

# OPINION

## LETTERS POLICY

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### One lonely cricket not giving up

TO THE EDITOR | For several nights I've listened to the sound of one lonely cricket in my front yard. He seems to be desperately seeking love in all the wrong places, yet he persists, night after night. In the distance I hear thousands of peepers singing.

Together they make one hell of a noise.

Today, I drove from Corning to Watkins Glen to protest against Crestwood's plan to store methane, propane and butane in salt caverns on the shore of Seneca Lake. Despite a foggy gray dawn the view was breathtaking.

Why do I oppose Crestwood's plan? Why would anyone support it? Why would Schuyler County agree to 14 acre brine pits and huge gas flares? This is wine country, not brine country. Why would Watkins Glen allow 32-car trains filled with compressed gas to cross that beautiful gorge every day?

Eight wonderful people were arrested for peacefully blocking the gates at Crestwood today. That brings the number of arrests to over 340. There are a whole lot of people fighting for clean energy and against climate change. Sometimes they feel like one lonely cricket. Sometimes they make one hell of a noise. Please join the conversation about defending Seneca Lake by going to [www.wearesenecalake.com](http://www.wearesenecalake.com) or find us on Facebook.

**Jeni Paquette**  
 Corning

### Reed ignores constituents' needs

TO THE EDITOR | In my lifetime I've been a Planned Parenthood patient, volunteer, employee and volunteer once again. I consider attacks against Planned Parenthood as attacks against me. Our

representative, who hails from the birthplace of Margaret Sanger, has voted to defund Planned Parenthood, choosing the hard right line over the welfare of his constituents.

Should these same politicians additionally succeed in getting rid of the Affordable Care Act, they will leave those least able to afford it without the reproductive health care they need. That this will inevitably lead to more abortions or dependence on Medicaid should be – but clearly isn't – obvious.

Even with ACA, the need for access to birth control, STD testing/treatment, and cancer screenings cannot be met in underserved areas such as ours without the safety net of Planned Parenthood, which provides reproductive health care to approximately 12,000 people through the clinics of Planned Parenthood of the Southern Finger Lakes.

I stand with Planned Parenthood. Stand with me and remind Representative Reed that he works for all the people in his district.

**Leslie Potter**  
 Big Flats

### Sorry, Leader, that's old news

TO THE EDITOR | Either The Leader is understaffed for developing Sunday's newspaper content or the editors and writers think their readers are brainless. I'm referring to the rerunning of week-old "news" almost in its entirety, the exception being the addition of color images and deletion of a short article on Billy Joel.

This happened in the "Nation & World" sections of Sunday's August 2nd and 9th papers. I'm sure some timely articles from the many news wire services can be found as fillers in upcoming editions. Grin.  
**Tom Doud**  
 Corning

## WHAT FOLKS ARE SAYING ...

### A local athlete and truck crash highlighted responses from readers on The Leader Facebook page recently:

#### \* Carter Smith takes a shot at EHL hockey:

"Great kid from a great Hockey program with dedicated coaches and parents, congratulations Carter Smith, could this be the start of something awesome for the Corning Hurricanes? We have an organization with some amazing and talented Hockey players." — Robert Wilcox

#### \* Schuyler officials work to prevent more crashes like the one in Tyrone:

"actually the problem may

have been that modern day technology contributed as well. We have helped several truck drivers avoid Mud Lake Hill - their GPS will tell them this is the shortest way to/from Watkins Glen instead of staying on 226 and going to 14. I don't know many people - not even geniuses that are using a GPS in a strange place that would not follow those directions. I don't know that this is the case here...but just saying don't always assume that people are just stupid...there is a difference between stupid and ignorant...and being ignorant should not have to end like this - I think clear and highly visible signage would help. Just my opinion." — Dawn Smith

## WEEKLY COLUMN | SEN. TOM O'MARA

# One view of what New Yorkers deserve

Earlier this year, Assemblyman Phil Palmesano and I organized a bipartisan group of 114 state legislators — more than half of the entire Legislature — to urge Governor Cuomo and state legislative leaders to invest more in local roads and bridges.

We were joined by highway superintendents, mayors, county executives and other local leaders from around the state who helped us make what we felt (and continue to feel) is a credible case for increasing state support for local roads and bridges.

It's a case we've been making for the past three years and, in fact, state funding has been increased by approximately \$125 million since 2013, including \$90 million over the past two years. But more should have been done this year. We're moving in the right direction, but we had the opportunity to make a stronger commitment this year and we should have.

In the end, these are relatively modest increases, particularly when viewed in the context of some of the other fiscal commitments being made by the Cuomo administration.

One reason I say modest is because the state enjoyed an unanticipated budget surplus of more than \$5 billion this year. Investing in local infrastructure would have been a wise use for it. It would invest in economic growth, job creation, property tax relief and motorist safety.

And there are at least 8 billion other reasons.



SEN. TOM O'MARA

I'm referring, of course, to the \$4 billion Governor Cuomo has found to rebuild the Tappan Zee Bridge, located 20 miles north of New York City, and, more recently, another \$4 billion to redesign and reconstruct LaGuardia Airport in Queens. Some airport industry experts have already predicted that the final cost of the LaGuardia project could easily be closer to \$8 billion.

"This is what New Yorkers deserve and have deserved for a long time. And now we're going to get it," Governor Cuomo said at the LaGuardia announcement.

I suppose that depends on which New Yorkers you're talking to, governor. I can tell you that I hear from more than a few New Yorkers who feel that they aren't getting what they deserve from New York — and haven't been for a long time.

Like, for example, a stronger state commitment to local roads and bridges.

As part of the LaGuardia announcement, the governor made a passing reference to some equal treatment for upstate infrastructure. The trouble is that this concentration of such vast state resources to these two downstate projects will more likely than

not stand in the way of any comparable commitment to upstate roads and bridges any time in the near future — even if there's no denying the unmet need.

The state comptroller has estimated \$89 billion in unmet local infrastructure needs over the next 20 years. Numerous studies have pinpointed thousands of miles of local road deterioration and hundreds of local bridges in poor shape. In fact, 32 percent of local bridges are deficient and 40 percent of local road pavements are rated fair or poor.

It's costing New York motorists an additional \$20.3 billion statewide annually — nearly \$2,300 per driver in some areas — due to higher vehicle operating costs, traffic accidents and congestion-related delays.

Ask any local highway superintendent how critical it is, or how local, rural, upstate budgets are stretched so thin. The fact is that without greater state investment the need will continue to worsen. The "Consolidated Highway Improvement Program" (commonly called CHIPS) is a

long-standing state aid program for local infrastructure. It's a formula-driven distribution of taxpayer dollars, to every region of the state, that's been fair, effective and absolutely critical to counties, towns and villages — unlike the financial plans for achieving both the Tappan Zee and LaGuardia Airport projects, plans which remain disturbingly vague if nonexistent.

Let's look at the 2015 scoreboard: Four billion dollars, at least, for Tappan Zee. Four billion, at least, for LaGuardia. And a \$50 million increase for CHIPS. This governor, in the eyes of more than one interested observer, has consolidated control of the state's purse strings like no other governor in modern history.

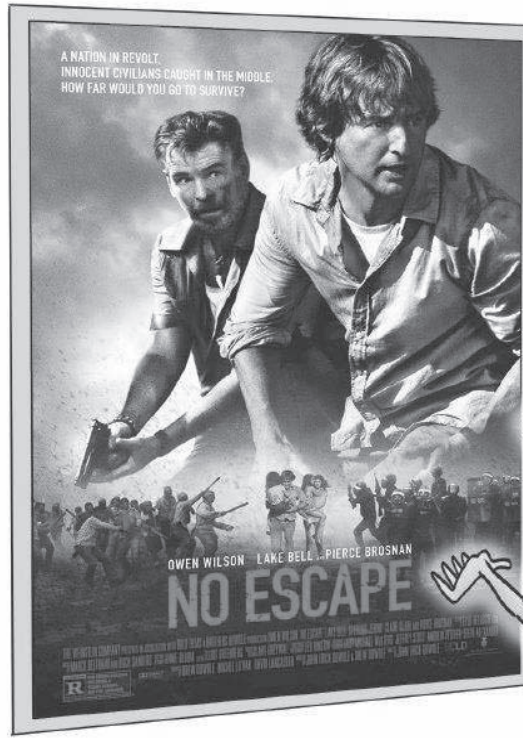
And on top of all the above is the newfound concern being expressed by numerous smaller airports across the upstate region, including Elmira-Corning and Ithaca Tompkins, about a proposal up for review by the Port Authority of New York to lift what's known as LaGuardia's "1500-mile perimeter rule." If approved, it will likely mean far fewer flights to our upstate airports and jeopardize critical local economic activity and jobs.

Remember what the governor said at LaGuardia, "This is what New Yorkers deserve and have deserved for a long time."

Then recall the many nagging reasons why so many of our local communities and economies continue to struggle — including unfunded state mandates, state-imposed taxes and fees, and state-based rules and regulations — and ask yourself if you're one of those New Yorkers getting what you deserve.

— State Sen. Tom O'Mara represents New York's 53rd Senate District, which includes Steuben, Chemung, Schuyler and Yates counties, and a portion of Tompkins County.

## ANOTHER VIEW



## COLUMN | RAY UNDERWOOD

# Public input on Colonial Days sought

Colonial Days was started over 50 years ago to celebrate the community spirit and pride that has always been present in Painted Post.

Over the years, the event has evolved in numerous ways with many people involved in the planning and execution of the event. Many of these people have come and gone, but the event itself has continued.

Colonial Days currently consist of the parade, Miss Colonial Days

contest, and the carnival along with other supporting events. In the past, we have had softball, baseball and golf tournaments in addition to a bake sale with arts and crafts that some may recall as "Friday in the Square."

There was also our own food booth, which assisted in raising revenue for the parade. All of these events require a significant amount of volunteer efforts which came directly from the community. Now, we are again looking to the community

to ask for assistance and support in keeping the tradition of Colonial Days alive.

Please share your opinions and comments with the Painted Post Board of Trade Colonial Days Committee. You can email them to [PPColonialDays@gmail.com](mailto:PPColonialDays@gmail.com) or write by mailing to P.O. Box 128, Painted Post, NY 14870

A public meeting will be held early fall. Any information provided will be included as part of the overall discussion.

When the official date is announced we welcome your involvement. We need your energy, ideas and feedback. This is your community and your opportunity to be part of its future. We look forward to hearing from you and having you at the upcoming meeting.

Please contact: Ray Underwood at 962-0545 or Jean Wise-Wicks at 962-6811.

— Ray Underwood is a member of the Painted Post Board of Trade Colonial Days Committee.

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