UPINION

Online at www.the-leader.com/opinions

COLUMN

Responding from the grassroots

f you have attended any of the public forums held by the State Senate TaskForce on Heroin and Opioid Addiction over the past several years, includingtwo I sponsored locally in Elmira and Penn Yan, I'm willing to bet that the testimony you heard from recovering addicts or from the family members who have either lost a son, a daughter or another loved one to heroin – or who are in the midst of the nearly unbearable struggle to help a loved one recover – has been the most powerful.

It has been for me. But it is exactly this grassroots testimony that is driving our current and ongoing efforts to combat this crisis, a crisis which knows no geographic or socioeconomic



SEN. TOM O'MARA

boundaries.

What our Senate task force has heard directly from the local front lines infighting this heroin and opioid addiction crisis is the foundation we're building on. This local input, which has been reflected in actions we've taken over the past several years as well as in this year's state budget, is the key to helping us target the necessary responses and keep our strategies as up to date as possible.

One thing we know for certain is that heroin is devastating lives in Penn Yan, Hornell, Ithaca, Elmira and many other communities throughout the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions as much as it is on Long Island, the North Country, Western New York and across the state.

So I'll stress it again: local, grassroots input has been the driving force behind the recommendations our Senate Task Force put forth and acted on last week to enhance and strengthen the state-local partnership that's going to be critical to putting in place the most effective combination of law enforcement, awareness and education, and treatment and prevention.

We're going to need to keep acting and keep working, and we will.

THANK-YOU!

SEE GRASSROOTS, A7

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

of the editor.

■ Letters may be edited

for space considerations.

The publication of any

letter is at the discretion

Highly recommends pistol class

LETTERS POLICY

typed or neatly printed.

and include an address

Letters should be

and phone number.

TO THE EDITOR - On May 14th and 15th I attended the first Steuben County Sheriff's Pistol Proficiency Course held at the Bath Rod and Gun Club. I have hunted and carried concealed for over fifty years and found this course priceless. It outlined, and put into practice, good safety and shooting habits.

There were several women and new permit holders present. They, and everyone taking the course, said it established a new level of confidence in their handling and use of their firearm for self defense.

The course was led by UndersheriffJames Allard. He was assisted by Capt. Tyner, Sg. Shutt, Officers Harrison and Smith. All officers involved were very courteous and patient with every shooter and they provided individual instruction as needed. This rapport created a great working atmosphere with both the participants and the officers. Any questions or concerns were addressed during class time.

In the last several yeas the Bath area has changed, and not for the better. Undersheriff Allard stated (my paraphrase) "that Law enforcement may not be readily available to respond as quickly as needed in some cases and this is the reason this training is so valuable for everyone."

■ All letters become the

property of The Leader

and cannot be returned

to sender.

The class was small, about 20 participants, and the ages ranged from the 20's to the 80's. I highly recommend this instruction to everyone. I did not know that James Allard was running for Steuben County Sheriff in the fall until after the course was completed. His ability and desire to work with the civilian population is something very needed in our area. Undersheriff Allard has raised the bar for Law enforcement/civilian interaction.

Rov Hann. Bath

Teamwork key to opioid abuse battle

TO THE EDITOR - As a sheriff, I see firsthand the impact opioid abuse has on our communities and our families. It has been hurting our communities for years, and we need to address the root cause. The reason I see this problem every day is because I am part of this community. Our representative Tom Reed is also very active in this community,

which is why he and I are working together to address the problem.

Mail: LETTERS TO

CORNING, NY 14830

Fax: 607-936-9939

Email: sdupree@

the-leader.com

PO BOX 1017

THE EDITOR, THE LEADER

Tom was one of the leaders in pushing the administration to investigate this problem plaguing New York and now he is supporting legislation that will give our state and local leaders the ability to combat this problem. The opioid epidemic needs to be stopped, and the only way we can do this is by seeing how the problem started on the ground.

As a local sheriff, I can honestly say that state and locally implemented measures to help with this opioid crisis is the best possible way to address this crisis.

We also need to be sure to take the additional steps to educate our kids about the harms of opioids.

If we fail to educate our kids about this problem, then we are leaving them to be susceptible to the dangers of opiates. This is why both Tom and I are focusing on this important step.

It is so important that our representatives work with local law enforcement in order to address our communities' issues.

I am happy to see Tom around the district working with us.

David V. Cole Sheriff



Father's Day Contest



and Possible Leaks Add additional checks for 1/2 Price

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What is the best advice your father has given you?

Submit your entry on this form along with a photo of your father to The Leader at 34 W Pulteney St., Corning, NY 14830 by 4:30 pm, Friday, June 10, 2016. The winner will receive a gift certificate to Many's Bar & Grill, plus their father's advice and photo will be published on Father's Day, Sunday, June 19, 2016.



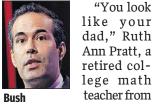
GOP 2016 FAMILY TIES

A Bush can survive in Trump political world

By Will Weissert The Associated Press

DALLAS - George P. Bush was talking about his future political plans – and how Donald Trump wouldn't reshape them - when two women approached, giddy with excitement.

They wanted pictures with a man whose photogenic smile once landed him on People magazine's most-eligible bachelors list. Up close, though, they saw something unexpected.



Lake Jackson, near Houston, finally exclaimed. "You turn slightly to the side, and you ARE your dad."

Bush only smiled. These days, being associated with his father, former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, may not be such a great thing.

Eighteen months after he was elected Texas land commissioner and a few weeks past his 40th birthday, Bush is quietly continuing his family's legacy. The grandson of one former president and nephew of another, he remains a rising star in America's largest conservative state and is keeping alive the possibility that a political dynasty declared dead by many when his dad flamed out of the presidential race could yet again return to national prominence.

though, is if a third George Bush can survive in a political world turned upside down by Trump – where Republican primary voters overwhelmingly have embraced the ultimate outsider who promises to smash the political establishment the Bushes embodied for decades.

"Regardless of what comes at me, I'll be prepared," Bush said of the possibility his last name has shifted from GOP royalty to a liability.

In an interview during the What remains to be seen, recent Texas Republican

Convention in Dallas, Bush said that, like his father, grandfather and uncle, he isn't endorsing Trump or attending the Republican National Convention in Cleveland.

Bush said he was part of a national conservative movement concerned about Trump's candidacy.

"He has the ability to win us over if he clarifies many of his remarks and he demonstrates that he has humility and that he doesn't besmirch peoples' character as the motivating factor for why he's running for office," Bush said.

Joe Brettell, a former GOP congressional staffer now based in Houston said "George P. has one of the brightest political futures in the country."

"He is absolutely on any smart Republican's radar,"Brettell said. "When the party begins to rebuild after Trump, Marco Rubio and George P. Bush will be two people that they look at as a blueprint for potential good times ahead."

GRASSROOTS From Page A6

Two weeks ago, Governor Cuomo created his own "Task Force to Combat Heroin" comprised of experts in health care, drug policy, advocacy, education, and recovery. This group is currently conducting a series of listening sessions statewide with the goal of recommending acomprehensive plan to be acted on before the end of the current legislative session. The Senate is hopeful that many of the recommendations from the governor's task force will mesh with many of our Senate actions and that agreement on badly needed, final actions will come together in short order.

What's encouraging to me is that there's an unmistakable sense of urgency surrounding this crisis, from all sides, which more often than not leads to something concrete and productive getting done.

The fact is: there's no choice. We can't wait to build on the

foundationswe've already put in place and make them stronger. What's forthcoming won'tend this crisis - we all recognize that this is a long-haul challenge – butit will mean that action by action, step by step, we will make progress to begin turning the tide.

For the Senate's part, our recommendations have been gleaned from testimony from regional law enforcement officers, first responders and district attorneys, drug addiction counselors and treatment providers, recovering addicts and family members, social services and health professionals, educators and other experts about the range of complex challenges posed by heroin including addiction prevention and treatment options, drug-related crimes, and other community and public health and safety impacts.

Our legislative package (which you can find in its entirety on my Senatewebsite, http://www.omara. nysenate.gov), which I co-sponsor, together withfunding in this year's state budget, seeks to build on existing laws, programs

and services enacted over the past few years to bolster awareness and education, prevention and treatment, and enforcement efforts.

Overall, our updated strategy is focused on a four-pronged approach:prevention, treatment, recovery and enforcement. It includes a series of legislative actions, but it also issues directives to various state agencies that we believe are critical to cutting through a number of bureaucratic shortcomings and tangles which currently stand in the way of the most effective responses and available, meaningful help.

It's also critical to stress that the 2016-2017 state budget includes \$167million in funding to continue enhancing and expanding heroin and opioidaddiction prevention, treatment, recovery, and education services. How best o distribute and utilize this funding remains one of the key agreements that must be reached between the Legislature and the governor before theend of the current legislative session.

Toward this end, the Senate hasoutlined several funding priorities including: increased Family Support Navigators and Navigator training programs; peer programs; RecoveryCommunity and Outreach

Centers; transitional housing and post-recoveryemployment; and local government block grants. The bipartisan Senate task

force was created in 2014 at a time when local police departments and addiction centers, including many across the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions, were pointing to the alarming risein the availability and use of heroin. The alarm has only grown louder overtime, and it can't be ignored.







Father's Day is Sunday June 19, 2016





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