

OPINION

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COMMENTARY | STATE SEN. TOM O'MARA, R-BIG FLATS

Domestic violence demands raising awareness

Consider the following facts from the New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence (OPDV): there are more than 400,000 domestic violence incidents in New York State each year.

Read that again: more than 400,000 domestic violence incidents annually. Domestic Violence Awareness Month throughout October tries to raise awareness of this and many other facts, as well as to let the victims of this violence know that there are places to turn for help.

Several years ago, a prominent national study reported this finding: 60% of Americans know a victim of domestic violence or sexual assault. Sixty percent. That was just one of the numerous, disturbing findings from a study released as part

of a nationwide public awareness campaign commissioned by NO MORE (nomore.org), an organization continuing its work today. According to NO MORE:

- 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men experience violence from their partners in their lifetimes;
- 1 in 3 teens experience sexual or physical abuse or threats from a boyfriend or girlfriend in one year;
- 1 in 5 women are survivors of rape;
- 1 in 2 women and 1 in 5 men have experienced some form of sexual violence in their lives; and
- 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men were sexually abused before the age of 18.

The NO MORE campaign has brought together concerned advocates, community and corporate leaders, and celebrities and

athletes in a renewed effort to combat domestic violence.

In New York State, we also keep trying to strengthen our laws. In 2017, for example, the Senate approved legislation (S4311) that would provide expanded protections to employees of domestic violence shelters or those seeking their services by strengthening penalties for assaults at shelters.

The Senate also approved, for the seventh consecutive year, legislation (S1107) I co-sponsor to enact the "Domestic Violence Protection Act," also known as "Brittany's Law." This measure, which deserves action by the state Assembly leadership, would increase the safety and awareness of communities by increasing access to information about convicted violent felons.

The legislation calls for the creation of a publicly accessible registry of all individuals convicted of a violent felony and allow local law enforcement to keep track of their location. Brittany's Law is named in memory of 12-year-old Brittany Passalacqua, who was brutally murdered along with her mother, Helen Buchel, at their home in Geneva, Ontario County, in 2009. The killer, John Edward Brown, was a paroled domestic violent offender at the time of the murder. Brittany's mother had begun dating Brown without knowing that he was a recent parolee after being incarcerated six years earlier for violently assaulting his infant daughter.

In addition, we keep trying to raise public awareness. For example, all New Yorkers are encouraged to

participate in the annual "Shine the Light on Domestic Violence" campaign, coordinated by the OPDV, by wearing purple on Thursday, October 19.

You can read more about the Shine the Light campaign, which is ongoing throughout the month of October, on the OPDV website: <http://www.opdv.ny.gov/>, where additional, comprehensive information is available highlighting:

- New York State's toll-free hotline where victims of domestic violence and sexual assault can seek help 24 hours a day by calling 1-800-942-6906; and
- a number of statewide programs that provide direct services to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, including counseling and emergency shelter for victims and their children.

Also, remember the Sexual Assault Resource Center (SARC) that serves the Southern Tier and operates the following toll-free hotline: 1-888-810-0093.

As a former district attorney, I can tell you that domestic violence has always been and continues to be one of law enforcement's most difficult challenges. The same goes for governmental efforts to fight against it – to take any and all of the steps we can to prevent it, and to do anything and everything we can to protect victims and help them reclaim their lives.

By toughening our laws and continuing to raise public awareness, we can strengthen prevention, help protect the victims of domestic violence, and bring the perpetrators of this terrible crime to justice.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Boland has my support

To the Editor,
It is great to see Bill Boland running for Mayor. He has a positive approach and the experience to take over when Mayor Rich Negri retires at the end of the year.

Mayor Negri has done an excellent job bringing professionalism to the City Council. Although Bill Boland is a Democrat, Mayor Negri appointed him as his Deputy Mayor four years in a row. Rich Negri and Bill Boland are non-partisan. They focus

on what is best for the taxpayer and promote teamwork. Mayor Negri and Deputy Mayor Boland have built a cooperative atmosphere among members of the City Council and outside agencies like the Gaffer District, Arbor Housing, and Three Rivers Development.

As the Deputy Mayor, Bill has done an excellent job leading the City's housing strategy. All of our neighborhoods have a few blighted houses. These rundown properties hurt our property values and reduce our quality of life. It will take

time to clean up these houses, but Bill is leading an innovative effort between the City, Arbor Housing, and Three Rivers Development. It is these types of creative approaches we need to move forward.

I am a Republican, but I don't just vote party line. I look for the best candidate. We need someone who can continue the tremendous progress the City of Corning is experiencing. Bill has the experience, creative ideas, and ability to work with people to continue this momentum. Please join me in voting for Bill Boland to be our Mayor.

Steve Castner
Corning

Mayor race has three candidates

To the Editor,
Rick Davis (The Leader, October 1st) doesn't realize that there are three candidates for Mayor of Corning. That is possibly because the announcement of the official launch of my campaign was ignored by two newspapers, two radio stations and one TV station. Many thanks to WETM for showing up.

A number of Corning citizens that I have spoken to expressed similar concerns about the

high taxes we pay. Taxes may be "a major concern" for Mr. Weinstein, but it seems he did not offer a solution.

I have several solutions to suggest. The first is to greatly reduce the need for tax revenue. Working on the principal of a penny saved is a penny earned, the obvious place to start is reducing expenditure and consumption. This can be done by increasing efficiency (doing more with less) and eliminating waste. Paradoxically, waste can also be used to generate income for the city. And provide opportunities for self-employment, co-operatives and micro-businesses.

The City by itself cannot make solutions happen, nor can it impose solutions on the citizens. There needs to be greatly improved two-way communication and collaboration between the city and the citizens. There also needs to be considerable education about why costs are what they are.

My chief concern is the environment, an area Mr Boland admits to being ignorant of. I do not know about Mr Weinstein's level of knowledge, but I do know his employer thinks. I have spent the past seven years informing myself

about the adverse effects of human activity on the natural world, as well as the many possible paths to recovery. The good news is that biology is much cheaper than technology, and that what is good for the environment is also good for people.

Elizabeth Whitehouse
Candidate for Corning Mayor

Shooters need proper instruction

To the Editor,
In your Friday, October 6, 2017 edition is a nice story about Boy Scouts and shooting opportunities.

One would hope that activity includes proper instruction. The photo on page A8 shows a boy using a scoped rifle with a right-handed grip, but the stock is against his left shoulder and against his left cheek.

I hope someone realizes this is not the proper position for either a right- or left-handed shooter.

D. Randy Weidner
Bath

Number of Weinstein tickets shocking

Letter to the Editor,
I was surprised to read the Leader's account of mayoral candidate

Nick Weinstein's car being towed for multiple unpaid parking tickets. Being that he is one of Tom Reed's staffers, the sense of entitlement and disregard for authority wasn't what surprised me. Instead, it was the sheer number of tickets, 34 in 2 plus years, and his transactional mindset that was shocking.

Weinstein appears to believe that breaking the rules is "no biggie" as long as you can pay the cost of the ticket. Here's the problem with that thinking – those rules serve a more important purpose than bringing in revenue. The parking regulations ensure that Corning's visitors and residents can access Market Street quickly and easily.

Each one of those 34 tickets represents at least one inconvenienced tourist or a family forced to waste 10 minutes by circling to look for a parking spot. Those experiences create an impression that can be the difference between a customer's return to Market Street and taking their business elsewhere.

And while paying his tickets may provide the City with a pittance of revenue, businesses on Market Street may have lost sales, and may continue to be losing sales, because of Weinstein's parking penchant.

We all make mistakes and get a ticket once in a while. But by racking up 34 tickets, Weinstein has indicated that he thinks his business is more important than Market Street's business. That kind of self-interest is the exact opposite of what we demand from our public servants. Corning deserves better.

Anne Galbraith
Corning

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[12:30] 7:30, 9:20
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The Mountain Between Us (PG13)
[1:45] 4:20, 7:00, 9:30
mother! (R) - [1:30] 6:55
American Assassin (R) - 4:20, 9:30
Flatliners (PG13)
[2:00] 4:30, 7:00, 9:30
Kingsman: The Golden Circle (R)
[12:30, 3:30] 6:30, 9:30
IT (R) - [1:15] 4:00, 6:45, 9:30
Battle of the Sexes (PG13)
[1:30] 4:10, 6:50, 9:30

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