

BIG RIG CREATES BIG BUZZ IN GOWANDA

By MARY PANKOW

There were people with cameras everywhere along West Main Street in Gowanda Wednesday morning to take photos of a tractor-trailer transport rig that occupied almost the entire north side of the street in the Business District. The immensity of the rig wasn't the only attraction, the story that accompanied it held the crowd's interest as well.

During the early evening of the night before, the 185-foot, 74-wheeled monster truck was headed up Perrysburg Hill when the differential on the tractor gave out. The driver from a Monaco, PA firm, PGT Trucking, then had to back the rig down the hill, park and wait for help. Amazingly, and in the dark of the night, this was accomplished without incident.

As the village began to stir early Wednesday morning and as traffic made its way along West Main Street, the sight that greeted everyone was the 400,000 pound, nearly 200-foot rig, with its load — a large machine that makes parts for brakes. The piece of machinery had been picked up in Tonawanda and was on its way to Cleveland.

The trailer to haul such heavy loads, owned by W.L. Byers Trucking Inc. of Wampum, PA, has five sets of triple axles and articulates when various pins are removed. A platform in the rear of the trailer allows an operator to steer the back, a plus when negotiating a curve or corner.

While waiting for help, a driver from PGT explained that the differential on the tractor had been repaired only a month earlier, so the breakdown was totally unexpected. By mid-morning, another heavy-duty tractor arrived, the tractor needing repairs was driven away and the replacement was backed up to the trailer and secured. The State Police inspected the rig, making sure all permits were in order, and before noon, the truck was on its way ... up Perrysburg Hill and toward Route 20 without a problem.

Everyone watching all of this take place remarked how it's been "quite a while since Gowanda's seen this much excitement!"



DEFINITELY AN OVERSIZED LOAD — A tractor-trailer camped out on West Main Street in Gowanda overnight last Tuesday after the tractor broke down trying to negotiate Perrysburg Hill. A replacement tractor, shown here, was brought in to take the load the rest of the way — a journey from Tonawanda to Cleveland. (Photo by Mary Pankow)

Replacement of stolen signs top discussions in Gowanda

By MARY PANKOW

The Village of Gowanda Board of Trustees opened their March 13 meeting with a moment of silence for Lester Arnold, who had been a member of the fire department.

Anna Sage then approached the board to discuss replacing the stolen Sesquicentennial signs.

Sage began by saying she was in the process of obtaining sign designs and quotes. One business from Springville had submitted a design that is 4 feet in height and 8 feet in length. Another business from Silver Creek will also submit their design.

After a period of discussion, it was agreed that a sign committee will be established, including Sage, which will work on acquiring designs and quotes, deciding on the best locations for the signs, and to speak with Code Enforcement Officer Paul Bowers on restrictions/requirements under the village's sign ordinance.

Sage expressed her concern over the theft of the original signs and hopes someone will come forward with information regarding the theft.

Erie County Legislator John Mills was also in attendance at the meeting and made inquiries about any county roads that need work.

Public Works Superintendent Mike Hutchinson mentioned that Aldrich Street, which needs repairs, will be getting some attention when a drainage project gets under way.

Legislator Mills announced that he is working with National Fuel to obtain grant money for the new emergency services building proposed by Gowanda Fire Department.

Lastly, Mills stated that he was elected minority leader of the Legislature and will receive a \$5,000 stipend for that position. He will be using that stipend to put on hot dog roasts to benefit libraries in his district. (Mills has a background in food service and will be manning the grill!) The time will be from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., but dates have not yet been determined.

Mills' final comment of the evening was, "I'm fighting to keep taxes low."

In other matters, the board:

- Was presented with the event application for the Hollywood Happening by Aaron Markham, who, along with a number of others, are organizing the June event formerly known as the Harley Happening at the Hollywood.

- Approved the recommendation of Assessor George Stark to leave the assessments unchanged for 17 and 19 Jamestown Street.

- Learned that the American Legion has presented the village with a new POW-MIA flag that will be flown on the Municipal Building.

- Approved the business permit for the China King restaurant on the corner of South Water and West Main streets.

- Heard Police Chief Joe Alessi's report that indicated for February, his department logged 147 reportable calls, made 22 arrests, issued 34 traffic tickets, and responded to six violent domestics and two motor vehicle accidents.

In addition, the Gowanda Police Department has been in contact with the State Police and Gowanda Schools Superintendent Charles Rinaldi regarding the taxation conflict and

Continued on Page 21

Change of venue for Town of Persia voting

By HEATHER KELLER

The regular meeting of the Town of Persia Board on March 8 began with a discussion regarding the voting place change. Voting will now take place at Academy Place. The building as inspected and approved by the Board of Elections and Supervisor Mel LeBar explained that Academy Place is more voter-friendly than the town hall. The building has two handicap accessible entrances.

LeBar's main concern with the new voting place is the response from the voters. He is hopeful that residents will respond in a positive manner.

The board received calls from Healthy Community Alliance on the Academy Place Project regarding the submission of a grant application.

Councilman Ken Strohmeier responded to this concern saying, "We can adapt to the change. The Board of Elections would have us make costly accommodations if voting were to remain in the town hall."

The board received the tax revenue report from Town Clerk Kristen Schaus. The general fund deposit totaled \$159,815. The highway fund deposit totaled \$68,538. Also deposited into the highway fund was \$15,846.17, which comes out of the fourth-quarter sales tax or the county.

Highway Superintendent Dan Ackley was unable to attend the meeting. He submitted the highway report to the board, which was read by Supervisor LeBar. The board approved the highway bills for last month, which totaled \$3,050.17.

Councilman Strohmeier reported that he had

looked into the town hall railing situation. He explained that nothing could really be done until the weather improves.

Councilwoman Paula Schueler reported that she had attended a yearly meeting for Gowanda Ambulance Service. She learned about the number of calls and people served during the past year. She also heard many concerns about the possible closing of area hospitals, as that would directly affect ambulance services. Those attending the meeting explained the difficulty in emergency care without a local emergency healthcare facility. This situation may lead to loss of life. Because the trip to Buffalo will take much longer, there is also a great concern that they will be unable to return quickly enough to take another call.

Councilwoman Schueler urges the board and area residents to write letters to congressmen and to the governor to express these serious concerns.

Councilwoman Schueler also reviewed the court records and explained that they are all in order and commended court officials on a job well done. Schueler also helped Town Clerk Schaus with clerk records and stated that she would need assistance. Schaus requested permission to have R.A. Mercer & Co. aid in reviewing the town books, as the process is complicated. The board approved and granted permission.

Councilwoman Gloria Tomaszewski relayed information from the last Tri-County meeting regarding the closing of area hospitals. She said that the committee had begun a lawsuit, and recommended that residents continue to

Continued on Page 21