



97 percent burns of his body in 2005, when he was hit with a roadside bomb in Iraq's Anbar Province. He was given a 3 percent chance of survival and has gone under 120 surgical procedures. It was said of him that he had a great sense of humor and a passion for bringing cheer to his fellow vets. He was nicknamed "Miracle Man". Merlin had a dream of establishing a charity called Merlin's Miracles, which is online at www.merlinsmiracles.com. It is for child burn victims and their families. We have had many great men and women in our American history, but what truly makes a person great? I think it is Marines like Merlin who truly cared about the suffering of others and gave little thought of his own adversity. Sergeant Merlin German is truly the personification of what is true heroism, and for that I salute a true patriot and an exceptional Marine.

On a different note, I was at breakfast at St. Anastasia Parish on Memorial Day, and there were many civic groups in attendance including my own St. Anastasia Knights of Columbus Council #5911.

All these groups were there in preparation of marching in the parade. Now I had the opportunity to speak to a number of these organizations and the chief complaint was that they find a decline in membership.

It seems to me that if we want to make our country and community better we need to get involved. Like President John F. Kennedy said, "Ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country." We have here a great opportunity to help our neighbors and our community. This we can do by volunteering to various organizations like churches, faith base[d] organizations and civic and service organizations that serve the greater good. Remember: We are the people spoken of in the Constitution, "We The

People", and we need to get involved to truly make our community better.

There is a web site called Littleneck.net which gives a list of such organizations and what they do. They can also give you a list of their organization local chapters in your community in Queens.

So be all you can be and serve your community.

Sincerely Yours,
Frederick R. Bedell Jr.
Bellerose

Likes Stamps Of Stars

To The Editor:

On Feb. 12, 1997 my letter to you was printed in your paper—my story was "stamp of approval". I said I would like to see more of the entertainment field on a stamp, such as Babe Ruth, Al Jolson, Eddie Cantor, Fiorello LaGuardia, former mayor of N.Y., John Wayne, etc. Don't let the public forget these great people. We had Elvis and Marilyn Monroe and it did great to remember them. Yes, don't forget George Burns.

Now, year 2008 I see Frank Sinatra on a stamp, great. He will never be forgotten as some stamps are saved by all.

Larry Kahn
Jackson Heights

Hails Extension

To The Editor:

Several articles published in the May 7 and 14 issues of the *Gazette*, in addition to several news items mentioned on the radio and television are worthy of sharing with my *Gazette* readers.

I applaud Congressman [Carolyn] Maloney for her initiation of 13 more weeks of unemployment for the nation's unemployed Americans. Inflation, with the cost of postage, rent, food, medication, education, and medical services in addition to gasoline and fuel and natural gas for heating and electricity, poses a burden and danger for those who cannot pay bills due to unemployment. Maloney is so caring to all and has done so much for so many to improve the quality of life for all people.

I also agree with state Assemblymember [Michael] Gianaris about the Con Edison rate increase. Again, an additional burden will be placed on the public consumers who are struggling. The CEO management basks in millions of dollars of pay checks while the ordinary people struggle. Electricity and gas are no luxuries but necessities and must not be heavily taxed or increased. It seems that nowadays utilities are getting to be like jewel-

ry and diamond rings, luxuries, but they are indeed necessary for life and one of the basic needs.

Rent increases proposed by the Rent Guidelines board also are high and unfortunately SCRI[E] for seniors cannot help those who have more salary or income or those who are not seniors and cannot get frozen rent. The SCRI[E] frozen rent program should be increased to people whose salaries or incomes are just above the limit and also to those who are not senior citizens, but those who work, but too rich for welfare or Section 8.

Postage is another problem. Why must the postage system increase the cost of stamps every year? The mail delivery system is already like Con Edison, not satisfactory. Letters, pension checks, important mail gets lost, misdirected, returned or put in other people's mailboxes. We do not know our mail carriers any more and with the 800 Post Office number, we cannot be connected to a local number any more or speak to our mail carrier. With technology came impersonal and uncaring workers.

As for Access-A-Ride, I was dismayed to read in last week's issue about the lady who was denied Access-A-Ride although her disability was permanent and precluded her from riding conventional public transit due to age and mobility impairment. Why must people who are mobility impaired, aged, or visually impaired who have a documented condition for many years that is permanent, be subjected to a rigorous physical, walking down a long hall many times, climbing bus steps and asked questions as though they are criminals? These people are stressed and the long waiting time in crowded waiting rooms to be asked questions and tested by uncaring employees adds to heart conditions or other conditions that may seriously impair these people. A system must be devised to take into account the disabilities that are permanent and avoiding the physical and mobility test. This is a waste of money, time and causes undo stress and hardship for those involved. Transit is not a luxury and deserving and one of the basic freedoms, the freedom of movement.

Senior citizens must not be threatened and stressed by having their centers closed or Meals On Wheels turned into impersonal frozen meals.

We must honor the aged and remember that all of us will be older and need services. Senior centers are havens, oases and also keep people out of nursing homes and avoid depression, illness and even suicide and loneliness. The quality of life for seniors and all people is sacred, must be enhanced and prolonged according to the Bible.

I hope that the political leaders who read this letter who bear in mind some of my comments. A better New York City with equality and justice for all ages is up to all of us.

On a brighter note I wish to thank the *Gazette* for featuring three positive optimistic articles that brightened the spirits during this rainy, cold and dismal weather week.

I congratulate and applaud our own Julie Wager for being honored by the Democratic Club for his outstanding community participation and service. Julie is a dedicated person to all facets of life, has touched the lives of many people and is an inspiration to all. Although disabled, he has overcome his disability with courage and has led a productive life, helping others through his work and activities in the community. I am honored to know Julie personally and to have him as my friend.

I also am proud of the high school seniors who were recipients of the Vallone Scholarship Award.

These are young people who through their performance scholastically and in the community have inspired all and will be great future leaders of tomorrow. These students are inspirations to all and show us that today's young people are interested and involved and smart and will make a difference in the world of tomorrow.

I also am glad that the state legislature has passed the bill concerning Access-A-Ride's extension to Long Island, thus enabling the disabled to visit hospitals, nursing homes, shopping, attend to medical appointments and this will enable them to have the freedom of movement in accessible terms that is their right. It is high time that the senior citizens and disabled Access-A-Ride users be given the opportunity to travel outside of the five boroughs. I know that our governor will sign this bill and enact it as a law of our state. Governor Paterson is compassionate and empathetic to the needs of the seniors and to the disabled.

Again, it is wonderful to promote the spirit of optimism during these troubled times of war, economic hardship, natural devastating disasters and let us pray for Senator [Ted] Kennedy's recovery. He has done so much for so many as Senator for 38 years in the United States Senate. Let us also honor and remember all who served in war during Memorial Day. Let us pray that there will be a time when war will not exist and all will join hands and sip from the cup of friendship and peace.

Cynthia Groopman
Long Island City



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