

OPINION

A4 MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2024

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EDITORIAL

Weigh the community value of preserving historic schoolhouses

Nothing gives citizens a sense of community and history and belonging more than taking up residence in a historic building.

Walking where people decades or centuries ago walked.

Experiencing places from the same perspective as the people who actually lived and worked and learned in these spaces generations ago.

Placing your palm against the walls and stepping across creaky floors, smelling the fireplace and the linens and the aging plaster. Marveling at the craftsmanship of ancient tradesmen.

Traversing the same patch of earth where a contemporary's great-great-grandfather might have played as a child, where meals were prepared, where stories were told, where our forefathers lived and died.

Do you want to teach children his-

tory, not just lecture to them about it?

Put them in the place where history was once alive.

In addition to the educational and intangible benefits, preserving historic structures can help local economies, drive up property values, improve aesthetics, attract visitors and invite new community investment.

A blue and gold historic marker by the side of the road can't replace that.

How many communities have torn down historic buildings in the name of progress and gone on to regret it? And how many people in those communities are grateful that their leaders chose preservation over demolition?

That's why representatives of the Scotia-Glenville school district should join local and state government officials, area historians, architects and financiers to explore all options be-

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fore moving ahead with plans to tear down the historic Beukendaal School on Sacandaga Road to make room for a new charging station to serve electric school buses.

The 109-year-old fieldstone and wood-framed, three-room schoolhouse in Glenville, with its unique architectural design, is in rough shape.

Like other buildings of the time, it's got lead paint and asbestos. And structurally, it's got foundation issues.

Any preservation effort will be ex-

pensive. But there is money available for preservation through public and private grants and funding sources that could help the district offset the cost of repairs.

There's no time to waste. The district is under pressure to complete the transition to emission-free buses by 2035, and the site occupied by the old school appears ideal for its intended use. From that standpoint, tearing the old school down is the easy decision.

But before bringing in the backloaders, community leaders need to open up their minds to the possibilities of preserving it, of its potential uses as a museum or visitor's center or community center or administrative offices.

Viewed from the perspective of what this building once was, what it could be, and what its loss or preservation could mean to the community,



Beukendaal School in Glenville

attempting to save it may turn out to be of greater value than knocking it down.

Don't be so quick to destroy something that can never be replaced.

Labor Day 2024: Are workers better off?

YES: Jobs are more plentiful, pay has increased and worker satisfaction is higher than four years ago

BY DEAN BAKER

When the labor market is as strong as it has

workers, the pay increases disproportionately went to those at the bottom, reversing the pattern that had been

thing that had just happened. It was not inevitable that the economy would bounce back quickly