's groundbreaking possible, saying, "On May 15, the town of Florida Planning Board officially approved the site plan ... and we are truly grateful for those people who came out and showed support at that meeting in particular. Of note was the support of dozens of members from organized labor, and we look forward to working with

organized labor throughout the construction period. We're very confident this local project can be done through the hard work of local labor."

Rudolf acknowledged the company's "friends" in Fort Plain and Canajoharie, the birthplace of the century-old company, saying, "We are grateful for our 100-year relationship and we look forward to maintaining this important partnership for years to come as we will remain a friendly neighbor in the county. We pledge to

partner with you to find and develop the future utilization of our current production facility, as a distribution center, as a processing plant or any other ideas that may materialize as we start to approach new potential partners and owners in the months to come."

He noted Hero/Beech-Nut is investing \$124 million in its new, 550,000 square-foot facility, which will maintain 356 jobs and create 135 new ones.

Rudolf also talked about the company. **Please see GROUND, Page 4A**

Chiara speaks on reval

By BILL SHEEHAN
Recorder News Staff

After a long wait for the meeting, Amsterdam's Common Council held a brief, and largely one-way meeting with Assessor Michael Chiara Tuesday night as they looked for answers as to the citywide revaluation that was begun two years ago.

"There are a lot of things involved and it's very difficult to do everything perfect," said Chiara in opening his remarks.

Chiara, who was accompanied to the meeting by attorney Paul Wollman, said that while he was allowed to hire help for the project, state help was lacking.

"A lot of calculations were done, hundreds of visual inspections and decisions were made," said Chiara, adding that a low number of home sales in the city made the job even tougher.

"It's a matter of finding out what I could," he said.

Chiara said that with about 2000 properties in the city facing increased assessments, and increased taxes, he sought to make adjustments.

"It impacted certain streets and looked to me like we would have had a disaster. I guess it became a matter of judgment and, of course, people have the right to appeal," he said.

Chiara said he has had a declining number of appeals from 71 in 2005 to 39 in 2008 and defended his adjustments to a relatively quiet council.

"I did it because I felt it was the right thing to do at the time," said Chiara, who suggested the state legislature ought to consider capping assessed values.

"Then you wouldn't have a panic," he said.

After questions on procedure, Chiara wrapped his comments with a defense.

"I didn't deliberately hoodwink anyone. It's a very difficult thing to do what we do with the number of people **Please see CHIARA, Page 4A**

Meeting to focus on 'quiet zone'

Interested in the creation of a "quiet zone" in order to reduce the noise level of trains passing through Amsterdam? A public informational meeting will be held at City Hall tonight, beginning at 6 p.m., to address the possibility of silencing the horns of trains through the city.

According to Amsterdam Mayor Ann Thane, Tom Lichtenthal, senior project engineer of Bergman Associates, will talk about the implementation of a possible project that would entail new safety measures and improve-

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INSIDE



Shows likely. Highs in the 50s.

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Three injured in two-car wreck

By LINDA KELLETT
Recorder News Staff

TOWN OF AMSTERDAM — Three people sustained what were believed to be minor injuries in a two-vehicle accident at the intersection of Wallins Corners and Midline roads here late Wednesday afternoon.

According to Montgomery County Sheriff's Deputy Crosier, the driver of a gold-colored, southbound Buick sedan allegedly ran a stop sign and struck a red Toyota Corolla proceeding east across the intersection at around 4:30 p.m. The Buick then crossed the lawn of a nearby residence, sideswiped shrubbery in front of the house, causing minor damage, and struck a utility pole a short distance down Hagan Avenue.

Crosier said while the utility pole didn't break, it was cracked and needed to be replaced. There was no disruption of **Please see WRECK, Page 4A**



Dave Wojeski / For The Recorder

An emergency medical technician loads gear into an ambulance as a victim of a motor vehicle accident is transported from the scene at the intersection of Midline Road and Wallins Corners Road in the town of Amsterdam Wednesday afternoon.

OBITUARIES

Blair A. Rudes, Ph.D
March 16, 2008

Blair A. Rudes, 56, died suddenly on March 16, 2008 in Charlotte, NC.

Dr. Rudes was born in Gloversville, NY on May 18, 1951 and spent his youth in Piseco, NY. After completing his early education at Piseco Elementary School and Wells Central High School, he attended the State University of New York at Buffalo where he completed his undergraduate and graduate work. He was awarded his Doctorate Degree in Linguistics in 1976.

At the time of his death, Dr. Rudes was an Associate Professor of English at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. He had been on the faculty of the University since 1999.

Dr. Rudes was an internationally known linguist, speaking many languages, but with a particular expertise in Native American languages. He published and edited many books and scholarly articles in his area of expertise. In 1999 his Tuscarora-English Dictionary was published by the University of Toronto Press and at the time of his death he was completing a three volume work titled "The Catawba Language" for the University of South Carolina press.

Most recent accomplishments of note were work he had done as a dialect consultant and coach for two Hollywood movie productions. In 2004, he was hired by Dreamworks to work with the cast of the movie "The New World". This assignment required him to reconstruct the long extinct Virginia Algonquian language and then coach the cast in its syntax and pronunciation. His work contributed significantly to the historical accuracy of the film and gained notoriety when it was featured in the "New York Times" Science Section and was the subject of a personal interview with National Public Radio. Following his work on "The New World" he was again recruited by Dreamworks to assist with the 2008 film "The Ruins" where he served as the Mayan Dialogue Coach.

In recent years, he was also the recipient of several important honors. In 2006, he was recognized by the Tuscarora Indian Nation for his contributions to preserving their language. In 2007, the South Carolina General Assembly passed a resolution recognizing the work he had done for the South Carolina Commission for Minority Affairs. Most recently, on April 5, 2008, he was awarded the University at Buffalo's Distinguished Alumni Award.

Dr. Rudes is survived by his brother and sister-in-law, Bryan and Sarah Rudes of Piseco, NY; three nieces, Heather Rudes, Brittney Culican, and Jennifer Cox and his nephews Bryan Patrick Rudes as well as his aunts, uncle and many cousins. Also surviving are his cherished dogs Heidi and Ben.

He was predeceased by his beloved companion Philip Hunt.

A memorial service will be held at 11:00 a.m. on May 30, 2008 at the Higgins Bay Cemetery in Piseco, NY.

In lieu of flowers contributions may be made to the UNC Charlotte Foundation, "In Memory of Dr. Blair Rudes", 9201 University City Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28223-0001, where a scholarship is being established in his name.

Lowell William Franklin
May 21, 2008

Lowell William Franklin, Ret. Sen. Master Sgt. USAF, 78, of Mohawk Drive, Tribes Hill, New York, passed away Wednesday morning at his home.

Born in Fort Worth, Texas, on Feb. 15, 1930, he was the son of the late William Ivan and Martha Thoma Franklin. He retired as a Senior Master Sergeant in 1972 after a career that spanned twenty four years with the US Air Force. He served tours of duty in Scotland, Germany, Vietnam and Hawaii as well as other state side assignments.

Following his retirement, Lowell worked professionally at Sir William Johnson Council as a District Executive, Boy Scouts of America. He also worked at the Noteworthy Company in Amsterdam and the Baronet Litho in Johnstown. He retired from those positions in 1992 due to emphysema brought on by excessive smoking.

Lowell was very active in Veteran's affairs, he was a member of the James T. Bergen Post 39, serving as it's commander, and later the Montgomery County commander. He was a member of the AmVet Post 21 where he served as 1st vice commander. Lowell transferred from Post 39 to Wyszomirski Post 701 as a supporting member. He was a member of the First Baptist Church of Amsterdam. In his later years, Lowell became an active member of the Horace J. Inman Seniors, serving on various committees.

On December 19, 1951, he was united in marriage to Virginia A. Walker in Waco, Texas.

In addition to his beloved wife, he leaves his children; Lydia Trunko and Laura J. Franklin both of Tribes Hill and Lowell W. (Pati) Franklin Jr. of Jacksonville, Fla.; son in law Kevin Trunko of Delmar, NY; his sister; Barbara Gutenberg, of Pasadena, Ca.; brother; Donald E. (Delma) Franklin of Seattle, Wash.; three grandchildren; William (Suzanne) Davis of Albany, NY, Schonna (Charles) Dungan of Virginia, and Windy (Tony) Isais of Florida; ten great grandchildren; Cameron, Taylor and Rylee Davis, Shealynn, Tony and Bryce Isais, Caila, Thomas, Joshua and Andrew Dungan; nieces and nephews.

Services will take place Saturday at 11:00 am at the First Baptist Church, 479 Guy Park Avenue, Amsterdam. Hospice Chaplin Jill Farnham officiating.

Relatives and friends are invited and may call on Friday from 4-7 pm at the Betz, Rossi & Bellinger Family Funeral Home, 171 Guy Park Avenue, Amsterdam.

Interment will take place in Canandaigua, at the Woodlawn Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the Community Hospice of Amsterdam, in care of the funeral home office. Please visit the family's online guest book at www.brbsfuneral.com.



BETZ, ROSSI & BELLINGER
FAMILY FUNERAL HOME
171 Guy Park Avenue, Amsterdam, NY 12010
518-843-1920 • www.brbsfuneral.com

Ground from page 1A

ny's growth in the domestic and foreign markets, the design of the building and the environmental standards that will be met in the new facility.

He addressed the meaning of the company's investment in Upstate New York, saying, "It all points to an established and emerging industry leader that is poised to become the most innovative baby food producer in the United States and North America and in the world."

Rudolf continued, "Hero/Beech-Nut has a legacy of innovation and excellence. With our new infant food manufacturing facility, we will continue to be a great employer for another 100 years here in Montgomery County and in New York state."

Silver commented on progress that's been made since the Flood of 2006. He said, "I remember touring this county with [Tonko] to inspect the damage following the floods of June 2006. At Paul's urging, the Assembly provided \$3.85 million to help Beech-Nut repair the flood damage and upgrade its operation. It was clear back then that if we wanted Beech-Nut viable and competitive in the world market, we needed to do more."

He also talked about the more than \$100 million economic package of funding and incentives to benefit the company.

Silver said the "entire economic food chain of this region will be strengthened. Our farms, our suppliers and processors, our wholesalers and retailers, local restaurants, all of the small businesses that serve the working families of Montgomery County will benefit" as a result of this project. He pledged to work with Paterson, Farley and others to bring more jobs into the Mohawk Valley and Upstate New York.

Greco commented on the many hurdles, the hard work, the compromises and commitment it took by all parties to reach this point. He said, "Everyone's goal was to retain jobs and keep economic development in Montgomery County and New York state full and thriving." Strevy said he looks forward to working with Hero/Beech-Nut to reach everyone's common goal, that is, the successful completion of the project. Thane said the venture "will provide jobs, revenue and improved infrastructure that are so important to building a strong 21st century economy. This new facility will inspire additional residential, retail and industrial growth and will greatly benefit all of our residents."

While not taking an active role in the ceremony, a number of others in attendance were asked to comment on the significance of the event.

Town of Root resident Tony Lapi, one of the Beech-Nut Employees of the Month who was on hand for the ceremony, said he felt "wonderful" about the reason for the celebration. "We need the jobs," he said.

A fellow coworker, who wished to remain anonymous, said, "If what they tell us is true about keeping our jobs and stuff, I feel okay."

Frederick Miller, executive director of the MVHCC, said, "I think the [commission] supported the move since Day 1, since we were given access to [information]. The challenge is to take care of

Canajoharie and Fort Plain while we're moving on."

He also spoke about the potentially positive impact on the area ag industry, and added, "We have to take a strong and positive attitude toward this thing and not look back."

Canajoharie Mayor Leigh Fuller said, "We're very happy that Beech-Nut is going to end up in the town of Florida and the state of New York. We're going to miss Beech-Nut. We've been partners for 100 years, but life will go on."

He spoke to efforts that are being made by the village to address outstanding issues related to the company's departure, including, for example, the hiring of an engineering firm to assess the impact on the wastewater treatment facility and research by grant writer David Carlson, of Carlson Associates in Cooperstown, to obtain grant funding.

While he said nothing has been guaranteed to the village "by anybody," — including the state — "a lot of people are working in many directions," he said. "I feel Canajoharie will be fine."

What's next for Hero/Beech-Nut?

James "Jim" Ivey, program manager for the Facility Group, noted that orange fencing has been set up around the acreage affected by the outstanding Army Corps wetland permit, creating a buffer so it will remain undisturbed.

Until the permit is issued, preparatory work for erosion control will take place.

John Jablonski, provost and vice president for academic affairs at Fulton-Montgomery Community College, said that while nothing is official yet, college officials are interested in supporting Hero/Beech-Nut and are having conversations with company officials about ways to meet their needs for employee training and the like.

He said, "If Beech-Nut has specific needs, we can customize training programs."

Deborah Auspemyer, president of the county chamber, said the groundbreaking was "a wonderful opportunity for Beech-Nut officials to meet with our community leaders and to celebrate a lot of hard work to get to this point."

Among those acknowledged by Hero/Beech-Nut officials for their help and support included the state Department of

Environmental Conservation, the New York State Energy Research Development Authority, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Montgomery County Industrial Development Agency and its director, Kenneth Rose, Empire State Development, the governor, Silver, Tonko, Farley, Assemblyman George Amedore, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Fulton and Montgomery Counties, the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce, the Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor Commission, the town of Florida, the Florida Planning Board, the Arkell Hall Foundation, National Grid, the Target Distribution Center, Wegman's, Price Chopper, Hero/Beech-Nut employees, and a host of others.

Contact Linda Kellett at linda.kellett@recordernews.com.

Wreck from page 1A

electrical service to the area as a result of the accident.

The driver of the Corolla and the driver and passenger

SEND 'EM IN

All submissions for publication should be legible and include the name and daytime telephone number of someone we can contact if there are any questions. Please be sure all names are spelled correctly.

of the Buick, none of whom were identified, were transported to St. Mary's Hospital by personnel from the Greater Amsterdam Volunteer Ambulance Corps.

Both vehicles sustained front-end damage and were towed from the scene.

In addition to GAVAC and the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office, members of the Hagaman Volunteer Fire Department and National Grid responded to the accident.

The driver of the Buick was to be ticketed for failure to stop at a stop sign.

Quiet from page 1A

ments to current, at-grade crossings in the city.

Bergman Associates is the engineering group that worked with Rockland County to establish their quiet zones. Lichtenthal will address funding, mechanics, liability issues and benefits during the meeting.

In order to establish a quiet zone, supplemental safety measures or alternative safety measures are required by the Federal Railroad Administration Train Horn Rule to compensate for the absence of a whistle or horn warning at the crossing. Treatments vary in complexity by crossing and may include four-quadrant gates, median barriers and other measures that meet FRA requirements.

All members of the public are welcome to attend. Residents will have an opportunity to learn about the process required to design and implement a railroad quiet zone.

— Staff report

Chiara from page 1A

who want your attention every day," he said.

Fourth Ward Alderman William Wills says he was "somewhat disappointed" by Chiara's explanation of his work.

"We really didn't get any answers," said Wills, who hopes to sit down with Chiara and Mayor Ann Thane at some point to get better answers to his questions.

Wills called the brief session, between committee meetings and the regular council meeting "unfair to him and unfair to us."

"We should have done it on an off day," he said.

"He should have just shared the rolls with us and it should be done in public just so the people know what's happening. If he's making adjustments then they should go across the board, not in a piecemeal manner. He seems to want to do it in secret," said Wills.

In Memoriam

Mary Ratajczak

In loving memory of our mother and grandmother who passed away 13 years ago
May 22, 1995.

If roses grown in heaven Lord,

please pick a bunch for us.

Place them in our mother's arms

and tell her they're from us.

Tell her we love her and miss her

each and every day, but there is an ache within our hearts

that will never go away.

Love, Children and Grandchildren

China from page 2A

quake that has left an estimated 50,000 dead and 5 million homeless across Sichuan province, the immense challenge means help is not arriving fast enough.

Mindful of the problem and the growing discontent, Premier Wen Jiabao announced a \$10 billion reconstruction fund and ordered all agencies to cut spending by 5 percent to free up already budgeted money, state media reported. Wen also called a

halt to new state building projects.

In the sprawling quake zone, more schools reopened in the fairly orderly and teeming tented refugee camps in some of the larger towns and cities. The government evacuated more of the injured from strapped hospitals on specially outfitted trains staffed by doctors, with 242 patients leaving the city of Jiangyou for the southwestern provincial capital of Kunming.

Only one rescue was reported — that of 35-year-old Cui Changhui trapped for 216 hours in a water diversion tunnel at a hydropower plant construction site. In a further sign of dwindling hopes, rescue work had all but ceased in the obliterated town of Beichuan and workers poured disinfectant over the site, perhaps in preparation, one rescue worker said, for demolition. For much of the past two days, authorities have kept the media away from Beichuan.

The confirmed death toll from the earthquake rose to 41,353 and another 32,666 remained missing, said a spokesman for the Cabinet.

In the last day of a three-day national mourning period, the communist government was also reverting to well-tested methods to impose its authority.

A message of unity in the face of adversity was prominent in state media and on the streets of the hard-hit city of Shifang. Huge billboards stood in the shopping district in the center of the city, showing pictures of the quake's damage, including collapsed buildings and injured people. A huge slogan read: "Everyone come together with one heart."

In nearby Xinhua, a community of farmhouses and low-rise apartment blocks, a dozen soldiers milled around the protesting crowd of farmers, while others guarded the government office.

State-run media, which conducted unusually probing reporting in the first days after the May 12 quake, shifted to a more positive tone. Deng Yaping, four-time Olympic gold medalist in table tennis and a national hero, was shown on state TV talking to children in the city of Mianyang, where many refugees had been taken from

nearby mountains.

"This is the traditional way of doing things for the Communist Party's propaganda department. They always try to use the information to legitimize the government, and don't try to reflect, summarize experiences or prevent disasters from happening again," said Li Datong, the ousted editor of a once-thoughtful weekly supplement to the China Youth Daily newspaper.

With the torch relay for the Beijing Olympics set to resume today after its mourning-period hiatus, the government appeared set on getting the country back on track for the Aug. 8-24 games. No mention was made whether the government's spending cuts would affect the Olympics, although most construction is already finished.

A need for a tighter grip and a stronger government response is especially urgent in the smaller, rural communities of quake-shattered Sichuan. Distrust of local officials seen as corrupt and indifferent is already high in such areas across China, causing protests to soar in the past decade.

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