

OPINION

LETTERS POLICY

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COLUMN

Still traveling

In 1927, Stewart Chase was among the American progressives who traveled to the Soviet Union. He marveled that the Soviet economy was planned by a small group of experts in the Kremlin. The group became known as the Travelers. Chase later became an advisor to FDR.

Today, Democrats still believe in central control. Governor Cuomo, like most Democrats, believes that economies grow when you put smart people into a room (himself being the smartest), add government money, and bam! Prosperity happens. Cuomo's program or anything like it exists nowhere else in the United States.

So far, the Regional Economic Development Council awards and the Upstate Revitalization Grants total \$172 per Southern Tier resident per year over the last five years. It's a pittance, not worthy of the fawning news coverage. Bob McManus, writing for the NY Post, said Cuomo is like a "flash-bang grenade" - all light and noise, but nothing really happens. Enter Lieutenant Gov. Kathy Hochul, recently claimed that the Southern Tier will produce 8,000 to 10,000 jobs in - wait for it! - five years. People looking for a job don't have five years.

We're constantly bombarded with taxpayer-funded propaganda telling us that New York is open for business. Upstaters aren't buying it. Somehow they haven't heard that prosperity is only 5 years away. The upstate exodus has accelerated. Forty-one of the 50

upstate counties have lost population from 2010-2015. Broome County has lost nearly 4%, while Steuben and Chemung County have lost 2%. Cuomo recently spoke at yet another press event to announce a grant to Binghamton University. This is the government giving money to the government. He called it Southern Tier Rising. He should have called it Southern Tier sinking. A cultural shift, from reliance on experts to faith in individuals, is what's needed to revive upstate. But you must first have leadership that believes in us more than they believe in themselves. When we've built a business, don't tell us we didn't build that. Calvin Coolidge is deliberately misquoted as saying "the business of America is business." This is to portray Coolidge as a tool of big business. What Coolidge really said was, "... the chief business of America is business. Americans are profoundly concerned with producing, buying, selling, investing and prospering in the world." Coolidge was talking about average Americans fully engaging in commerce. He helped create a culture of entrepreneurship, where people take risks and reap the rewards. Coolidge's policies put the roar in the Roaring Twenties, a time of enormous prosperity. That's what upstate needs, and it's the direct opposite of what we have now. Instead, Cuomo is following the way of the Travelers and upstaters are traveling too, right out of New York.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Veteran denounces Reed endorsement

TO THE EDITOR | Tom Reed's endorsement of Donald Trump to further his policies of torture, racism and misogyny by becoming co-chair of Trump's N.Y. campaign is a frightening endorsement of Neo-Facism. Trump has called for the use of extreme torture, going after the families of terrorists, bigoted rhetoric against American Muslims, punishing women for health decisions and has threatened to undermine the First Amendment when free speech is used to his disliking. Any national policy condoning the use of torture puts our serving military at severe risk and reveals a

contempt for the principles of a civilized people claiming the mantle of being a Christian nation. Trump's endorsement by Tom Reed should disqualify Reed from representing the decent people of his district and as a Viet Nam vet I am here to denounce Reed's Trump endorsement as a betrayal of American values that so many veterans fought for and believe in. Our nation is only as exceptional as we behave. Donald Trump and Ted Cruz are disgustingly low points of moral bankruptcy into which the GOP has sunk and for which our representatives should be rejecting not endorsing.
Wayne Wells
Cameron Mills

POLITICS | SEN. TOM O'MARA

Responsible government, balanced decisions

'Historic is a word that we try not to use lightly, but it's truly appropriate to describe how the environment fared in this budget.'

Those were the words from the New York League of Conservation Voters following the recent enactment of the 2016-2017 state budget.

It's highlighted by the inclusion of a fully funded, \$300-million Environmental Protection Fund (EPF), something many conservation advocates have been fighting for and working on for a number of years, and that they're hailing as a great victory, as they should. The EPF supports critical environmental initiatives including clean air and water projects, flood control and restoration, and open space preservation. So in my second year as chairman of the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee, I would stress this point about this year's final budget and the significant increase to the EPF: it makes great environmental and economic sense.

The EPF, for example, helps create local jobs. Studies have shown that for every dollar of EPF funds invested in land and water protection, the state and localities get back seven dollars in economic benefits. That's a pretty solid investment by any measure. The EPF enjoys an impressive record of government investment which has benefitted a broad-based segment of New York's citizens and communities like very few government programs ever have. Consequently, strengthening the EPF within the context of the entire state fiscal plan covers a lot of common ground in order



SEN. TOM O'MARA

to achieve a great deal of common good - to help us achieve, in the words of former U.S. President and legendary conservationist Teddy Roosevelt, "the great central task of leaving this land even a better land for our descendants than it is for us."

On the EPF, the Business Council of New York said, "The programs contained in the EPF are incredibly diverse and touch every New Yorker's life in some manner through land conservation, urban forestry, sustainable waterfront planning, agricultural sustainability, pollution prevention programs and more. The Business Council was pleased to join with nearly 150 organizations from every corner of New York in advocating for this bold action."

This year's action on the EPF will be an enduring achievement for future generations of New Yorkers and New York communities, and I've been proud to help achieve it. But this budget goes even further. It includes, for instance, a \$200-million increase for the "Water Quality Infrastructure Improvement Grant Program" which I fought for and the Senate established last year to help localities undertake vital and long-overdue water infrastructure improvement projects, such as sewer and municipal water line repairs. As we are all well aware, this action has

become particularly timely as drinking water quality concerns and crises regionally, statewide and across the nation become increasingly acute.

The budget contains additional funding to reimburse counties for costs associated with the collection and recycling of electronic waste. Of this action on E-waste, New York State Association of Counties Executive Director Stephen J. Acquario said, "Many counties end up absorbing the costs of recycling the electronic waste disposed of by their residents. This reimbursement will provide much needed financial support to our counties for the responsible collection and recycling of electronic waste."

Again, an action that makes economic, fiscal and environmental sense for local communities, local government, local taxpayers, and local economies. Further, the budget includes a rebate program for consumers and municipalities who purchase electric and "zero-emission" vehicles. The program contained in the budget mirrors legislation I introduced earlier this session and will provide up to a \$2,000-per-vehicle rebate for individual buyers and a \$5,000-per-vehicle rebate for local municipalities. Assistance will also be provided to municipalities for building related infrastructure, such as charging stations and hydrogen refueling stations.

Other highly praised actions will assist local parks, trails and waterfronts; help step up the fight against invasive species; enhance farmland conservation; encourage

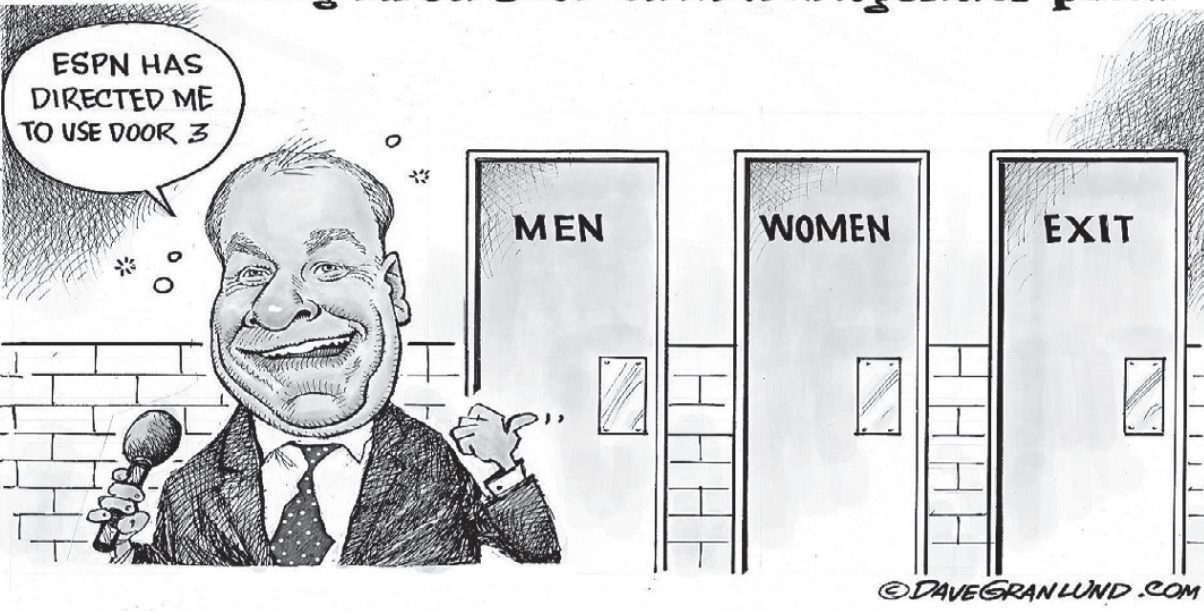
smart growth communities, including renewable energy initiatives; boost farm-to-school strategies to connect local schools to local farmers; and restore more than \$9 million for critical agricultural program cuts proposed by Governor Cuomo that would have impacted 30 different programs.

On the environmental front, we have had and will continue to have differences, and face controversies. The challenges we're facing - including challenges and crises that we don't even know exist yet - are more difficult than they've ever been, in some ways. And it's equally true that the governmental and political context in which we have to confront these challenges in today's world is more complex and highly charged than it's ever been, and it often doesn't make our task easier. But we have a responsibility to stewardship and conservation. We have a responsibility to do our best to address the challenges, to work through them, and consider and negotiate them in a balanced, deliberate, fair, serious and sensible way. We took this responsibility very seriously this year and we did just that in some very important ways. I hope this hard work will continue.

President Teddy Roosevelt also once said, "Human development and conservation can happen together. Responsible government, balanced decisions." Responsible government. Balanced decisions. They do not have to be mutually exclusive, and we've begun the work of proving that this year.

ANOTHER VIEW

Curt Schilling fired over anti-transgender post...



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Drive, don't text: It can wait.

TO THE EDITOR | An excellent article on "City cops crack down on texting and driving!" I would like to congratulate the Corning Police Department for stepping up to the plate and to doing something about this dangerous habit. You see it all the time, with the eyes of the driver looking down rather than ahead without any concern for the others on the road just that all important message to send or receive. It can wait! Some facts about texting: When someone texts and drives they have a 23 percent greater change of getting into an accident. It is our newest addiction. The penalty for the first offense is \$150. A second

offense both committed within 18 months is a fine up to \$200. A third of subsequent offense all committed within 18 months is a fine of up to \$400.

It is as dangerous as driving while intoxicated. I wish the other police agencies in the area would step up their efforts like the Corning Police Department and follow their efforts to try to end this bad habit our world has come to accept.

Was that last text message you sent or received that important to get into an accident and injure yourself or worse yet, kill someone?
Fran Avagliano
Corning

You're going to die, plan on it

TO THE EDITOR | April is

Poetry Month. Aspiring bards are popping up everywhere - from kindergartens to libraries. Here's mine:

Roses are red,
Violets are blue,
I'm planning to die
And so should you.

Yes, it's the time again for the annual meeting of the Memorial Society of the Greater Corning Area. Members will be receiving notice by mail, but I'm trying to attract folks who have thought they might live forever, don't want to think about it, figure it's someone else's job or just put off making plans.


The bad news is that we are not immortal. None of us; sorry. The good news is that we will be around for a while yet. And the best news is that a representative of our fine undertakers, Jon T.

Carpenter, funeral director and owner of Haughey Funeral Home, will be our speaker.

We meet May 1 at 2 p.m. at the Congregational Church on Pulteney Street. People of any faith, or none, are welcome, especially if they like refreshments and a lively topic of conversation.

Let's learn about our current funeral choices from an expert and discover the comfort of making informed decisions ourselves, before our "final journey", rather than burdening our survivors with decision making under stressful conditions. That's what it's all about.

A complex matter can become simplified with new insight into this profession. Hope to see you there.
Jean A. Wosinski
Corning



The Leader Staff

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