

THE BUFFALO NEWS

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A hall of fame befitting of Buffalo

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By MARY KUNZ GOLDMAN

Cleveland has the Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame. Toronto has the Hockey Hall of Fame. Buffalo needs a hall of fame, too. And I've got just the idea: The Bureaucracy Hall of Fame.

What other locale can approach our big government? Where else can we find the agencies and offices we have here?

Community activist Kevin Gaughan cinched our supremacy when he released, in fall, his study that showed Western New York has more officials than anywhere else.

Gaughan declined to give the proposed hall of fame his stamp of approval. But he didn't fold, spindle or mutilate the idea, either.

"We have up to 10 times the number of politicians of any comparable-sized region in America," he said. "It's unbelievable."

Our big government has led to a bureaucratic way of life.

That's why Buffalo is ripe for a Bureaucracy Hall of Fame. Gaughan's study is just one 2006 event that calls for an exhibit. Here are a few more:

- Citistat, which has its own TV network and an avid audience. Bureaucracy as a spectator sport! Move over, Christine Baranski. Make way for Timothy Wanamaker, the mayor's director of strategic planning, and Raj Mehta, acting director of the city's Management Information Systems Department.
- The merger of Buffalo's Department of Permits and Inspections with the Department of Economic Development.
- The streamlined efficiency of the resulting office under the direction of Richard M. Tobe. Remember the couple who came home to find the city had demolished their fire-damaged house and mailed them the bill? It takes weeks to get someone to show up and hook up your cable or fix your toilet. But the city was able to knock down a house in 48 hours and deliver the bill a few days later. For the first time, City Hall has exceeded private business in efficiency.
- The historic *Anschluss* of the Health Care Industries Association with a new wing of the Buffalo Niagara Partnership, called the Life Sciences Industries Council, and the integration of Bufflink, a biotech business development group, with the Partnership's development affiliate, Buffalo Niagara Enterprise. Visitors to the hall of fame would have to fill out a form in triplicate. They'd rubber stamp a guest book. They'd need lots of ID.

Where would we put the museum? A board would have to determine that, over a period of years. It might fit well into the Richardson Complex, a victim of long, bureaucratic neglect.

Or we could always put it next to the new Peace Bridge.

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