

OPINION

LETTERS POLICY

■ Letters should be typed or neatly printed.
 ■ Letters must be signed and include an address and phone number.

■ Letters may be edited for space considerations.
 ■ The publication of any letter is at the discretion of the editor.

■ All letters become the property of The Leader and cannot be returned to sender.

Mail: LETTERS TO THE EDITOR, THE LEADER PO BOX 1017 CORNING, NY 14830
Fax: 607-936-9939
Email: sdupree@the-leader.com

Online at www.the-leader.com/opinions

The LEADER

34 W. Pulteney St., Corning, NY 14830
www.the-leader.com

Stella DuPree..... Editor
 Derrick Ek..... Assistant Editor

READER VIEW | STACY WARD

Girls need role models

I have been a Girl Scout volunteer for a year now and I would like to share why I spend my time in this organization.

I love being a role model that impacts girls' lives. Not only am I making a difference in girls' lives, I also benefit from my involvement in Girl Scouts. I'm sharing my passion for empowering girls by giving them a voice and helping them learn new skills in a fun, friendly, supportive environment. I have made many friends through Girl Scouting and feel part of an exciting community.

The results of a survey done this summer by Girl Scouts of the USA concluded that 97 percent of girls have had fun and exciting new experiences in Girl Scouts. We'd love to see even more girls be part of this experience. We need volunteers to make it happen!

This summer, our Brownie troop volunteered to plant flowers in front of Corning City Hall. It was so exciting to see the girls

show up prepared and ready to work. We planted over 200 flowers! The best part was it didn't seem like work. The girls had fun while learning about gardening and the joy of donating their time and energy to beautify their community. This is just one example of the activities made possible for the girls by volunteers generously contributing their time and expertise.

Girl Scout volunteers come from all walks of life: They are men, women, young professionals, retirees, college students and more. You don't have to have a daughter in Girl Scouts to share your passions.

We need adults to chaperone trips, be first aiders to events, share their love of the outdoors, or even lead a troop! We're flexible to meet your schedule.

Consider joining me in one of the greatest adventures of your life! Visit girlscouts.org/join or call (800) 948.4414.

Stacy Ward is a Corning

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Reed listens to all constituents

TO THE EDITOR | To me, a good representative is someone that listens to the people and works to find common goals for the good of a community. If I've learned anything about Congressman Tom Reed during his time in Congress it's that he has made our area a priority. Tom has held almost 150 town halls in our district inviting members of the community to join him in a conversation. He truly remains connected to our community and brings our thoughts and concerns with him back to Washington as he fights for our area.

Tom has joined with elected officials in all levels of government to fight for initiatives our community would benefit from, not to mention the heavy lifting done at the federal level to control our national debt and high unemployment. Tom fought hard with local leaders to ensure Lakeshore Hospital stayed open, recently hosted a roundtable at SUNY Fredonia about campus sexual assault, helped secure \$2.1 million in federal funds for the Wastewater Treatment Project in Westfield and worked directly with FEMA to help our county secure assistance after the may flooding occurred. We are so quick to forget about these things.

There is a clear difference between Tom Reed and his opponent Martha Robertson. Tom is willing to hear the concerns of his constituents and work to find common ground. He has fought passionately for our communities, and I want to thank Tom Reed for his hard work in the 23rd Congressional district. We need to stand behind good representatives. Remember to vote on Nov. 4.

Carla Westerlund,
Greenhurst

Follow us on Twitter

The Leader: @TheNewsLeader1
Stella Dupree: @TheLeaderDupree
Shawn Vargo: @TheLeaderVargo
Chris Gill: @TheLeaderGill
Bob Benz: @TheLeaderBenz
Derrick Ek: @TheLeaderEk
Amber Brenza: @TheLeaderBrenza
Eric Wensel: @TheLeaderWensel

POLITICS | SEN. TOM O'MARA

An economy still going hungry



SEN. TOM O'MARA

There are reminders, every day, all around us, of the devastating impact of job losses on regional communities and, even more to the point, individual local lives, families and households.

Not long ago, I highlighted an analysis stemming from the state Labor Department's latest unemployment figures that again delivered the message: the Upstate economy remains stagnant. Earlier this year, there was another report from the Tax Foundation pinpointing New York as one of the worst business tax climate states in the nation.

It just doesn't let up. But you can't always get the strongest sense of it from statistics on a page, until along comes a report that starts putting a face on the numbers getting tossed around.

A few weeks ago, the Food Bank of the Southern Tier, as a kickoff to Hunger Action Month in September, sponsored a legislative forum on the local hunger problem. I attended. So did many other local and state government officials, and business leaders. We heard a strong message: 1 in 4 Southern Tier residents receive Food Bank assistance at some point during the year. That's nearly 50% higher than the national average.

A few thoughts. First, the obvious one concerns the work of the Food Bank and its partners and volunteers, which deserves every bit of our gratitude. Throughout its service area last year, the

Tier President Natasha Thompson said, "Two-thirds of our clients are out of work but looking for work. We're not talking about famine. We're talking about food insecurity. We'd really like folks to be aware of hunger issues in your community."

You can read the full report and find out more about the Food Bank of the Southern Tier, including how you can help, online. I've placed a link to it on my Senate website at www.omara.nysenate.gov (click on the "Hunger Action Month" icon in the left-hand column of the home page).

Awareness is a key beginning, of course, but then there needs to be action. In late December of 2013, the Governor created an Anti-Hunger Task Force with a mission to "enhance the effectiveness of our fight against hunger by better coordinating the significant public and private resources already dedicated to this important issue."

The new task force includes an impressive array of New York leaders in anti-hunger advocacy, education, health and medicine, social services, and, importantly in my view, agriculture and the food industry. At its beginning, the task force was touted as a driving force in the development of strategies in pursuit of several comprehensive goals, including increasing participation in federally funded programs like SNAP, school breakfast and school lunch; utilizing public-private partnerships to enhance outreach

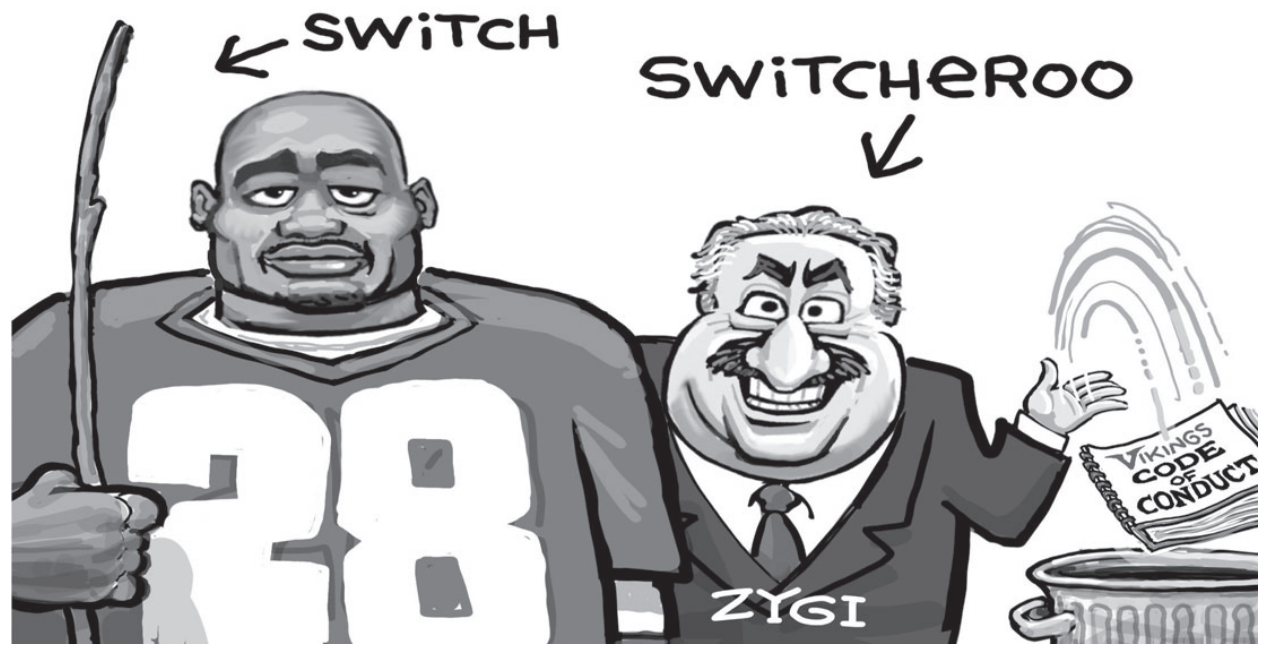
and encourage greater cooperation and coordination among governments, businesses and the non-profit sectors; and enhancing access to quality, healthy food through New York-grown, locally produced goods, which in turn would serve to create local jobs and strengthen local economies.

But the task force shouldn't just exist to look good on a website. To date, I've yet to see a final report from the task force issuing a set of recommendations for action. That needs to be forthcoming before the start of the next legislative session. You can stay updated on any task force developments at www.governor.ny.gov/anti-hunger-task-force.

The realities of what the Food Bank of the Southern Tier calls "food insecurity" stand, collectively, as yet another stark reminder of the devastating impact that job losses and an overall weak economy have on individual lives and entire communities. And so it reinforces the overriding importance, in my view, to stay focused on getting this economy turned around, on getting our workers back to work in jobs that can help them move from a state of insecurity to a long-term sense of security for themselves and their families - for the sake of food and so much more.

State Sen. Tom O'Mara, R-Big Flats, represents New York's 58th Senate District, which includes Steuben, Chemung, Schuyler and Yates counties, and part of Tompkins County.

ANOTHER VIEW



READER VIEW | KAREN BEISANZ

Seek the truth in campaign advertising

Voters, beware! It's election season.

Prepare for an onslaught of half-truths and outright lies. Campaign mudslinging reportedly did not occur when George Washington ran unopposed. But ever since, our election campaigns, at all levels, have been besmirched with dishonesty and distortions. Even Honest Abe couldn't avoid it. The facts no longer seem to suffice for winning an election.

Part of the problem is that it is difficult to outlaw campaign lies without violating our free speech rights. Also, the voters themselves seem to relish the lies of their favored candidates and act like

co-conspirators. They understand the benefits of lying and forgive or tolerate it from their political team, figuring that good sportsmanship doesn't win seats.

SuperPacs, using undisclosed donations, indirectly assist individual campaigns through ads that demean and denigrate their political opponents. Their TV ads are very lucrative for TV stations. So even when ads are deceptive, the profit motive usually convinces stations to accept them without fact-checking. The League of Women Voters (LWV) has begun a program to address this problem: Truth in Campaign Advertising.

The LWV approaches TV stations, and asks them to fact check political ads as a public service.

These slick, creative Super-Bowl-style ads persuade and manipulate. They can be very entertaining and convincing but they rarely discuss candidates' positions on important issues. They arouse our emotions rather than our reason. But shouldn't our votes be based on accurate information?

What are we voters to do to prevent such manipulation? We are not helpless. We could confront candidates when we catch them lying. We could organize a community dialogue on the subject to discuss what

can be done.

If you do not use the internet, you can check your candidate's voting record by asking his/her office for a copy along with an explanation of the bills. The voting record says it all.

If you use the internet here are some helpful, non-partisan sources:
 ■ Vote411.org from the League of Women Voters
 ■ factcheck.org
 ■ <http://blog.washingtonpost.com/fact-checker/>
 ■ <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/>
 ■ Opensecrets.org (to follow the money)
 ■ NPR.org
Karen Beisanz is a Corning resident.