

OPINION

LETTERS POLICY

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'In Flanders Fields'

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
 Between the crosses, row on row
 That mark our place; and in the sky
 The larks, still bravely singing, fly
 Scarce heard amid the guns below.
 We are the dead. Short days ago
 We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
 Loved and were loved, and now we lie
 In Flanders fields.
 Take up our quarrel with the foe:
 To you from failing hands we throw
 The torch; be yours to hold it high.
 If ye break faith with us who die
 We shall not sleep, though poppies grow.

Ed. note | Lt. Col. John McCrae, M.D., served as a surgeon in World War I. He wrote "In Flanders Fields" in 1915 after a friend was killed in the war. In 1918, McCrae died at age 46 of pneumonia in France.

The Leader runs this poem every Memorial Day weekend in honor of those who served.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Thanks to voters in H'heads district

To the Editor | Thank you to everyone in the Horseheads Central School District who voted May 20.

The 2014-15 budget increases spending less than 1%, with a tax levy increase of less than 2%.

The budget is within the property tax cap, and as such, homeowners eligible for the STAR exemption will receive a rebate from the state in October for the increase in their taxes. The budget adds an additional pre-kindergarten class at Gardner Road Elementary School, along with academic intervention support at the early grades in all elementary schools. Our spending plan keeps the three As – academics,

athletics, and the arts – intact.

We continue to look at our programs and facilities to determine if we can operate more efficiently and effectively while keeping a quality program for our students. We ask residents to keep a look out for the special newsletter regarding two studies that will help us chart the future of our district.

We are proud of our students, staff, and community. We will continue to preserve the quality of education that we provide our students, even in the face of financial difficulties.

Again, thank you, for your support of our wonderful school district.
Ralph Marino, Jr., Ed.D.
 Superintendent of Schools
 Horseheads Central School District

ONLY ONLINE

The Notorious Sinner on evangelism



So how do we start truly making evangelism a priority church-wide?

1. Pray!

Prayer is the supernatural precursor to proclamation. In Acts 4:31 Luke writes, "After they prayed the place where they were meeting was shaken and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and went out and spoke the word

of God boldly."

Read more from the Notorious Sinner at www.the-leader.com

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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.

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POLITICS | SEN. TOM O'MARA

In memory of our veterans



SEN. TOM O'MARA

Many of us across the region will gather together this Memorial Day at cemeteries, parades and other ceremonies, large and small, in Bath, Corning, Elmira, Hammondsport, Horseheads, Southport, Odessa, and Watkins Glen, to name just a few.

There'll be a service at the Bath National Cemetery, a salute to veterans at Denison Park in Corning, a ceremony at Woodlawn National Cemetery in Elmira and an observance at the Schuyler County Courthouse in Watkins Glen – together with so many other ceremonies at so many of the monuments, memorials and organizations dedicated to veterans throughout the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes.

That's as it should be. On Memorial Day – one of the most meaningful of all American celebrations – citizens join to remember our veterans, past and present. It's a time to pay tribute to our nation's past, to honor her present, and to look forward to her future.

Let's hope it will always be so.

We can be proud that New York State is recognized as the "Birthplace of Memorial Day," which our nation has now observed for over a century, since the time of the Civil War. It's a time to reflect on the greatness of a nation built on the sacrifices of her soldiers, soldiers who still

today serve the underlying dreams of our homeland: freedom and peace, compassion and decency, and democracy.

It is always a great privilege to help carry on this observance. It's essential to pay tribute to those left behind in Germany and on the beaches of Normandy, Iwo Jima, the hills of Korea, the jungles of Vietnam, the sands of the Middle East, and the mountains of Afghanistan. We must especially remember and salute the men and women who serve in harm's way this very moment to keep America strong and the world safer in the war against terrorism. They remain shining examples of the bravery, courage, and honor on which the American way of life has been built, and persevered.

In remembering, we reaffirm our pride in this nation's servicemen and servicewomen and, of course, we turn our thoughts and prayers to those young soldiers whom we've lost from here at home.

On June 6, 1984, in remarks commemorating the 40th Anniversary of

D-Day, President Ronald Reagan said, "We will always remember. We will always be proud. We will always be prepared, so we may always be free."

So we remember our soldiers on Memorial Day. As well, we must remember and salute the nearly 900,000 veterans living in New York State, together with the millions across our nation. They have earned our gratitude. Last week in Albany, I was proud to honor one of these outstanding local veterans, Anthony J. "Tony" Specchio of Watkins Glen, a Korean War veteran, with an enduring tribute by inducting him into the New York State Senate Veterans' Hall of Fame. Tony joins nearly 300 state veterans who've joined the Hall since 2005, including the following area veterans that I've had the pleasure and privilege to induct since 2011: Philip J. Smith of Schuyler County, J. Arthur "Archie" Kieffer of Chemung County, and Painted Post Mayor Roswell L. "Roz" Crozier (view the Veterans' Hall of Fame and read the inspiring stories of these and so many other New York State veterans on my Senate website, www.omara.nysenate.gov).

Because of these veterans, we can look into the eyes of our young people this Memorial Day, the faces of the future, and have faith that they, too,

will be instilled with the spirit to keep America strong and to keep believing that the American way is a good, decent, worthwhile way.

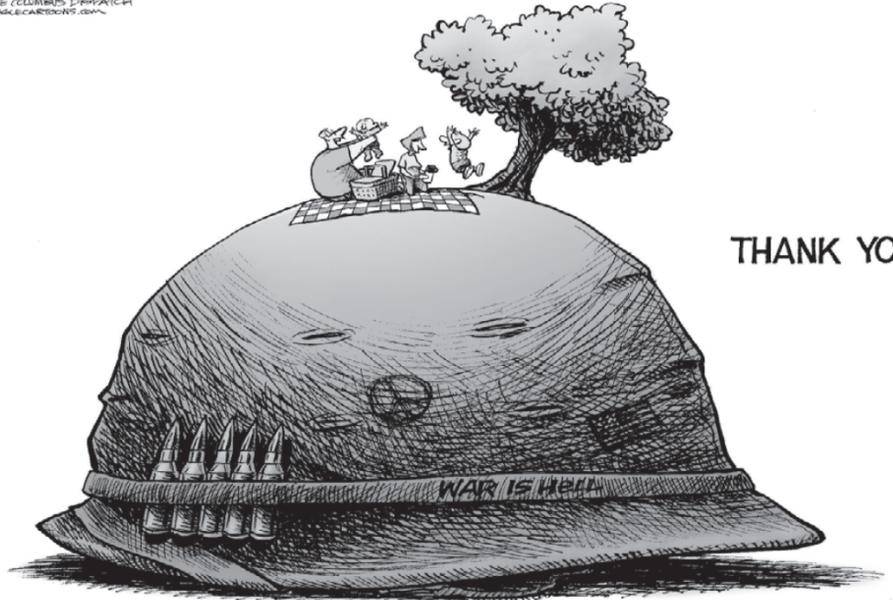
In the end, perhaps this will always be the greatest justice for all of the missions flown, for all of the foxholes dug, for the hills taken and the battles fought. Our soldiers – American soldiers – have made and continue to make the ultimate sacrifice to keep America free, so that we can lead the way to a more free world. Our soldiers sacrifice to keep alive America's promise, so that people throughout the world can look to us for inspiration. Our soldiers sacrifice to keep America strong, so that other nations can draw courage from our strength.

For as long as we remember and keep our soldiers alive in our hearts, we will stand as we do – free in a land of opportunity and promise.

To read more on the history of New York State as the "Birthplace of Memorial Day, visit New York's Hall of Governor's website at <http://www.hallofgovernors.ny.gov/generic/memorialdayexhibit>.

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



THANK YOU

COLUMN | CHRISTA HEYWARD

Education key to preventing pregnancy

May is National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month and now is the time to talk to young people about preventing pregnancy.

I was born and raised in Chemung County and I became pregnant at 19. Like many teenagers, I wanted to have close, personal relationships and feel accepted by my peers and I used sex as a proxy for intimate connections. I understood that sexually transmitted infections were a consequence of sexual activity but because my peers and I were young and from a small town, the probability of getting an STD seemed low. The most significant risk, from a teenager's perspective, was pregnancy.

I had unprotected sex on a Friday night at the end of my freshman year of college.

Emergency contraception

was available only by prescription and I had to wait until Monday morning to visit a local Planned Parenthood. When I returned the following week for a pregnancy test, the woman administering the test expressed her concern that raising a child in college would be extremely difficult and negatively impact my future. She not-so-subtly suggested that I would have to give up many things that I enjoyed.

As a freshman, I was a member of Villanovans for Life and I felt that abortion was not a viable option for me. My nine months of pregnancy were incredibly stressful and lonely. Despite the support of my family, I had no relationship with the baby's father. I took a leave-of-absence from Villanova, but was too ashamed to explain my absence to anyone from school. I wasn't ready to care for a baby so I

prepared for adoption.

Ultimately, my father took early retirement to become my son's caretaker.

Eventually, I went on to complete not only my Bachelor's degree but also a Master's and a Ph.D.

The stressfulness of my pregnancy gave me a better understanding of how others, who lack support systems, might choose abortion. Pregnancy comes with significant financial burdens, emotional distress, and the physical stress on the body – none of which need be experienced by the fathers. In order to maintain my parents' health insurance coverage during my leave of absence, I matriculated as a full-time student at a state university without financial aid. The baby's father's life, however, remains unchanged.

Unplanned pregnancy places an unequal burden on women. Increasing sex education, emphasizing

prevention, addressing mental health issues related to self-esteem and acceptance, and countering the objectification of women are critical steps in addressing the underlying causes of unplanned pregnancies.

Young women who do become pregnant need resources that minimize shame and provide structural support such as parenting guidance and daycare.

Planned Parenthood is accessible and is an obvious venue for these resources. As such, it is often the first place young people turn for support in dealing with issues related to sexual activity. Defunding Planned Parenthood reduces outreach and awareness programming, but does not reduce the numbers of teens who have sex or the rate of teen pregnancy.

Christa Heyward lives in Pine City.