

Happy New Year!

MARV'S FAREWELL

Mark Gaughan analyzes the reasons Levy is leaving and what happens next. Page D7



NEWS BOOK CLUB

Alice Munro's "Runaway" and the kickoff of our short fiction contest. C1

THE BUFFALO NEWS

FINAL EDITION

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TUESDAY, JANUARY 1, 2008

Serving Western New York since 1880

66 PAGES • 50 CENTS



All is ready: Drop the puck

BY GENE WARNER
AND JOHN F. BONFATTI

NEWS STAFF REPORTERS

It's time for some old-time hockey — the outdoor version.

The 1¾-inch-thick ice is ready, even better than some players imagined. The players have tried out various neck warmers and face masks. The weather gods seem ready to cooperate. And Ralph Wilson Stadium looks like a man-made winter wonderland.

The only thing left to do is drop the puck, as hockey returns to its winter roots this afternoon when the Buffalo Sabres and Pittsburgh Penguins face off in the Ice Bowl —



Special preview section

The Winter Classic is more than a game, it's an event and Sports has all the ice covered beginning on Page D1.

formally known as the AMP Energy NHL Winter Classic.

At Monday's dress rehearsal for today's 1 p.m. game, both teams sported their throwback jerseys and stepped on the rink that extends between the 16-yard lines on the stadium turf.

Let the record note that Sabres defenseman Brian Campbell was the first to take the ice, at 1:24 p.m., as he stepped from the Sabres bench between the 40- and 45-yard lines.

"The ice was good actually, real good," Sabres forward Derek Roy said after he peeled off his ski-type

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