


**Culture
Corner**

A compilation of concerts, plays, exhibits, special events and activities for the children for the weekend and the coming week appears on Page 13.

Friday

August 23, 1985

Page 11

Brush manufacturer inches nearer Dresden site

By MAURICE DUMAS

DRESDEN — Peter Biocca won some concessions from the village board last night, but he didn't get a commercial zone as requested.

Now he must decide whether to go ahead with the purchase of the former Dresden Elementary School building or move his abrasive brush business elsewhere.

Biocca's \$100,000 purchase offer to the Penn Yan school district is contingent on the creation of commercial and light industrial zones for the 15-acre Dresden property.

What he got, from both the

village and the Town of Torrey, was a light industrial zone with some commercial uses.

At the start of last night's meeting, Mayor Timothy Chambers made it clear that he wants Biocca's firm, which employs nine people, to move from Rochester to Dresden.

"There is no noise, there is no fumes, there is no anything," Chambers said. "It is an ideal business to be in that school."

Biocca explained that his firm can't use the entire 25,000 square feet of space available. He re-

quested the commercial zone to give him flexibility in renting the excess space.

"Would you rather leave it vacant with boards on the windows?" Biocca asked.

Chambers said the village preferred that the excess space and land be used to attract other industries rather than small shops. The object is to create high-paying jobs, rather than ones paying minimum wage, he said.

The village eliminated a requirement that the planning board

review and approve any alterations or additions to buildings in the light industrial zone.

Biocca's Penn Yan lawyer, Donald Schneider, argued the clause was unworkable, adding that only the standard building permit procedure should apply.

"We don't want to go through the procedure of applying to boards every time an alteration is required," said Schneider. "I can see endless debates on something that should be cut-and-dry."

The hearing attracted businessman Donald Stork of Penn

Yan, who urged the board to accommodate Biocca.

"We need jobs," said Stork. "I think we should welcome him to Yates County and let him get to work with his business. I think it's important to the community."

Biocca thanked the board for its consideration.

"If we don't become neighbors, I want to wish the best to you," he said.

After Biocca, Schneider and Stork left the meeting, the three-member board unanimously adopted the light industrial zone

proposal. Permitted uses include a retail outlet for goods produced on site, warehousing, research and development activities, as well as offices.

Realtor Richard Curbeau, who is handling the sale, said he would pick up a copy of the law creating the zone, and try to convince Biocca to buy the school.

"I sincerely hope this will meet Mr. Biocca's approval and he'll move in tomorrow," said Chambers. "I hope he expands. I hope he fills that school right up."

DeGelleke retires

Court clerk and former judge 'disappearing breed'

By LOUISE HOFFMAN

LYONS — Instead of a Florida retreat, a boat in the marshes of Sodus Bay will suit him just fine, says Ralph DeGelleke, who retired Wednesday as chief clerk of Wayne County Court.

DeGelleke, an Alton resident, plans to spend much of his time duck hunting with his dog, Sheesa, and building decoys, now that he won't be sitting in court anymore, something he's done, in one manner or another, for the last 20 years.

His booming, friendly voice has resounded through the hallways of the Wayne County Courthouse since 1972, and DeGelleke served as a Sodus town justice for seven years before that. Judges and attorneys praise both his sense of humor and sense of fairness.

"To be a truly effective clerk, an individual must somehow combine two almost mutually exclusive talents: an ability to keep cases moving and an ability to maintain a friendly relationship with attorneys," said Wayne County Court Judge Harold Stiles. "Ralph is one of the few persons I know who has consistently managed to accomplish both."

"I still call Ralph judge and I'll always call him judge," said District Attorney Stephen Sirkin, who remembers practicing law as an assistant district attorney in 1969 in DeGelleke's home, where Sodus town court was held.

"He's one of a disappearing breed who understands informal kitchen table justice," said Public Defender Ronald Valentine, who like Sirkin, enjoyed arguing cases before DeGelleke. "I have never

know him to be anything but a gentleman.

"He was one of the most consistent justices I've known; he was more concerned with a just result than a literal interpretation of the law."

DeGelleke, 62, said that he never really intended to become a justice, or for that matter, a court clerk. Born and raised in Alton, he ran a body shop there for 25 years and was a town councilman when he was asked in 1965 if he would like to take the seat of a justice who had died.

"I was civic minded, so I decided to do it," he said. "But when I first started, I didn't know an indictment from a traffic ticket."

DeGelleke received two weeks of training but said he really learned the law from watching and talking with the other town justice, Elmer Holland.

Over the seven years, he married more than 30 couples — many of them in his kitchen — and arraigned countless people on a variety of charges. The case that sticks out most in his mind is an unusual driving while intoxicated case.

"The state police picked up this guy for DWI at 6 p.m. and brought him in to me. I arraigned him and told the state trooper to take him home and give his wife the keys," DeGelleke said. "I didn't set any bail because I figured he'd stay there and dry out."

"Well, at 10 p.m., they're back again with him. Seems he got the keys away from her and went out drinking. So, I set bail at \$500 and sent him to the jail," he said, a smile coming across his face as he

he neared the end of the story.

"At 6 a.m., they woke me up and said 'you're not going to believe this' and brought in the same guy again. He got his wife to call all their friends and scraped up the bail. When he got out, he went back to the bar. I finally just sent him to jail on no bail."

DeGelleke, a life member of the Alton Fire Department, and a past president and captain of the rescue squad, joked that he was the only justice he knew who could give complete accident service.

"I'd could go to the accident and administer first aid, fix their car in my body shop and then arraign them on charges in my court," he said.

"I never had all three, though."

When DeGelleke started working for the county as court clerk, the board of supervisors insisted that he give up his justice seat.

"They said it was a conflict of interest," he explained. "Although I liked being a justice, I did give it up because I didn't want court both day and night."

As court clerk, DeGelleke maintained the judges' calendars, swore-in witnesses at trials, took minutes and filed legal papers. He said the job and its paperwork have become more complicated over the years.

"Hell, I figured I'd better get out before they realize I don't know

what I'm doing," he laughed.

And what he'll be doing from now on is pursuing his first love — besides Kitty, his wife of 35 years — ducks.

"I've always been a hunter. My interest in ducks came from my wife's brother. I started making decoys and collecting antique ones; I have over 100," he said.

He also makes lamps and gives some of his handiwork to the local Ducks Unlimited chapter to be auctioned off at its dinners. The group raises money to preserve Canadian wetlands, where most area waterfowl come from.

He has entered, but never won, the International Hunting Decoy Contest at the Clayton Decoy and Wildlife Art Show, where duck enthusiasts gather each year to trade duck stories and paint decoys.

Stiles said he will miss DeGelleke.

"We had so many good conversations about vegetable gardens, waterfowl or the Army Air Force in World War II (in which DeGelleke served)," Stiles said. "Whenever I think about him over the years, I will be picturing, thanks to poet Ogden Nash: 'A grown-up man, with pluck and luck, hoping to outwit a duck.'"

And from October to December, DeGelleke said he and Sheesa will be doing just that.



Ralph DeGelleke

With some of his decoys

Photographer visits Benton along the way

By MAURICE DUMAS

BENTON — Inches of worn boot leather later and 11,000 miles from the start of the journey, John and Sue Coffey rolled into town yesterday in their private wagon train.

Coffey, 33, an itinerant photographer, set out in 1976 from Lancaster County, Pa., with his workhorse, Brownie, and a darkroom on wheels.

Two years later, Coffey was in the Mojave Desert in Southeastern California, where he met his future wife. She decided to go with him on an adventure that grew into a commitment to an old-fashioned way of life. Their entourage now includes a dog, a second wagon pulled by oxen, a milk cow and one chicken.

Coffey takes photographs using the wet plate collodion process, a forerunner of "modern photography," developed in the 19th century. He produces ambrotype and tintype photographs, which sell for between \$5.50 and \$20.

"It's a lost art," said Coffey. "As far as I know, I'm the only one in the whole country."

Every once in a while, they set up camp and sell photographs.

"People enjoy the experience of having a portrait taken," said Coffey. "The tintype has a different look about it and it's a very durable photograph."

"For history buffs, it's the cat's meow," said Mrs. Coffey, a former graphic artist who spends some of her time selling a book she wrote about the journey, *Horsehairs in My Soup*.

Their low overhead makes the venture possible.

"We don't have any bills," said Coffey.

"That's the beauty of what we're doing," said his wife. "We don't worry too much about money."

They also don't worry about where they're going to sleep. It's often just a wide space off the road, but sometimes they stay with new-found friends.

Wednesday night the Coffeys stayed at the Oliver Oswald farm in Potter and were traveling the Rasmussen Road yesterday on their way to the Harry Fox farm in Benton.

"Meeting people is not very hard to do when you travel as slowly as we do," said Mrs. Coffey.

They often stop for the winter, setting up camp at museums where their old way of life is exhibited. Their plans for this winter are uncertain.

The pace of their travel presents the most serious and persistent danger of their way of life — cars.

"It's just the nature of automobiles," said Coffey. "They go very fast; we go real slow. We are being missed by inches by missiles."

No collisions have happened yet and the Coffeys, when on the road, average 12 miles a day. They have never experienced trouble from what Mrs. Coffey called "bad people." Usually, and especially in New York, strangers have been friendly.

In fact, the normal reaction, said Coffey, is that "most people are excited about us and wish they could do something different for a change themselves."

Ex-secretary pleads guilty

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Redd Foxx's former secretary and accountant faces sentencing Sept. 19 after pleading guilty to forging the comedian's signature on checks totaling \$3,700 and cashing them.

Sheila Y. Clark, 27, entered the plea Wednesday to three counts of forgery, said Deputy District Attorney Paul Fau, Superior Court Judge Gerald Levie could sentence Ms. Clark to 7 year in jail and order restitution.

The checks were cashed in May and June, Fau said.



Hand talk

George Canne uses sign language to communicate with Mary Faas, another counselor at Camp Onseyawa. (Times photo by Sonni Sampson)

'A second home' to deaf counselor

By SONNI SAMPSON

OVID — George Canne remembers the first time his parents took him to Camp Onseyawa. He was 9 years old.

"I cried when they left, because I thought I would be the only camper who was deaf," he said. "But I quickly learned that there were others who could sign and I loved it. When my parents came to pick me up, I didn't want to leave."

The experience was so good that Canne now uses part of his two-week vacation each year to work at the summer camp for mentally and physically handicapped children. During the rest of the year, he is a computer operator at the Wayne-Finger Lakes Board of Cooperative Educational Services in Flint

Canne, 25, a graduate of

Rochester's School for the Deaf and the National Technical Institute for the Deaf at Rochester Institute of Technology, said working at Camp Onseyawa gives him the chance to help hearing impaired campers.

"I know how frustrating it can be in a room full of hearing people who can't communicate with you because they don't understand sign language so I try to teach everyone here, who is willing, how to sign," he said. "That way, those campers who sign don't feel awkward and it makes it easier for everyone to communicate."

Deaf since birth, Canne has attended the camp each year since 1969, first as a camper, then as a counselor in training and for the last nine years as a unit and waterfront counselor.

"There's no place I'd rather be," said Canne, who lives in Phelps. "This is like a second home to me."

Talking to campers and staff using sign language, an interpreter or writing things down on a pad, he has no difficulty in making himself understood. "Often words aren't necessary to bring a smile to someone's face," he said.

Camp director Donald Bogart

said Canne "has a natural body language that shows he's very affectionate, open and caring and everyone here is attracted to him."

That was apparent earlier this week when Canne dropped to his knees, opened his arms and flashed an ear-to-ear grin at a small, shy boy who responded by running to Canne and giving him a hug. The scene was repeated numerous times as Canne met campers in the dining hall, in the pool or along the trails.

Canne said it's still hard for him to leave the camp each year.

"I enjoy the helping the kids have a good time, the camping and so many other things that I always find myself wishing that camp would never end," said Canne. "That's why I return every year. If I had the money, I'd buy a larger camp, so more kids could enjoy this experience."

Camp Onseyawa, sponsored by 24 Rotary clubs in Ontario, Seneca, Yates and Wayne counties, is held at Camp Babcock-Hovey, a Boy Scout camp on the west side of Seneca Lake near Willard. Currently, there are 140 campers at the camp, which is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year.