

# Cold Competition Puts Spotlight on Snowmen

By Olivia M. Hall

When the landscape is covered in a blanket of white, some see the snow as a nuisance to be cleared in long sessions of snow-blowing, shoveling, and salting. For others, it's the raw material for hours of fun.

Dryden's first annual Snowman Building Contest is snowballing into a cold competition culminating in the crowning of champions in the "biggest," "most creative," and "most Dryden spirit" categories. Organized by the town's Recreation Department, the competition runs until Feb. 28, with winners announced on March 1.

"The contest is open to anyone, not just Dryden residents," says Recreation Director Melissa Bianconi. "People's entries so far have been very creative. We've had a few snowmen come in with Dryden lions, hats, and scarves. People have told us that they're going to dye the snow purple (Dryden high school's color). And the entry doesn't even have to be a snowman. It can be a snow woman, a snow alien, or not even a person but a snow structure."

The creative frontrunners will each receive one free registration up to \$35 for any Town of Dryden Recreation program. With over forty programs and events annually, "We run a little bit of everything for everybody," says Bianconi. The department's offerings include youth and adult sports programs, outdoor music and movies in the summer, and field trips and art courses during school breaks. "We really have a lot going on all the time," she adds.

In the dead of winter, the snowman contest is intended to get people outside to embrace the winter a bit, Bianconi explains. "People in our field (of recreation) are really trying to come up with ways to encourage families to let their kids go out and play without there being an organized structure. Building a



**Caleb Lower, 8, with the snowman created by his family on Dryden Harford Road in Dryden. It's resting on a trampoline.**

snowman is something we all used to do without being prodded. But now we're seeing more and more that kids can't go and just play by themselves, for a lot of reasons. Parents are more scared to let their kids go outside unsupervised, and all the screen time on TVs and computers sounds better to the kids than going outside and freezing. So any bit of prodding we can do to get them outside in the fresh air, working together as a team, doing something on their own or with their parents, we think is good."

Unlike last year, when a number of snowshoeing and tubing outings had to be canceled because of the lack of snow, Bianconi believes this year will be more promising for winter activities. Her faith that "we'll have one more big storm before it's all said and done" was rewarded recently by snowstorm Nemo.

For more information on how to enter the contest, visit <http://dryden.ny.us/departments/recreation/snowman>.

# Street Beat

The word on the street from around Tompkins County.

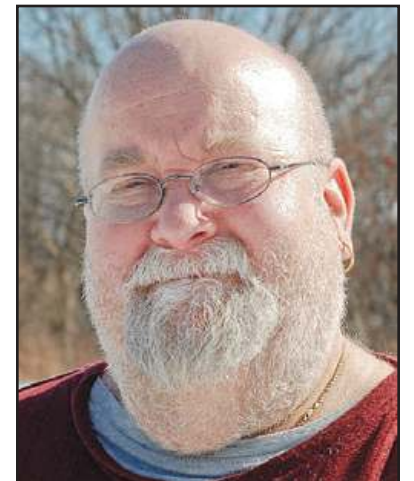
By Kathy Morris

Question: Are you satisfied with winter road maintenance in the county?



"I'm not too fussy about it, myself. I think they have a difficult job on a tight budget."

- Bob Duckett, Fleming



"With the Town of Newfield I'm quite happy. The City of Ithaca leaves a bit to be desired. Rural roads are better kept than city roads, in my opinion."

- Mike Beach, Newfield



"Yes. I haven't had any problems with it. But I'm not here much in the winter."

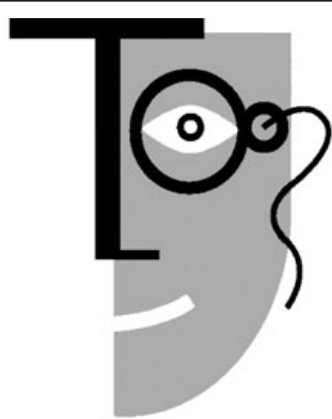
- Jacquie Lopez, Ithaca



"Yes. They do a good job. Since I've been driving (six years) they've been keeping the roads clean."

- Michael Griffin, Dryden

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