

OPINION

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Thanks for supporting United Way

To the Editor | United Way of the Southern Tier wishes to extend our thanks to over 300 guests who recently attended our annual dinner event in Corning, NY. For those in attendance we know you experienced what it means to LIVE UNITED. For ninety minutes our guests came together to be inspired and celebrate acts of Giving, Advocating, and Volunteering, and most importantly, how people united can transform a community.

Throughout the evening guests were filled with hope, inspiration and constant reminder of how fortunate we are to call the southern tier our home.

During the event United Way invited all attending and the entire community to embrace our vision moving forward. That together with everyone's help we can create a thriving place for all to live, a place where the precious lives of all children are able to grow up in a community where their foundation for life-long success is assured and that united; we commit that our collective well-being is secure.

It was United Way's honor to present its highest award, The James B. Flaws Lasting Legacy Award to founding members of the Health Ministry of the Southern Tier. While changes in accessibility to health care coverage led to ceasing operations in 2015, Health Ministry

of the Southern Tier and their dedicated volunteers improved lives for thousands of uninsured residents for nearly twenty years. United Way presented our annual G.A.V. awards to several special individuals. Give Award, Richard Rahill; Advocate Award; Ellen Wohl, and Volunteer Award to Hilda Lando. There's just no denying, we know what success looks like, we know how change happens, and we know what good comes by the hands of those who we recognized and all past award recipients who've made extraordinary contributions to the lives of others. In today's edition, please see our recognition announcement for these very special recipients.

On behalf of United Way of the Southern Tier, we thank everyone who finds their passion, mobilizes to make a difference, and makes the southern tier community a place we proudly call our home.

Stephen M. Hughes
President & CEO, United Way of the Southern Tier

Stamp Out Hunger was a success

To the Editor | I'm writing on behalf of the Painted Post Food Pantry, Inc in heartfelt appreciation of all those who made the Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive a huge success. Thank you so much to the dedicated Postal employees for all your efforts in publicizing the event, picking up, and delivering food bags to our local Pantry on Sat. May 13th. Your extra work is greatly appreciated and will not go unnoticed in our community.

We also would like to thank the students from Mrs. Seip's Interact Club at the Corning-Painted Post High School for dedicating your day to unpacking and sorting the thousands of donated food items. Your hard work was appreciated, and essential to making the Food Drive a success.

Most of all, tremendous thanks to our community who donated over two tons of a variety of food to support our pantry. Our appreciation of your generosity in helping our neighbors with much needed food, cannot be expressed. Those who are hungry in our community are most grateful for your

help in making food available at the Pantry.

Thank you to all our neighbors for supporting our local Pantry, and helping to Stamp Out Hunger in our community. Your generosity is appreciated by all.

Phyllis Draper
Painted Post Food Pantry Board

Sick and tired of party politics

To the Editor | I was very disappointed to miss the Political Pundit Night on May 22, but I had a commitment to the Steuben County Going Solar campaign. However, thanks to The Leader's coverage, I was at least able to get a flavor of the event.

It was interesting to note that Rich Negri and Dan Mandell are both sick and tired of party politics. I am too. That is why I am running for Mayor of Corning without party affiliation. (Actually, I am walking for Mayor at the moment; I'll start running in July).

The real issue with political parties is that the support they offer (or withdraw) is essential to re-election. As a result, legislators are very reluctant to break with the party, even when their vote is clearly not what their constituents want, as we see time and time again.

Presumably, that (toeing the line) is what led to some of the more interesting comments of the evening. From Bob Price: "This (the Russia connection) could all turn out to be nothing." It could, but I for one would like to know for certain. He seems to feel that the "seething hatred" against the President, by the media, is unprecedented. Everything about this President is unprecedented, or should that be unprecedented? Another example of toeing the line against all odds is Mayor Negri's comment: "I think he's doing a great job." Not just a good job; a "great" job. What criteria does Mayor Negri use? He says Donald Trump is "doing a great job"? Maury Houghton calls it a "train wreck". Which one is right?

Elizabeth Whitehouse
Candidate for Mayor Corning

COMMENTARY | STATE SEN. TOM O'MARA

"From the ground up spans FDR to today"

In a letter to the nation's governors during the height of the Dust Bowl of the 1930s, President Franklin D. Roosevelt stated, "The Nation that destroys its soils destroys itself."

It's a statement as true today as when the letter was written in 1937.

In a recent report, "Rethink Soil: A Roadmap to U.S. Soil Health," The Nature Conservancy examines how over the past century agricultural technology improvements have helped farmers continue to feed a world population that has soared from under 2 billion to over 7 billion.

During the same time, however, America's agricultural soils have been significantly degraded. The report highlights the significant impact this degradation has on soil health, estimating that "the annual societal and environmental costs of the status quo are up to \$85.1 billion annually through unintended effects on human health, property, energy, endangered species, biodiversity losses, eutrophication, contamination, agricultural productivity, and resilience."

In short, it's an alarming scenario and it set the stage for a round table the Senate and Assembly Environmental Conservation Committees recently convened in Albany called "From the Ground Up: Why Soil Health is Key to Sustainable Food Production."

Specifically we invited a panel of experts to focus on the challenge of soil health and resiliency, one of the most critical challenges facing farmers and the agricultural industry overall throughout New York State.

Our panel included New York Agriculture Commissioner Richard Ball and staff from the state Department of Agriculture and Markets. They were joined by experts from Cornell University's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, as well as other agriculture and conservation educators and researchers representing a range of organizations including the New York Farm Bureau, The Nature Conservancy in New York, and the state associations of Conservation Districts, Agribusiness and Vegetable Growers.

Soil health is becoming an increasing concern for New York State agriculture. We have witnessed firsthand in the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions over the past several years how severe weather, like last year's drought, threatens the future of farming. Soil health and resiliency have significant effects on the state's agricultural industry, particularly farm productivity, profitability and sustainability. The ability of soils to resist drought, flooding and other impacts continues to emerge as a critical conservation, economic growth, environmental protection and food quality challenge in New York State and across the nation.

Consequently, the Senate and Assembly are continuing to assist and spur action on the development of a New York State Soil Health Management Network modeled after the successful federal Soil Health Network. This year's state budget, for example, included \$400,000 from the state's Environmental Protection Fund for a "Soil Health Initiative" at Cornell University.

The initiative will facilitate ongoing soil-related research and guide additional efforts toward the establishment of the state-level Soil Health Management Network. The envisioned network would be a public-private extension and education consortium.

The bottom line is straightforward: the sooner the better on developing and implementing a comprehensive, state-level network. The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences has been at the forefront of the emerging research and response strategies. We're grateful the college's leadership and appreciated this opportunity to hear from experts across the spectrum of soil health and resiliency on how best to move forward.

The fundamental, underlying importance of this challenge – and the necessary pursuit of forward-thinking programs and policies to tackle it – is summarized by the federal Natural Resources Conservation Service, "Soil is a living and life-giving natural resource. As world population and food production demands rise, keeping our soil healthy and productive is of paramount importance. By farming using soil health principles and systems that include no-till, cover cropping and diverse rotations, more and more farmers are actually increasing their soil's organic matter and improving microbial activity. As a result, farmers are sequestering more carbon, increasing water infiltration, improving wildlife and pollinator habitat – all while harvesting better profits and often better yields."

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Sun. 6/4 3:15, 6:15
Mon. 6/5 6:15
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(Johnny Depp, Geoffrey Rush, Javier Bardem) Rated PG-13 (2 HRS 9 Min)
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[12:00, 2:15]
Alien Covenant (R)
[1:30] 4:10, 6:50, 9:30
Wonder Woman 3D (PG13)
[1:30] 4:30, 7:30
Baywatch (R)
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The best part? 50% of every \$5 photo sent goes towards helping area shelters & rescues in the Southern Tier.

Go to the-leader.com/contests today to submit your photos!