

OPINION

Online at www.the-leader.com/opinions

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Take care of home first, governor

TO THE EDITOR | Governor Cuomo, how can you thumb your nose at upstate landowners and deny them their right to develop their land for gas fracking here in our state? You choose to go to Cuba to talk up NY state for business opportunities and yet ignore the value of so many opportunities for NY state landowners who have owned and paid taxes on their property for many years.

You need only to go to our neighboring state of PA to see how fracking has benefited not only landowners but restaurants, gas stations, hotels, and so on. The truth is that the benefits trickle down and do so much good in many areas.

Why don't you save us the expense of going to Cuba and focus on ways for the people of the state of NY to benefit from our natural resources?

Sandy Lundgren
Lindley

Building a better community

TO THE EDITOR | The Southside Neighborhood Association would like to publicly thank our community and partners for their invaluable assistance with our pilot program "Build A Better Block" on East Second Street on June 6th.

SNA, in partnership with Community Progress Inc. and Habitat for Humanity, worked with residents on the selected block to identify simple improvement projects to enhance homes and properties on the street. The event was a great success bringing more than 60 volunteers, including 15 Marine recruits, to replace heaving brick sidewalks, re-build and paint porches, and complete landscaping projects. Eight trees were planted on the street as well, with support from the Corning Garden Club.

SNA hopes that projects like this can help to promote community pride and a spirit of improvement. The project required limited financial resources – just some organization and a lot of elbow grease. It was inspiring to see neighbors helping neighbors! We look forward to adopting another block in SNA's mission area next year, and we encourage neighbors across the city to make a difference in their own backyards, one block at a time!

David Dowler
Southside Neighborhood Association

Battle against tobacco wages on

TO THE EDITOR | I recently read an article giving accolades to the State of New York for an overall decrease in tobacco usage. Although those are exciting statistics for the larger populated cities, the subpopulations in smaller areas such as Chemung County remain high in our teenagers and individuals challenged by mental health issues. Considering these facts, I wonder how happy we should really be about these statistics. Likely these numbers incorporate larger counties and municipalities where indeed the smoking rates have made a huge dent in the state's overall rates overshadowing the disparate areas and subpopulations whose incidence of smoking remains high. In my opinion, the battle continues to remain real, damaging and deadly in Chemung County. Efforts to target vulnerable groups like teens should remain in full force.

I have been a medical provider and resident of the Chemung County (Horseheads, Elmira) area for approximately 2 years. It has been surprising that there seems to be a lack of concern for tobacco advertisements near our public schools. Statistics have already indicated in the past that preteens and teens are highly influenced by persistent exposure to advertisements.

It becomes a type of subliminal message that is ultimately reinforced by peer pressure and familial influence.

Too many patients that enter my office began their journey to tobacco abuse and dependence in their preteen years (ages 12-18). To see the devastating complications of their long term use is not reflected in statistics, newspapers or the tobacco ads displayed near our schools.

If our young people are to remain our future and continue the wonderful legacy this area brings, then we should really focus on ways to sustain or improve their health. Tobacco abuse is a top health concern in this area and if we find ways such as decreasing the influential tobacco advertisements near our schools, then I believe we can begin to have validity in our excitement about a decline in the smoking rates for all the citizens of New York.

Gwendolyn Bowers
Medical resident
Elmira

WEEKLY COLUMN | SEN. TOM O'MARA

A successful summer, page by page

Numbers can help tell every story. Take, for example, how numbers help make the case about the importance of summer reading.

A whole body of studies over decades of prominent research drives home the point that children who engage in summer reading make greater academic gains than children who do not. The bottom line is that simple. In fact, many of the research findings on the so-called "summer slide" jump right off the page, including that:

- Students can lose up to 25 percent of their reading level over the summer.

- A conservative estimate for lost instructional time (for children who don't read during the summer) is approximately two months or roughly 22% of the school year.

- By the end of the sixth grade, children who lose reading skills during the summer are, on average, two years behind their peers.

According to "Making Summer Count," a 2011 report from the RAND Corporation on the importance of summer reading and other learning programs, "Rigorous studies of voluntary summer programs, mandatory summer programs, and programs that encourage students to read at home in the summer have all found



SEN. TOM O'MARA

positive effects on student achievement."

So all of the numbers and statistics help tell the larger story, but sometimes the words themselves form the most meaningful testimony of all.

The late Dr. Carl Sagan, the popular American scientist and Cornell University professor of astronomy and space sciences, once said, "One of the greatest gifts adults can give – to their offspring and to their society – is to read to children."

Or in the words of Thomas Jefferson, "I cannot live without books."

The importance of summer reading just can't be understated, nor is it an exaggeration to call it a lifeline. That's why I'm grateful this summer to have the opportunity to team up with the New York State Library and public libraries statewide, including so many throughout the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions, on the "Summer Reading at New York Libraries" initiative.

For my part, I'm offering an online summer

reading program called "Every Hero Has A Story." To participate, students and parents can visit my Senate website, www.omara.nysenate.gov, and click on the "Every Hero Has A Story" logo in the left-hand column of the home page. Among other features, the site includes a recording journal, opportunities to share books with other family members and friends, and a series of popular summer reading lists.

At its most basic level, summarizing the range of research on the importance of summer reading for students can be stated as straightforwardly as this: it's about getting books into the hands of kids.

According to Scholastic, a few of the keys to successful summer reading are letting kids choose the books they want to read (91% of children say they're more likely to finish a book if they've picked it out themselves), encouraging kids to read four or more books, and, maybe most importantly of all, providing easy access to books.

Of course the underlying importance of access points directly to the critical role played by our public libraries to encourage students and their families to read. Libraries are the gateway for making books and other reading

materials and programs available throughout our communities.

Our region is incredibly fortunate to have an outstanding network of public libraries providing access to books and other reading activities, materials and opportunities.

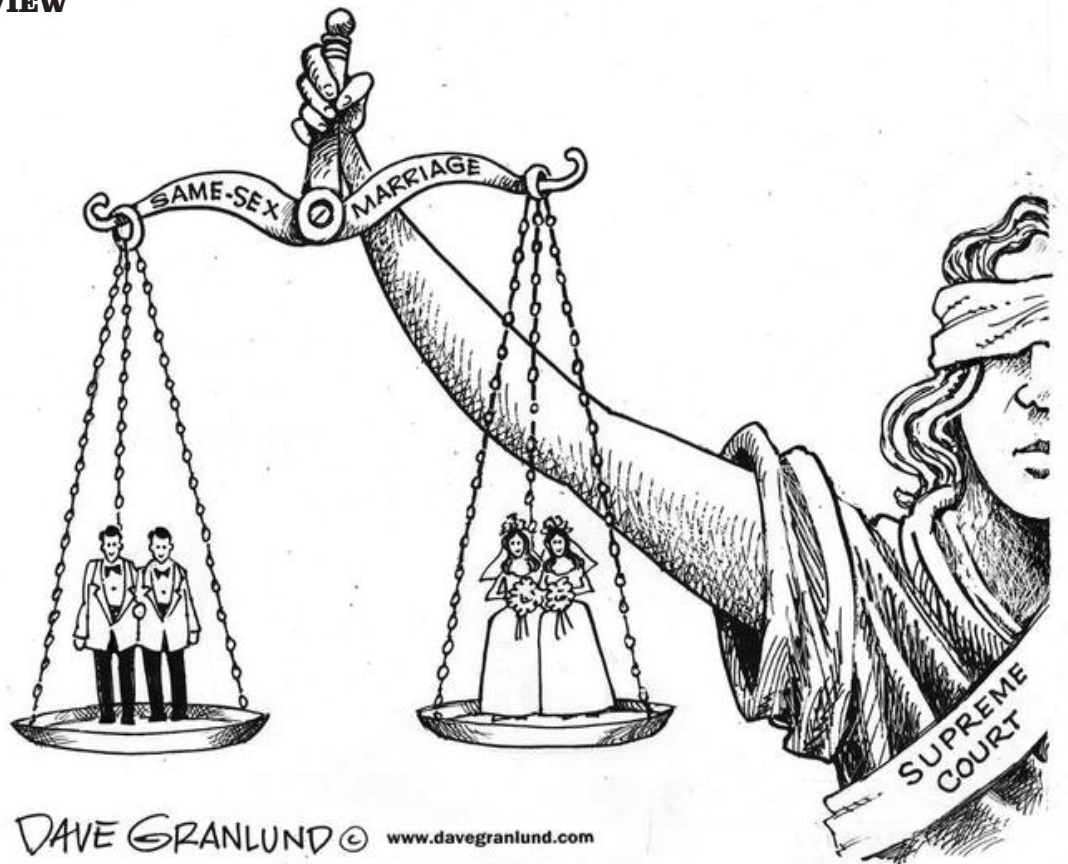
So keep in mind that a variety of summer reading activities and events are taking place at local libraries across the region. Visit the website of the Southern Tier Library System, www.stls.org, for links to member libraries in Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben and Yates counties. The members of the Finger Lakes Library System, including Tompkins County, can be found online at www.flls.org.

Last year, according to New York State Library officials, nearly 2 million young people statewide participated in the summer program. Hopefully it will be more this year. More information on "Summer Reading at New York Libraries" can be found on <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/summer/>.

There are plenty of ways to help children get summer off to a great start, but here's one that covers a lot of important bases: make a reading list.

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

ANOTHER VIEW



DAVE GRANLUND © www.davegranlund.com

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Many help to make festival a success

TO THE EDITOR | WOW ... again, amazing efforts to bring the Watkins Glen Waterfront Festival to fruition. Due to the horrific flooding and the clean-up effort that was required I just didn't see how we could ask the Village and County Crews to make room in their schedules for a Waterfront Festival and a crazy cardboard boat race. But make room they did and by Friday evening Mike Morse of Pro Audio Consulting and his crew were once again showcasing Seneca Harbor Park Marina with a beautiful light show. Mother Nature got involved and showed off her "lighting" abilities with one of the prettiest sunsets I have ever seen. Huge thanks to our Harbor Lights sponsor,

The Watkins Glen Harbor Hotel, supported by Hazlitt 1842 Vineyards, Lakewood Vineyards, Seneca Excursions, Seneca Harbor Station, Seneca Lake Wine Trail, and Village Marina Bar & Grill with harbor lighting support many marina boaters.

On Saturday, a gentle breeze from the south cleared the Cardboard Regatta Start-Line and the race was on. We capped the entry number this year to 50 boats and it worked out perfectly. As the last boats took to the start line...light rain began to fall. Excellent entries...crazy teams...lots of laughter and a good time was held by all.

We thank the Watkins Glen Fire Department, Watkins Glen Village Police and the Schuyler County Sheriff's Safety crew for keeping

us safe. We thank the Watkins Glen Public Works Department and the Schuyler County Buildings and Grounds crews for everything they do. The announcers of the Cardboard Radio Network, and Festival announcer Michele Benjamin for keeping us informed. Hats off to the entire Schamel Family and Harbor Masters Baerry and Terry. Huge thanks to the Freedom Village crew for all their efforts. Kudos to the Dundee Sports Booster for getting the boats to our superb team of Regatta Starters Steve Brace, Shawn Brace and Wyatt Sutterby and John Cornish. And, of course the entire film crew for BIG FOX TV. Bill and his posse are everywhere capturing this crazy event for posterity and of course for their broadcast. While

it takes a Village and a County to put this event on...there is a core group of hardy volunteers who are responsible for putting together this event year after year! You know who you are...please know that as always, it was a job well done.

Last, but never least, we thank the boat builders, the captains and crews! The real stars of the event...! You come in all shapes and sizes and from all backgrounds...yet you all gather on a Saturday in June, and give those of us who line the harbor a fantastic show...an afternoon of laughter...and a look at true determination.

From all of us, we salute you the 2015 Class of Cardboard Sailors of the Seneca Harbor Park Marina!

Caryl Sutterby
Watkins Glen Waterfront Festival Event Chair

The LEADER

The Leader (ISSN #10501983)
The Leader is published daily at
34 West Pulteney Street, Corning,
New York 14830

by Liberty Group Corning
Holdings, Inc. Periodical postage
paid at Corning, N.Y. 14830-0817.
USPS code | 0586-160

Postmaster:
Send address changes to
The Leader, 34 West Pulteney
Street, Corning, New York 14830

Publisher

Rick Emanuel | Group Publisher
936-4651, Ext. 303

Editorial

Stella DuPre | Managing Editor
936-4651, Ext. 361
sdupree@the-leader.com

Circulation

Corinne Mulligan
Customer Service/ Sales Manager
936-4651, Ext. 328

Advertising

Adam Mingos | Ad Director
936-4651, Ext. 388
amingos@the-leader.com

Classifieds 936-4651, Ext. 651
Retail 936-4651, Ext. 653

Postal rates

Steuben County
One month \$33.50
Three months \$100.50
Six months \$201.00
One year \$402.00

ELSEWHERE IN USA
One month \$43.00
Three months \$129.00
Six months \$258.00
One year \$516.00

Home delivery subscriptions reflect basic subscription rates before additional charges. Due to the added value of special editions there will be an additional charge for each special edition which will accelerate the expiration of your subscription. There will be no more than 12 special editions per year.