

OPINION

LETTERS POLICY

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Mail: LETTERS TO THE EDITOR, THE LEADER
PO BOX 1017
CORNING, NY 14830
Fax: 607-936-9939
Email: sdupree@the-leader.com

Online at www.the-leader.com/opinions

The LEADER

34 W. Pulteney St., Corning, NY 14830
www.the-leader.com

Fred Benson Publisher
Stella DuPree..... Editor
Derrick Ek Assistant Editor

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Truth is, Reed gets the job done

To the editor | I'd like to say some things in favor of Congressman Tom Reed. Right up front though, I must say that Tom's brother is my son-in-law. Yes, I suppose I'm a bit biased in my opinions, but it also means that I know Tom better than 99 percent of the people in his district. What I say can be backed up with facts, unlike the man in Painted Post who recently called Tom a liar in the paper. No facts, just unsubstantiated name-calling.

Then there's Tom's opponent in this race. I know nothing about Nate to say he'd be a good or bad representative. I heard that he accused Tom of being responsible for Sikorsky closing down. That ludicrous accusation was far from the truth — actually 180 degrees from the truth. He was properly rebuffed by others in the press and I don't need to add to it.

I've known Tom very well for 23 years. First and foremost, I know him to be honest. He was honest in his business dealings before he ventured into the political world and that hasn't changed. He won't make a promise that he doesn't do everything he can to fulfill. He works hard to find out what the majority of his constituents want. He listens to anyone who calmly presents his or side of an issue. I doubt that he listens to the screamers who jump up and disrupt his meetings. He'll try to do as the majority wishes. On issues where people seem to be split down the middle such as gay marriage, abortion and hydrofracking, he tries to come to some middle ground whenever possible.

As for Tom's politics, he's made many friends on both sides of the aisle in Congress. He doesn't play party politics. He was recently recognized for his non-partisan way of doing business by being one of only 38 Representatives — 16 Republicans and 22 Democrats — to receive the annual Paul E. Tsongas Patriot Award.

The award is given in recognition of outstanding leadership and putting aside political differences to "rein in projected deficits and put the United States on a more responsible and sustainable course — one

that would protect our nation's strength and shield future generations of Americans from crippling national debt."

You can Google it for yourselves.

Tom is also a member of the Congressional Ways and Means Committee. That's extremely rare for a first-term congressperson. It's another sign of the respect he has there. This, too, is fact!

As for the number of debates, three is plenty. I don't pay a lot of attention to them. Results speak loudest to me. One leader who has no other qualifications for office than being an accomplished speaker is enough for me.

Yes, I'll vote for Tom Reed, not because I'm a registered Republican, but because he's a great agent for the needs of our district. As for Nate, he'll have to prove himself capable before he gets anywhere near the respect Tom Reed has.

Bill Groeger
Corning

Shinagawa is the best choice

The 23rd Congressional District is in desperate need of a personal advocate for resources and jobs at the national level. Our current Congressman Tom Reed has evidently been sidetracked by a Tea Party agenda that is obsessed with rehashing long settled national issues rather than furthering the rural agenda upstate New Yorkers rely on.

Having met both candidates and spoken with them on a personal level, listening to their stories I believe Nate Shinagawa is the personal advocate we need. His background in the demanding field of health care administration and track record of personally helping people in our community more than qualify him for the job. I know for a fact that we can trust Nate to continue his good works in Washington because when Tom Reed says no to things like tax cuts for the middle class, extending the life of Medicare and Social Security, and even disaster relief money for his own district — NATE SHINAGAWA SAYS YES!

Jason D. Jordan
Hornell

ONLY ONLINE | YOU WEIGH IN

Recent poll

Who will you vote for in the congressional election?

U.S. Rep. Tom Reed, R, incumbent 50%
Challenger Nate Shinagawa, Democrat 49%
Total votes: 960

New question

What television show scares you the most?

"The Walking Dead"
"Keeping up With the Kardashians"
"American Horror Story"
"True Blood"
"Ghost Hunters"
"Ghost Adventures"
"Finding Bigfoot"

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POLITICS | SEN. TOM O'MARA

Latest 'summit' on tap

ANOTHER VIEW

So what's on tap for the remainder of October in New York State government? How about the state's first-ever "Beer and Wine Summit" soon to be convened by Governor Andrew Cuomo. It will mark the latest chapter in New York government taking a more active, collaborative, nuts-and-bolts partnership role in our pursuit to improve the business climate in New York to foster economic growth and create jobs.

Government as the gateway to a better business climate. Imagine that.

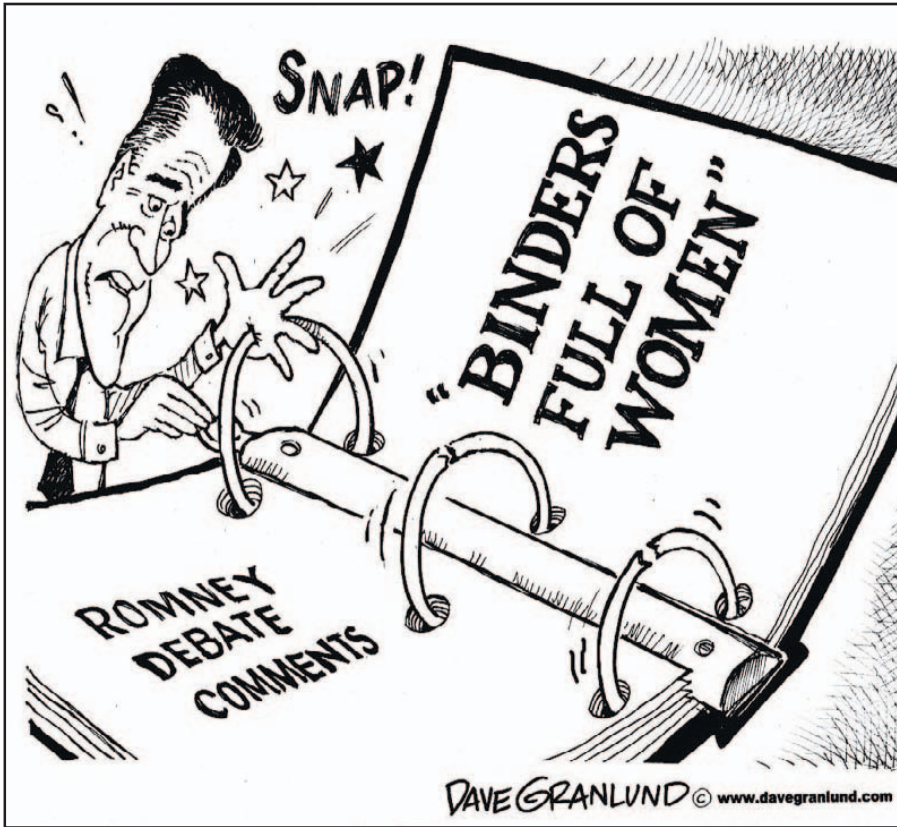
But that's what we're trying to achieve. Modeled after a successful "Yogurt Summit" in August, where the focus was on the Empire State's booming Greek-style yogurt industry, I've seen the upcoming summit on beer and wine fittingly referred to as a "business-oriented Oktoberfest."

We're certainly turning to the expertise and input from New York's brewers and winemakers to serve up a response to this overriding question: How can New York government help?

The Yogurt Summit focused on how New York government can take every step to encourage and grow the yogurt industry, and do it in ways that will work simultaneously to strengthen our dairy industry and other manufacturers. And the summit on yogurt did produce some immediate results, especially in the arena of regulatory reform. But it also delivered a clear message that we're not about to let this economic opportunity pass us by, a message whose value cannot and should not be overlooked.

So we'll soon convene Summit No. 2, and it's one that could produce particular benefits throughout the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions.

The wine industry, as we know, is one of the greatest of all New York success stories, one, in large part, led by the Finger Lakes vineyards and wineries that have served as the hub of this national and international emergence



over the past two decades (which you can read all about on www.fingerlakeswinecountry.com or www.uncorknewyork.com). In fact, one of the world's largest travel websites, TripAdvisor, just named the Finger Lakes one of the nation's top wine destinations (read more about it at www.tripadvisor.com).

But beer's been on the table, too. Overall, beer in New York is a \$5.3-billion industry employing approximately 60,000 citizens — and generating roughly \$446 million in federal, state and local revenues. Like Greek-style yogurt, New York's craft brewing industry is burgeoning. The number of craft brewers has doubled over the past 10 years. It now consists of more than 90 breweries, accounts for thousands of jobs and generates more than \$200 million of annual economic activity in nearly every region of the state, including right here at home (see the Finger Lakes Beer Trail at www.fingerlakes-beertrail.com). The Finger Lakes Beer Trail currently showcases craft brewers at 42 locations, including 22 breweries and 16 brew pubs (and nearly a dozen more in the works).

Some of you might recall a new state law enacted earlier this year that

implemented regulatory reforms and tax incentives to encourage the expansion of our craft beer industry. This year's law focuses on how to keep this single industry growing and to do it in ways that enhance and strengthen the foundations of agriculture and tourism at the same time.

For example, one of the law's key provisions requires that in order to receive the new Farm Brewery benefits, the beer must be made primarily from local, New York grown farm products in order to achieve the desired boost to agriculture as a whole.

In other words, like with yogurt, the underlying idea is to figure out how best to utilize the growth of one specific industry in a way that helps keep New York's number one industry, agriculture, strong through the creativity, diversity and innovation that's going to be required for long-term success. [As a brief side note, I've also had some discussions locally concerning the development of a hard cider industry as well as distilleries, both of which show the potential for growth and success, and would offer yet another market for many farmers. In the state of Washington, for example, the number of hard cider producers has

quintupled over the past few years.]

The Yogurt Summit immediately produced important regulatory reforms.

I fully anticipate that while the Beer and Wine Summit obviously can't settle all of the challenges facing these highly competitive industries — which, remember, continue to operate under Prohibition-era laws and layers of federal, state and local regulation — I do believe this upcoming meeting of the minds will open new pathways to success for large-scale beer manufacturers and wineries, as well as for smaller vineyards and microbreweries. Or, as the governor said in announcing it, "It's more than the meeting itself. What these meetings are all about is identifying a business product line where, we believe if we get involved, we can actually make a difference." The summit then causes — forces — a lot of discussion, a lot of meetings, where the business leaders from that particular area sit down with the agencies responsible."

Here's to raising a glass to the ongoing success of that idea.

Tom O'Mara is a Republican state senator from Big Flats.

OTHER VIEW | LOS ANGELES TIMES

The fall of Cuba's paper wall

For 50 years, Cubans have been prevented from leaving their country by an anachronistic and repressive travel policy that has aptly been compared to a paper version of the Berlin Wall.

The government's announcement it plans to end this inhumane system was long overdue and more than welcome.

Since soon after Fidel Castro came to power in 1959, Cubans who wanted to leave the island (which is slightly smaller than Pennsylvania) have been required to obtain an exit visa that is not only too

expensive for the average citizen but often denied for arbitrary or political reasons. Under the new policy, scheduled to go into effect in January, those exit permits will be eliminated and Cubans will be allowed to travel abroad more easily, more inexpensively and for up to two years or more at a time. In turn, President Raul Castro hopes the country will receive more money in remittances from abroad, injecting much-needed capital into the anemic economy.

The new policy is not perfect. Cuba's government has already carved

out exceptions. Scientists, athletes and other professionals will still be subject to the old rules in an effort to prevent a "theft of talents," otherwise known as a brain drain. Dissidents too could be kept from traveling under an exception for national security. And the new policy could spark a mass exodus similar to the Mariel boatlift of 1980, when thousands of Cubans took advantage of a brief loosening of the exit rules and fled the country.

While the new travel rules are less ambitious than they could be, they nevertheless represent

a significant shift. The United States should respond by abandoning some of its own outdated Cold War rules. The Obama administration has already taken some steps in this direction, including relaxing restrictions on remittances and travel to the island. But it can do much more, including lifting the long-standing trade embargo, which is both archaic and ineffectual, and ensuring that visa applications from Havana are not subject to unnecessary delays.

Any change that grants Cubans greater freedom should be encouraged.

The 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 the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.