

## Remarks at Taste of Freedom

May 29, 2005

By Jim Ostrowski

Welcome to the First Annual Taste of Freedom!

We're going to hold this great party every year until we FREE BUFFALO and FREE NEW YORK from big government, political machines and special interests, because 45 straight years of economic and cultural decline are enough. Then, we'll keep having this party to celebrate our victory and the re-birth of Greater Buffalo and this neighborhood.

You said you wanted a revolution and here it is: a peaceful--positive--populist--revolution to save Buffalo, Erie County, Western New York and New York State from economic and cultural oblivion. A revolution to take power back from the politicians and special interests who seized it from us for their own selfish purposes who have our beloved home towns and communities on the verge of collapse.

Why are we here in the old Central Terminal? This place is the perfect metaphor for Buffalo. It was once grand, great and beautiful; then it suffered through decades of decline and despair; but both will rise again, due to the spirit and tenacity of the people who live here who have never stop hoping and never stopped fighting.

Why are we here in the old Central Terminal on the East Side? Because many of us came from this neighborhood or our parents or grandparents did. This place carries powerful memories for many of us. Within about a mile of this spot, my father was born at home; he grew up on Best Street and my grandparents later lived on Sycamore at Sweet Ave. In 1946, my father, having served in the Army for three years and engaging in house-to-house fighting in France and Germany, returned home to this Terminal and later joined the Plewacki Post just down the driveway.

Why we are here today? Why do we fight against all odds to save Buffalo, facing bitter recriminations, harassment and retaliation from the political machine? Because it's our home! Because, as Pascal wrote: "The heart has its reasons that reason does not know."

As you drove here today, you saw the sad evidence of what the political machine, politicians and big government have done to Buffalo and Buffalo's once great and proud East Side. You saw the closed storefronts, abandoned houses, idle youth and lack of thriving businesses, and finally, you saw this once great edifice, abandoned for no good reason right in the middle of Greater Buffalo's 45 year slide toward oblivion.

But while the politicians and their policies and programs were killing off this once-thriving neighborhood, they were doing well for themselves with their big fat salaries and pensions, their long lunch hours and their no-show jobs. It's been a tale of two cities: the political class has done well while the rest of us have suffered. I say, Political Class--dismissed!

A great economist once said: “what the have nots, have not is FREEDOM!” The East Side of Buffalo did not decline because the people who live here chose to kill it. Buffalo and Buffalo’s inner city and this East Side have for 45 years been the plaything of outsiders, strangers in distant capitals, and hack politicians from Albany and Washington who have foisted their misguided policies on us. The residents of Humboldt Parkway didn’t choose to run that monstrous expressway through their front yards.

What Buffalo and the people of the East Side need is Freedom: economic, personal and political freedom to run their own lives, control their own wallets and purses, start and run their own businesses without constant harassment from bureaucrats and the taxman.

They need the political freedom to take control of their schools, parks, neighborhoods. They need the freedom to seize control of their own destinies, because unlike the limousine liberals and Rockefeller Republicans who have ruled and ruined Buffalo’s East Side from their far away mansions and office towers, we believe that the people of Buffalo and this East Side are fully capable of running their own lives!

So we say, Free Buffalo, Free the East Side, Free Erie County, Free New York and Free America from big government, political machines and special interests, because:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. --That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, --That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it.

Buffalo will rise again!

The East Side will rise again!

The Central Terminal will rise again!

Free Buffalo!!

Let’s party!!!