

## Supervisors get homework

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banned in the United States 200 years ago.”

McDonald added, “Properties that are behind in their taxes often need repair. 4(d)(6) forces some of these dilapidated properties to be lost to the county through tax foreclosure. Many of these properties the county can't give away and the liability, danger, rodent infestations, drug use and eye sore forces the county to tear these buildings down at considerable expense.”

At least some on the board were sympathetic to the plea, although no one was willing to outright rescind the law. They did feel, however, the law could be “tweaked” to keep the intent [it was offered when Cayuga Indian Nation properties first started hitting the foreclosure list as a way to stall improvements] but offer some mitigating alternatives. Supervisor Greg Lazzaro of Seneca Falls phrased it as “thinking outside the box.”

Hayssen – who also saw merit in tweaking the law – referred the matter to committee for “meaningful discussion.” He also asked Clerk Margaret Li to check with other counties in the state on whether they have similar laws and/or how they handle permits.

**INDIAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**  
Chair Robert Shipley of Waterloo reported on the federal Second Circuit Court's decision July 31 to reject the county's claims for a remedy to foreclose native American properties in tax arrears. The courts have ruled counties have the right to foreclose, but do not have a mecha-

nism to do it.

“It appears, once again, a lower court bypassed common sense,” Shipley said.

He said the decision not only failed to enforce the county's right to foreclose on tax delinquent Cayuga Indian Nation owned properties, but has “muddied the waters regarding tribal sovereign immunity from suit as it applies to land purchases by Indian tribes outside the boundaries of an Indian reservation.”

Shipley added, “This decision also exasperates the U.S. Supreme Court's decision that vacated the Second Circuit Court's opinion regarding the similar Madison County foreclosure action which continues to leave the option open to Indian tribes to simply waive their sovereign immunity without fear to be held accountable or any meaningful consequences to their action.”

**THE SECOND CIRCUIT** Court also chose to decline any action which would allow exceptions and deferred the matter to the plenary power of Congress to define and abrogate tribal sovereign immunity from suit.

Shipley outlines a two-fold option. First, the county has 90 days to seek state authorization and have the county's state subsidized attorneys, Harris Beach, petition the Supreme Court to hear the issue. The second is to ask Congress to legislate a means to resolve tribal sovereign immunity and/or force a resolution which would bind Indian tribes to pay for services received that are included in property and school taxes.

“To that end,” Shipley said,

“Phil Spellane will be at our August committee meeting (Aug. 26) to answer questions and give his opinions regarding the Second Circuit decision ... It is anticipated to move into executive session to review our options ... on behalf of the hard-working taxpayers of Seneca County.

**SUPERVISOR GARY WESTFALL** of Waterloo, chair of the government operations committee advised the board there will be a committee meeting Tuesday (Aug. 19) at 10:30 a.m. to finalize a new committee meeting structure. He said he anticipates having a recommendation for the full board at the September meeting and starting the new format – if approved – in September.

Most resolutions passed unanimously with little debate. One issue of note, however, was an agreement drawn up with the Village of Waterloo for temporary assistance in the county's water and sewer districts. Under the agreement, the village will assist at \$30 per man hour or any fraction thereof, portal to portal from the Waterloo Department of Public Works Building weekdays excluding holidays from 7 a.m.-3 p.m.. All other times, including weekends and holidays, the rate is \$40 with a two hour minimum. Any equipment less operator will be billed \$50 per hour. All supplies will be billed at actual cost.

The agreement, ratified by the board Tuesday, was necessitated by the arrest of two county maintenance workers, Gordon Carroll and Kenneth Kline. Both were placed on paid administrative leave following their arrest



The Seneca County Division of Human Services would like to recognize Seneca Meadows for their donation to the Seneca County Fatherhood Initiative in order to provide meals at the meetings. The Seneca County Fatherhood Initiative supports and assists men in continued involvement in their children's lives. Pictured above is Mark Benjamin of Seneca Meadows presenting Charles Schillaci, Commissioner of Human Services with a check toward this initiative.

## Hipshot gets IDA help

The Seneca County Industrial Development Agency (IDA) approved a \$150,000 eight-year, 2.45% loan to Hipshot Products, Interlaken, last Thursday (Aug. 7).

The revolving loan will assist the company in expanding and renovating space at its facility for more efficient production. The project is pegged at \$350,000 with owner David Borisoff using bank borrowing and his own money for the balance

Hipshot Products was established in 1994 and designs and makes frets, bridges, string benders, tuners and tremolos for musical instruments, primarily guitars. It is a worldwide distributor and has 25 employees.

The IDA also talked with Neal Sherman, owner of The Advantage Group, which refurbished restaurant equipment. It is housed in a warehouse on the former Seneca Army Depot.

Sherman and Flaum Development formed Seneca Depot, LLC in 1999. The IDA holds the deed, and has been working with the U.S. Army to transfer the deed to Seneca Depot. IDA Executive Director Robert Aronson told Sherman the

paperwork is almost complete.

## Casino foes keep fighting

Members of Casino Free Tyre have sent a second batch of boxes to the State Gaming Facility Location Board to show they are still willing to fight the proposed \$425 million Lago Resort and Casino Project.

The boxes contain copies of the ongoing lawsuits against the project plus support materials and letters of opposition from local businesses, churches, organizations and individuals.

Group leader James Dawley said he hopes they are getting their message across to the board.

## New hires

New hires in Seneca County include Siobhan Sullivan, Mental Health alcoholism counselor; Tommy Morro, Mental Health peer program support worker; Elizabeth Bentley, Social Services caseworker; and Karley Schultheis, Social Services caseworker

## STEPS makes a presence

STEPS (Seneca Towns Engaging People for Solutions) will have a presence at some upcoming events it has supported.

The Covert Community Trail is Aug. 23. Local businesses will host open houses, there is a community-wide yard sale and a picnic on the school lawn, all complete with music and games. Plan on spending a few hours, or even

the whole day! You can go to [www.covert-trail.com](http://www.covert-trail.com) for more details.

STEPS is also supporting the Between the Lakes Community Service Players ongoing Theatre Camp, *Aspects of the Stage*. The students will showcase their skills at a performance open to the public Friday (Aug. 15) at 7:30 p.m. at the South Seneca Middle/High

School, Ovid.

The next Community Conversation will be next Wednesday (Aug. 20), 6-7:30 p.m. at the Ovid Library. At last month's conversation in Covert, there were 11 new faces. A light dinner will be followed by discussions about our neighborhood. All residents from Covert, Lodi, Ovid and Romulus are invited.

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**Between the Lakes**

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### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Readers are encouraged to express their views. Letters should be short and to the point, preferably no longer than 250 words. Preference will be given to letters that pertain to local issues. Only signed letters will be considered and no form or fund-raising letters will be published.

### CALENDAR ITEMS

All items for Bits 'n Pieces must be received at the *Reveille/Between the Lakes* office no later than two weeks prior to the event. Bits 'n Pieces is designed to bring activities of interest to the attention of area residents. Items should be submitted in writing or by e-mail and must include the sender's name and complete phone number. It should include what the event is, where and the time(s) it will be held, costs (if any), registration information (if applicable) and a contact person and daytime phone number or address for more information.

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