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Good Morning, Buffalo

A quick look at what's happening today in Western New York

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It will be warmish, wet and dreary during the day, but winter is coming back tonight. The National Weather Service says we can expect the weekend snow to keep melting for a while under drizzle, fog and temperatures in the low 40s. Then, as the wind kicks up later in the day, we're dropping back below freezing again for a spell of cold and snow that's supposed to last until the weekend.

Wind advisories are likely tonight and Wednesday as the new cold front blows in. Gusts of up to 50 mph are expected. The metro Buffalo area could get a short blast of lake-effect snow overnight before winds shift and take the squalls to the traditional snow-belt areas. Wherever you go tonight, be ready for slippery highways and whiteouts.

Temperatures Wednesday are supposed to be stuck in the 20s, dipping down into the teens at night. Thursday is expected to be slightly warmer as a new front passes through with more snow. Next warm-up is due on Saturday, with a return to the 40s predicted for Sunday and Monday.

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The weather refuses to cooperate for the Labatt Blue Buffalo Pond Hockey Tournament. It just won't get cold enough to freeze the Erie Basin Marina in time for competition on the weekend of Feb. 10. But organizers have a backup plan. They will reveal it at a news conference at 10 a.m. in the Labatt USA

Pub in the Key Center in Fountain Plaza.

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A redevelopment plan for downtown Buffalo will be unveiled at a news conference at 2 p.m. today in the Granite Works, 846 Main St., when the Buffalo Niagara Partnership releases the recommendations it reached through its Buffalo Building Reuse Project. Mayor Byron Brown will announce a multimillion dollar commitment to get the plan moving over the next three years.

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An Elmwood Avenue restaurant's expansion plans, which prompted neighbors to raise concerns about loud noise at a Planning Board meeting earlier this month, will be the subject of a public hearing before the Common Council's Legislation Committee at 2 p.m. in Council Chambers. The owner of Acropolis, 708 Elmwood, wants to add new dining space and a porch on the second floor. On Jan. 3, the Planning Board recommended that the Council approve the project, with conditions limiting live music upstairs. After the committee votes, the issue will have to be taken up by the full Council.

* * *

The folks who want to preserve the quiet, small-town nature of Fort Erie, Ont., lost a battle last year when the Ontario Municipal Board approved plans for a 12-story condo in Crystal Beach. Another challenge comes up at the OMB meeting in Fort Erie Council Chambers this morning — an application for a project called Canadian Motor Speedway on 821 acres of farmland west of the Queen Elizabeth Way between Bowen and Gilmore roads. The facility would include grandstand seating for 65,000 and two tracks — a one-mile oval and a 2.6-mile road course — along with other commercial and auto-related firms. Opponents say it might be good for business but terrible for agriculture and the environment.

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Overdue fire-protection matters are expected to get resolved at two meetings tonight. The Lancaster Town Board is expected to renew a contract for the services of four fire companies — Bowmansville, Millgrove, Town Line and Twin District. The contract had been held up over technical matters after the companies agreed not to seek a rate increase. Meanwhile, the East Aurora Village Board is expected to end an eight-year-long process by voting to purchase land at 33 Center St. to build a \$5 million fire hall.

* * *

Sen. Charles E. Schumer is back in Western New York today, this time in the Genesee County Village of Bergen. He will visit the train tracks at Miller's Millwork factory on North Lake Avenue to announce his intention to end the private, state and federal foot-dragging delaying a \$58 million project that would create a high-speed rail link between Buffalo and Rochester.

* * *

The Parkside Community Association always gets a prominent guest speaker for its annual community meeting, which takes place this evening in St. Mark's School cafeteria, 399 Woodward Ave. This year it's the newly inaugurated Erie County executive, Mark Poloncarz. The program begins with a community potluck supper at 6. Awards, a general business meeting and election of the 2012 board of directors will follow. For more information, call Ben Johnson at 838-1240 or visit www.parksidebuffalo.org.

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Gayle Danley doesn't merely recite her poems. She puts them across with fierce dramatic impact. The 1996 International Slam Poet Champion and the 2006 Young Audiences National Artist of the Year will give a performance for Young Audiences of Western New York at 11 a.m. in the Central Library at Lafayette Square. Presented in honor of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., her appearance is free and open to the public. She repeats her performance, titled "Soul Portraits: Poetry of the Heart, Mind and Body," for students later today in Buffalo's McKinley High School.

* * *

Hospice Buffalo's 26th Annual Spring Bouquet Sale kicks off with a breakfast for more than 100 volunteers this morning in the Education Center, 225 Como Park Blvd., Cheektowaga. Through February, volunteer coordinators will take orders for the \$8 bouquets of mums, carnations and other fresh flowers. There is also the special oversized tribute bouquet for \$30, which will also provide a free bouquet to a Hospice patient. For information or to volunteer, call the Hospice Foundation at 688-8090 or visit www.hospicebuffalo.com.

* * *

A silent-film classic opens the spring semester tonight for the Buffalo Film Seminars. It's Swedish director Victor Sjorstrom's spooky 1921 "The Phantom Carriage," considered to be a major influence on the work of modern Swedish director Ingmar Bergman. Movies start at 7 every Tuesday in the Market Arcade Film and Arts Centre, 639 Main St., beginning with an introduction by the seminar leaders, University at Buffalo professors Diane Christian and Bruce

Jackson. A discussion follows after the lights come up.

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Recent movies scheduled to arrive on home video today include "The Ides of March," the political drama that George Clooney directed and in which he also stars; the thriller "Abduction," starring Taylor Lautner of "Twilight;" the faith-based crime drama "Courageous;" and the comedy "Bucky Larson: Born to Be a Star," starring Nick Swardson as a yokel trying to break into porn movies. Over in the music racks, there are new releases from Guided by Voices ("Let's Go Eat the Factory"), Kathleen Edwards ("Voyageur") and Buffalo's own Ani DiFranco ("Which Side Are You On?").

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