

OPINION

STATE SEN. TOM O'MARA, R-BIG FLATS

Wine and cheese equals a place to be

It is fast becoming one of the most anticipated days on the State Legislature's spring events calendar. I'm talking about the New York Wine Industry Association's (NYWIA) annual "Sip and Sample" tasting event in Albany, which, since 2014, I have been proud to host with Assemblyman Phil Palmesano and several other legislative colleagues. This year's fifth edition on May 7 featured wineries, cheese producers, restaurateurs and food manufacturers from the Finger Lakes, Long Island, the Hudson Valley, and Central and Western New York.

A group of grape growers, winery owners and other industry professionals established the NYWIA (www.nywineindustryassociation.com) in 2009 as an advocacy, public awareness and education organization.

NYWIA President Suzy Hayes, of Miles Wine Cellars in Yates County, said, "'Sip and Sample' has become one of the favorite events for legislators and their staff because they get the chance to try wonderful New York products while meeting the producers themselves in a festive, informal setting. It is a showcase of New York's finest....the products and the people that make New York a 'grape' place to be!"

The event has steadily grown over the past several years. It is now one of the Legislature's primary tools to help keep our incredible wineries, cheesemakers, food manufacturers and other producers at the forefront of state government's attention. It has become a rite of spring at the Capitol. (Visit my Senate website, www.omara.nysenate.gov, for a full list of this year's participants.)

Assemblyman Palmesano and I are proud to promote the excellence and quality of these sectors of the Empire State's agricultural economy. They represent amazing and interesting stories of culture, history and economic growth. These industries are indeed economic engines for communities right here at home, of course, but throughout the state as well from Long Island to the Hudson Valley up into the North Country and out into Western New York. In every region of the state, they are providing good, sustainable livelihoods for thousands of New Yorkers.

The New York Wine & Grape Foundation (https://www.newyorkwines.org/) estimates the state's grape, grape juice and wine industry annually generates upwards of \$13 billion in overall economic benefits to New York State. It directly employs more than 62,000 workers. It encompasses 450 wine producers and more than 11,000 acres of vineyards.

I have long noted that the rise of New York wines to secure their place on the national and international stage is one of this state's greatest of all success stories and, with the heart of the industry right here in the Finger Lakes, we should be proud to take every opportunity we can to celebrate it.

On the cheese front, the New York State Cheese Manufacturers' Association (http://www.nycheesemakers.com) was founded in 1864 – in other words, it remains one of our oldest and proudest industries. New York is the fourth leading state in America in total cheese production. I am proud to recall that my grandfather was a cheese maker who operated the Colosse Cheese Factory in Oswego County in the early 20th century, where he helped produce award-winning cheeses.

Again, our region is prominent. The Finger Lakes Cheese Trail was established in 2010 to establish what has become a highly successful and vibrant partnership between small family farms and cheesemakers. According to the Finger Lakes Cheese Alliance (http://www.flxcheese.com), you would put 500 miles on your car if you visited each of the farms on the trail. Amazing.

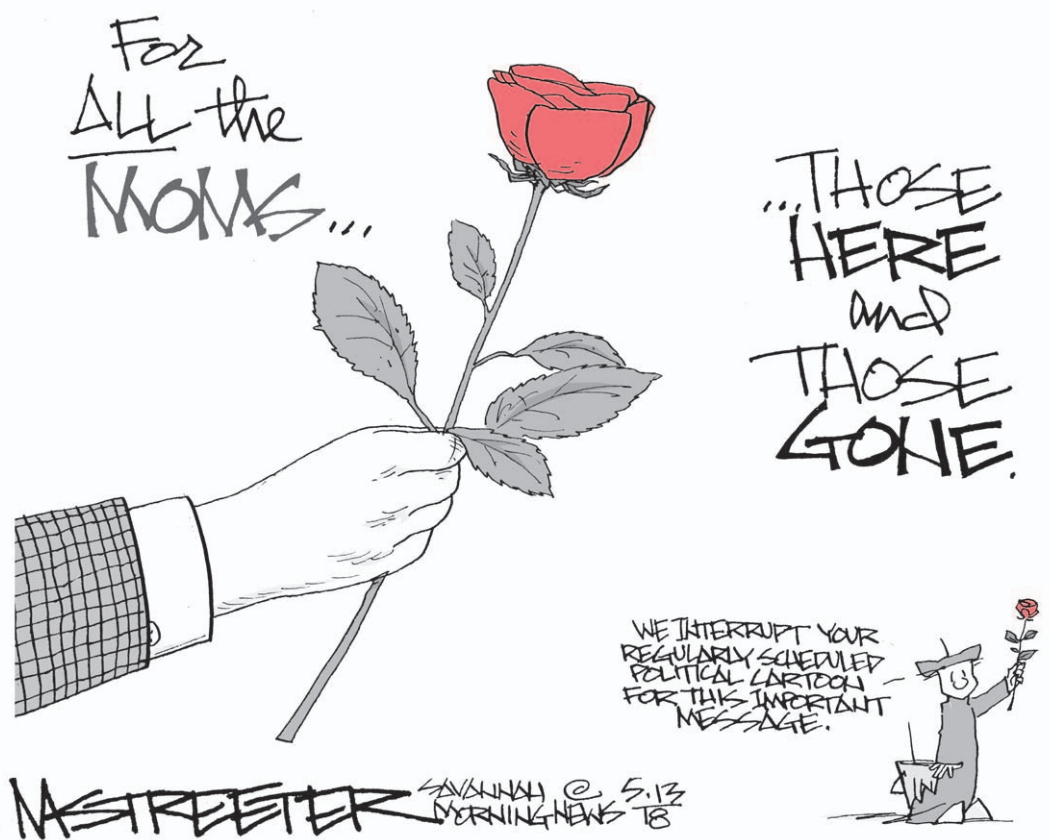
By the way, the Alliance's signature event, the Finger Lakes Cheese Festival, takes place this year on Friday, July 28 at Sunset View Creamery in Odessa, Schuyler County. Visit the Alliance website for additional information and tickets.

These industries are cornerstones. They represent some of the best of New York.

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ANOTHER VIEW



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Reed: Check out insulin costs

To the Editor,
 If Congressman Reed is truly concerned with helping people with diabetes, he will do something about the skyrocketing price of insulin.

He should immediately hold hearings and propose legislation to control the greedy pharmaceutical companies.

The price of insulin has more than doubled since Donald Trump became president!

Jim Scouten
 Corning

The mask of character

To the Editor,
 Certainly I am no genius, a long shot from it!

I consider myself of average intelligence on the low side. Not being humble, but being realistic.

However, I feel I have been endowed by my mother with good common sense.

A sign which I gave to my mom, states, "Wisdom is Common Sense to an Uncommon Degree". Perhaps over the years I have accumulated some wisdom.

These days the word character has been manipulated to mean good character.

Hard line integrity has been swapped out for undefined quality of character. It appears certain professions like educators, politicians, government bureaucrats and journalists have stealthily hijacked this sleight of hand.

Why, what is their motive? Replacing defined integrity

with an undefined quality of character allows those selfishly strategic institutions the mantle of good character. Such institutions lacking integrity can portray the qualities of character such that just being in their profession bestows good character upon them, integrity be damned.

Those institutions have banned many words or redefined them to limit debate forsaking truth to benefit their own agendas. Their agendas discarding integrity for self-glorification, deleting integrity from our society!

Gerald J. Furnkranz
 Millport

Protesters need to learn readiness

To the Editor,
 As an 86-year-old who earned 250 semester hours, attending eight universities and colleges, obtained three degrees and was a practicing educator for 27 years as a teacher, principal, assistant superintendent and superintendent, I feel I have the credentials to talk about school kids being used as political pawns.

The recent absence by rural school children is a misuse of taxpayers' money, are illegal absences from school and here are my recommendations.

1. Discontinue use of immature and uninformed students to be brain-washed as political pawns.
2. Fire all school personnel involved.
3. Make school personnel repay costs to taxpayers.

4. Parents who signed releases for illegal absences be mandated to 5 evenings of adult education "parent responsibilities of raising children."

5. Parents who signed permission for gun rally walkout should forfeit their guns.

6. A letter of apology from the school districts involved, accepting their error in judgement.

There is a reason why children are not allowed to vote until they are 18, it is called "learning readiness."

An example of "readiness" a few years ago was another protest at Tom Reed's office against the 2% who are the richest and the protesters must have thought the 2% were not entitled to what they had accomplished.

I put on my Army military coat and went to listen to the sharing their ignorances and I took the opportunity to tell them what "readiness" was:

1. Have you ever seen death?
2. Have you ever seen birth?
3. Have you ever climbed down the side of a ship with your weapon strapped to you?
4. Have you ever invested and lost?
5. How old are you?
6. What are your life's experience?

Then I told them to go home until you experience some of these experiences and you may be ready to make decisions.

Lastly, I bet the students did not have a permit for their group rally.

Anthony Savino
 Painted Post

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Mon. 5/14	6:30
Tues. 5/15	Closed
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