

## **Alfred community to celebrate a long-gone lake**

6/02/05

"Lake Alfred" may have vanished millennia ago, but residents of Alfred, NY, are planning a celebration in its honor Saturday. Of course, these are the same residents who a year celebrated the 30th anniversary of the village's one and only stop light, so off-beat celebrations aren't unusual in this village with about 1,200 permanent residents, and more than 5,000 students when Alfred University and Alfred State College are in session. "Lake Alfred drained 12,000 years ago, so we are long overdue to commemorate it," explains Dr. Becky Prophet, a professor of theater at Alfred University and one of the "Ladies of the Lake" who are organizing the festival. (Prophet was the guiding light of the Spotlight Festival last year.) "All that we have left of the lake are terraces, some significant gravel deposits, and, of course, the clay that led to the development of the ceramics industry in this area," said Prophet. "We are also left with some beautiful valleys that, when filled with early morning fog, give us an idea of what Lake Alfred may have looked like when the Wisconsin Ice Age drew to a close." Events Saturday begin with units for the parade lining up at 4:30 p.m. in front of The Brick residence hall on the AU campus. The marchers will step off at 5 p.m. After the parade, there will be a community-wide potluck picnic and beach party at the Village Bandstand. Those planning to attend are asked to take a dish to pass, their own table service and seating for their family members. Other events include a ping-pong ball regatta with participants making a small donation for the privilege of racing their ping-pong ball against others in Kanakadea Creek. Proceeds will benefit the A.E. Crandall Hook and Ladder Co. High school tour guides will lead geology hikes to point out the glacial and lake features of the Kanakadea Valley. Dr. Otto Muller, professor of geology at AU, conducted a seminar for local science teachers, who, in turn, passed along the information to their students. Muller has also compiled a CD of text and images on the glacial geology of the valley; those will be sold at the festival, with the proceeds also going to the fire department. Youngsters will be given sidewalk chalk, and an opportunity to draw either fantasy or realistic creatures that might have inhabited Lake Alfred. And, of course, souvenirs - tee-shirts, "Can-o-kadea" ginger ale, Lake Alfred bottled water, and lollipops that look like amber with insects trapped inside - will be available.