

OPINION

LETTERS POLICY

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Many reasons to support library

TO THE EDITOR | I am writing to you from, and about, the Corning public library. I would like you to put an ad or paragraph about the vote that will decide if the library will get funds that will ask people to support or vote for the library. Some reasons why people, including you, should support the library are:

1. Lots of people like going there.
2. It is a good place to go to do work and homework.
3. The people who work there will have find another job.
4. You can do more than just read or get books there; you can get movies, go to clubs, relax, play on a computer or stay there after school.
5. You go to storytime.
6. You can get books or movies for free.
7. The librarians are very nice and are good friends.
8. All the effort people put into supporting it will be in vain.
9. The community would not be complete without a library.

I hope you will consider all the people who really truly need the library.

I need the library so I can check out books like Harry Potter and Percy Jackson.

Sofia Sterbenk, age 8, grade 4

We cannot afford 'library' activities

TO THE EDITOR | We hear about all the free activities and programs given by the so-called library. Webster's Dictionary refers to library as a place in which books, manuscripts, musical scores or other literary and artistic materials are kept. The library I recall back in the 30s on Pine and First streets was just that. We now have an organization that consists of programs and activities. We read in the paper of those people who go there and get all these free. They are not free, it is the property owner that pays for them one way or another.

Walter Johnson stated his tax would be about \$37 a year. Back in 1957 my school tax was \$18. When they talked about consolidating all the area schools, they said our tax would not vary that much from what it is after consolidation. I have a rental property as well as my home. The rental property tax is \$2,100 and my home

property is \$500 on the Star program. We have an annual request for a tax raise every year by the school board. Would this happen every year by the library?

I was on the Corning Town Board during the 60s and 70s and our yearly budget included financial help for the library. They seemed satisfied with what the different contributors provided. The problem now is somewhere along the line it was decided to expand the programs with no charge to those who use them.

I do not understand the people of Chemung County who live in the C-PP school district. There are 500 to 1,000 of them and where were they when the library tax was voted on? I am sure they were against it, yet East Corning was the only district that voted for it along with the City of Corning. Folks, we cannot afford it and I hope a larger NO vote in October will settle this matter once and for all.

Lester H. Betts
Painted Post

Raising awareness, funds to fight pike

TO THE EDITOR | There is one less pike in Elmira's Eldridge Lake thanks to a River Friends' Aug. 2 fishing tournament to rid the lake of the predatory fish.

River Friends held a fund-raising fishing tournament to help reduce the number of large pike that are eating the smaller game fish. Over 100 anglers vied for the \$500 first-place prize. Jason Faso, 15, of Long Island won it. Jason and his family were staying in a Seneca Lake cottage.

The tourney successfully raised public awareness of the pike problem and \$2,500 for River Friends to promote fishing, outdoor recreation and conservation. We thank all the tournament participants, volunteers and these sponsors: Fire Alarm Service, Finger Lakes HVAC & Refrigeration, Chemung Canal Trust Co., Hills Valleys and Streams and Tops Markets.

We thank the Elmira Wegmans staff for doing a pike cleaning and fillet demonstration, the City of Elmira and Eldridge Park for partnering with River Friends to catch that one pike.

Pauline Emery,
Acting President,
Friends of the Chemung River Watershed

POLITICS | SEN. TOM O'MARA

NY-grown future is always within reach

'The breezes,' the late American author John Updike, a Pennsylvania native, once wrote of September, "taste of apple peel."

Now that we're turning the pages of our calendars toward autumn's beginning, we can also go ahead and turn our attention to the great bounty offered by New York State agriculture throughout the season ahead. One of government's constant responsibilities, of course, is to do our part to help maintain farming as a foundation of this state's culture and economy.

That includes taking every opportunity to help promote the abundance and variety of New York's locally grown agricultural products.

Here in the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions and, indeed, statewide, we can deservedly take great pride in a nationally renowned lineup of agricultural offerings. And New York's second-largest-in-the-nation apple industry offers a perfect example.

The New York Apple Association (www.nyapplecountry.com) recently reported that this year's apple harvest, which officially started in mid-August, is expected to be robust and serve as a strong follow-up to last year's vintage crop of 32 million bushels. The association forecasts a 30-million-bushel crop for 2014, a bit below last year but still above the state's five-year average of 29.5 million



TOM O'MARA

bushels. Most importantly, the association urges New York consumers to buy their apples, cider, juice, pies and other apple products from local farm markets, grocers and pick-your-own destinations.

"We grow more apples than anyone east of the Mississippi, so New Yorkers don't need to look any further than right here to find great apples," New York Apple Association President Jim Allen says. "Our motto of 'millions of local branches near you' is spot on." To help find a pick-your-own orchard (which, by the way, offers a great family outing) or a farm market near you, the association has overhauled its website, making it more consumer friendly and convenient with easy-to-use locator maps.

Remember the website: www.nyapplecountry.com.

There will also be plenty of fall festivals in the months ahead, including the Ithaca Apple Harvest Festival in early October. It's always an active time of year across Finger Lakes wine country, of course, with the grape harvest underway and celebrated with numerous events (stay updated on www.fingerlakeswinecountry.com).

So agriculture-related

opportunities to buy local abound across the region during September and October. But it takes more than straightforward consumer awareness to fully ensure the well-being of an industry that's constantly challenged from so many different national and international competitive quarters.

Recently, the state reported that the number of farm-based businesses producing wine, beer, spirits and cider utilizing New York-grown ingredients has increased by 100 percent over the past three years. That's at least partly due to state government's efforts to encourage new licensees, enhance marketing and promotion, and ease regulatory burdens. The number of New York-based cideries, for example, including the seven that have come on board since the enactment of a new Farm Cider law that took effect last January, has grown to 29 – a nearly 500 percent increase since 2011.

These government-driven efforts and initiatives need to continue. This past legislative session, for instance, saw the enactment of a key plank of the Senate's "Grow in New York" program to encourage more young people to become involved in farming. This year's action establishes a new revolving loan fund to assist beginning farmers with startup costs including land and equipment.

According to the state Department of Agriculture and Markets, in addition to providing New York with

America's third-largest dairy and wine industries, our farmers also make us the largest producer of cabbage and pumpkins; the second-largest producer of apples, maple syrup and squash; third in cauliflower and corn silage; fourth in pears, snap beans, sweet corn, tomatoes and cucumbers; fifth in onions and tart cherries; and eighth in strawberries and oats; and 14th in potatoes. That's highlighting just some of what's grown in New York.

In short, it's an industry that earns and deserves its accolades. Just consider all that's at stake. New York's farmers are the source of the freshest food for New York's consumers at a time of ever-increasing demand for locally grown products regionally, statewide and nationally. Farmers are the first stewards of the land. They provide thousands of livelihoods and anchor so many communities in so many ways.

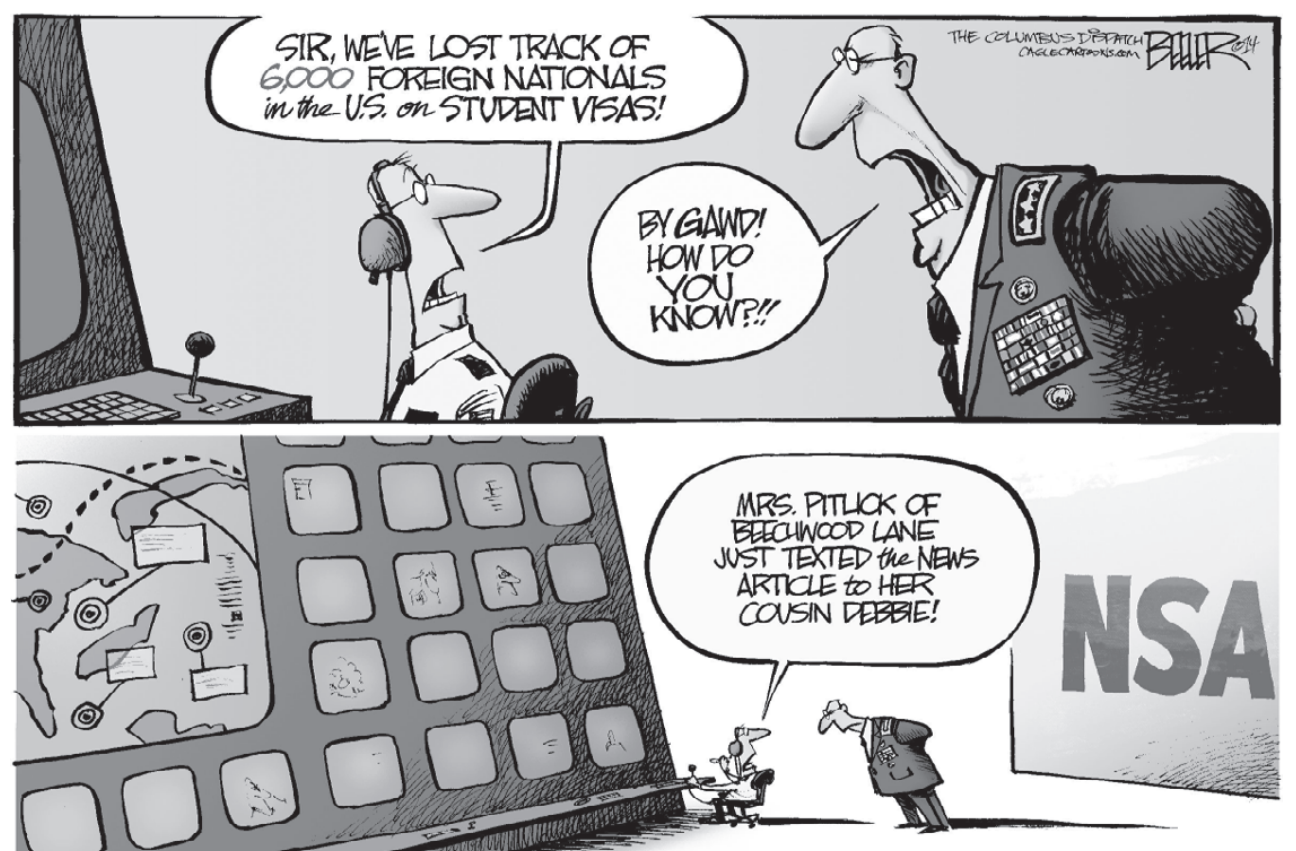
So the Legislature has to stay on board to keep agriculture, overall, strong.

A NY-grown future starts from a single fact: the success of New York's \$5-billion-plus agriculture sector begins and ends with the success of New York's 36,000 farm families.

The truth is that we can all do our part to help keep them going – and growing.

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



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Robertson hits low with negative ad

TO THE EDITOR | I write this letter as a former overweight American who woke up every morning for 43 years knowing I faced another day of embarrassment and discrimination because of my size. Millions of overweight individuals face this everyday.

Five years ago I became very ill and had to have a kidney removed. I had out-of-control diabetes and sky high blood pressure and cholesterol.

Two years ago, I chose to undergo gastric bypass surgery, just like our Congressman Tom Reed who was also experiencing health problems.

Tom and I share this experience and we both made a decision for our future and our families. This was a life-changing decision and I'm happy to say that Congressman Reed has lost 110 pounds and has added decades to his life, just like I have. I'm down 170 pounds, and my health problems no longer exist. I was surprised to see

Martha Robertson's recent attack ad running against Tom, which shows several photos of the Congressman taken prior to his surgery.

I became angered and outraged that the Robertson campaign would resort to such low levels of negativity toward Tom Reed. This put an unfair focus on a health condition that so many of our citizens face every day.

It's clear that Martha Robertson is trying to paint Tom's past health conditions in a negative light and influence voters based

on his former physical appearance.

This type of campaigning is hurtful and disgraceful and it should not be tolerated.

Let's focus campaigns on the issues that matter most, not someone's past health conditions. I'm proud of my life-changing decision, and I'm proud of Tom Reed for taking control and adding years to his life.

Rodney J. Strange,
Chemung County Legislator,
15th Legislative District,
Elmira

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First Amendment

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.