

OPINION

LETTERS POLICY

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READER VIEW | MIKE CARSON

What is the future of NSB?

Recently there was a ground breaking ceremony for the conversion of CFA to upscale apartments. The question for Northside residents is, what is in the future for Northside Blodgett school?

I have a suggestion. Raze the school, split the property in half with a fire lane or street and divide the remaining property into building lots. Make the lot sizes comparable to the surrounding neighborhoods to preserve the population density of the area. Restrict the construction to single-family homes but do not restrict the size or style of the homes. This will preserve the eclectic nature of the size and styles of homes in the current neighborhoods.

Pros: This approach is a free-market solution to developing a neighborhoods. No governing entity or corporation or developer will be deciding the fate of the Northside. Development will happen over time, allowing normal transitioning of the neighborhoods. Based of surrounding lot sizes, the Blodgett property should accommodate approximately 25 lots. Based on my lot value, roughly \$400,000 to \$500,000 in tax revenue would accrue to the city upon sale of the properties. If one assumes an average building cost of approximately \$100,000 the city will eventually see a tax base increase of roughly \$2.5 million. New construction in the area should maintain or increase the surrounding property values. The traffic pattern in the area will

remain about the same because the population density would be the same.

Cons: There will be disruption in our neighborhood during the razing and preparation phase of the land to accommodate new homes. It will take years to fully develop the neighborhood and for the city to see the tax base increase. I do not know what entity owns the school, but there will be a substantial cost to raze the building, lay out the lots and add services (electric, sewer, water and etc.). Northside Blodgett alumni and people with an emotional attachment would probably oppose this solution.

I am offering this suggestion because I am tired of government entities, corporations and developers with substantial resources and political clout deciding for our area what they think is best for us. I am not questioning their intent. I am sure they are well-intentioned, but when there is an economic or political motives involved, somehow that takes precedent and we living in the area have no choice but to live with their decision. However, if the natural market forces are allowed to work there is no decision to be made. The neighborhood would develop naturally, one house at time, as happened in normal neighborhoods as the city grows. And the individual property owners would have the freedom to develop their property as they see fit.

Mike Carson is a Northside resident.

WEEKLY COLUMN | SEN. TOM O'MARA

An Upstate NY picture in time

There's an old rule of thumb that a message has to be delivered three times before an audience really starts to hear it.

So for the third consecutive week in this column, I'll stay focused on the condition of Upstate New York.

Despite efforts in some quarters to paint a rosier picture, you simply can't hide the realities of the Upstate economy. The stains just keep reappearing.

The latest evidence comes from the well-regarded Siena Research Institute, which is in the midst of conducting a series of polls called "How We Live: The Fabric of Upstate Life" that survey a representative sample of Upstate residents on a variety of topics.

Some of the findings so far include:

- In a direct refutation of beliefs underpinning the time-honored "American Dream," nearly two-thirds of these Upstate respondents believe that America's best economic days are a thing of the past and, as a result, the next generation will have to accept a lower standard of living.

- Nearly 70 percent think the current generation of Upstaters, those young people coming of age today, has less opportunity than 25 years ago.



TOM O'MARA

- Nearly half of the respondents have decided to leave Upstate, or are considering it, after they retire.

- Only 21 percent believe they're better off financially than last year, and only 28 percent believe their finances will improve next year.

- More than 50% are concerned about being able to maintain their current standard of living.

And in a clear sign of the anxiety of these times, nearly 60 percent of the Upstate New Yorkers questioned say they spend more time than before worrying about money – and more than one-third believe that their job or another member of their household's job is not secure.

Collectively, it paints a bleak picture. There's no other way to say it. The polls reinforce the prevalence of common realities across the Upstate region. The flight of young people, and the fears confronting an aging population. Job losses, and job worries. High taxes. Overall

cost-of-living pressures – the high price of gas, and food, and utilities -- in a stagnant economy.

All of the above has certainly been reiterated over the past few weeks within the legislative rankings compiled by two of Upstate's staunchest supporters, Unshackle Upstate and the Business Council of New York, each of which extended a seal of approval for my personal commitment to standing up for the future of Upstate -- a distinction I'm particularly proud to have earned.

By now, I think we all know and understand this litany of Upstate's ills.

Dr. Don Levy, director of the Siena Research Institute, said, "Only thirty percent (of Upstaters) believe the economy in general is going to improve over the next twelve months and even when we ask them to think about ten years from now, in 2024, only thirty-one percent think that things will have improved...to the majority of Upstaters, it just doesn't feel that much better."

You can find the poll results and read more on the Institute website, www.siena.edu.

How about his one? Siena asked the question, "As you look forward, how confident are you in the government's ability

to take all necessary actions that will lead the nation out of economic difficulty?" A full three-quarters, 75 percent, are not confident.

So we still have to address this crisis of confidence in government to help, too, and you can only change the impression by changing the facts on the ground.

The fact remains that New York taxes too much. In New York, the cost of living is too high. New York's debt is too high. Overregulation is rampant in New York. And New York is not yet business friendly.

So when we get down to the fundamental work of the next legislative session, it has to remain about taking care of the fundamentals. It has to remain about scraping the walls of Upstate's decline, so that the cracks can be properly filled, the holes fully plugged and the economy and a greater sense of security about the present – and the future – fully overhauled and rebuilt in ways that will last.

You can't just gloss it over with patchwork.

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.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Don't be cheap, back the library

TO THE EDITOR | When I was a little girl, about 80 years ago, I lived in an orphanage in Binghamton. I was lucky and got adopted by nice people, and we moved to Corning. My father worked at the glass factory, and Mother stayed at home and cared for us. We weren't rich, but we got by. I went to school here, and later when I was grown and married, my children went to school here, too.

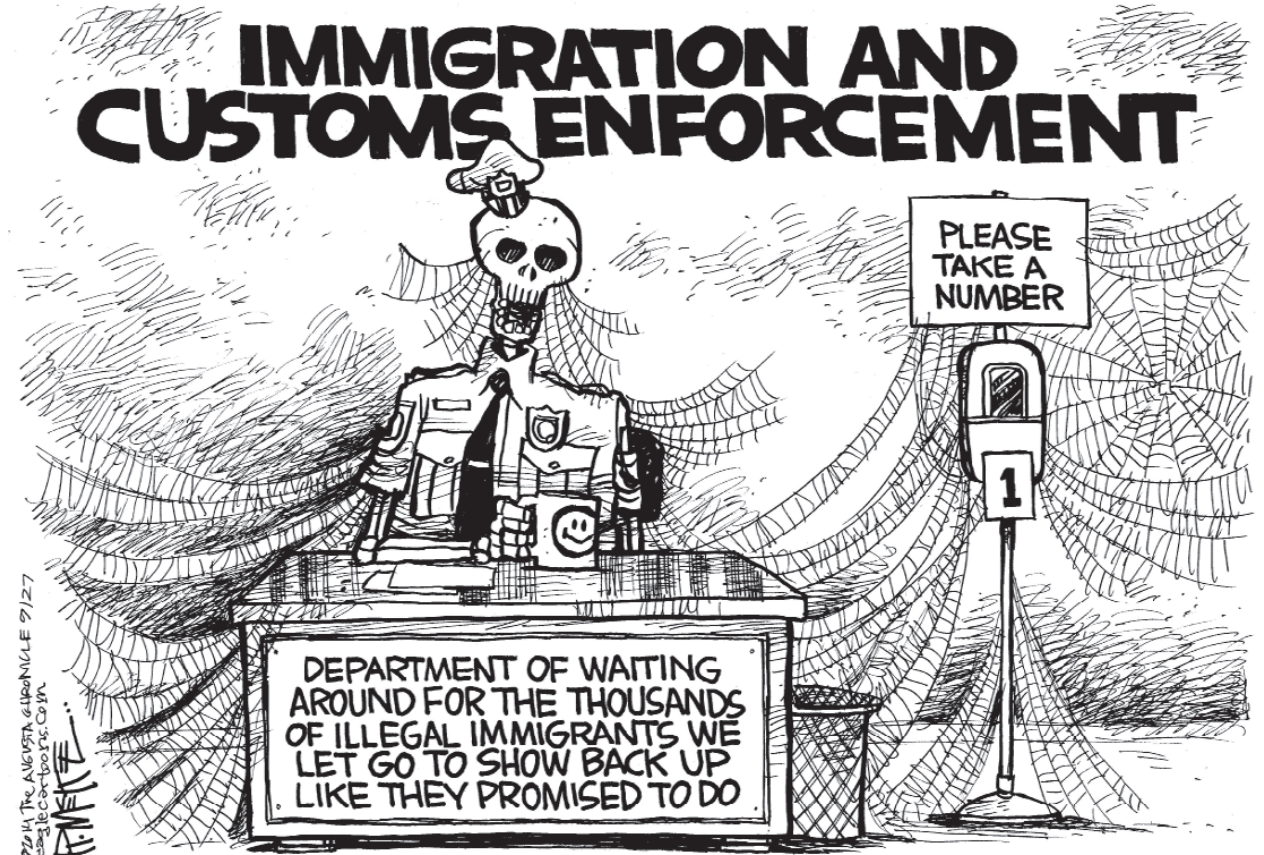
After I got adopted,

books were always in my house. Even in times when we had next to nothing, we felt rich because we could get all the books we wanted at the library. Reading a good story can take your mind off of your troubles.

I'm on a fixed income, but I don't mind saving out a bit each week toward the library. All children should be able to read stories. I think people who say they don't want to pay for it are just plain cheap.

Jessie Colton,
Painted Post

ANOTHER VIEW



OTHER VIEW | SEATTLE TIMES

Keep climate-change study in context

Climate change has extraordinary power to melt rational analysis.

Sober scientific research, couched in the lexicon of hypothesis and probability, becomes a puddle when it enters the oven of political rhetoric.

Extremism is evidenced on the left and the right. An unusually hot local summer becomes rock-solid evidence of climate change for bar-stool

scientists on the left.

On Tuesday, it was the right's turn.

A new study by two former University of Washington scientists found scant evidence that a global temperature rise was to blame for a 1-degree uptick in average coastal temperature since 1900 on the West Coast.

Instead, the study suggests that changes in wind and air patterns were responsible for 80 percent

of the warming from Northern California to Washington.

Right-wing skeptics seized on it as irrefutable evidence of a global climate-change hoax, ignoring studies that reached the opposite conclusion, and skipping over the researchers' careful hedging against such overreach.

"This doesn't say that global warming is not happening," study co-author

Nathan Mantua said. "It doesn't say human-caused climate change isn't happening globally."

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a United Nations-affiliated task force of 3,500 experts from more than 120 nations, concluded in a recent report it was "extremely likely" — a probability of 95 to 100 percent — that humans are "the dominant cause" of a warming planet.

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, West Pulteney Street,
Corning, New York 14830

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

Circulation
Elmer Kuehner | Circulation director
936-4651, Ext. 320

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

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12 special editions per year.