

OPINION

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GUEST EDITORIAL

Street repairs a top priority



RICH NEGRI

the past few years, the City Manager has focused on milling off the top layer of pavement and overlaying it with new blacktop. This is less costly and allows us to pave more streets. Once our streets are at a more acceptable driving level, we will refocus our attention on the more costly, but much needed, street reconstructions. During a reconstruction, the City usually replaces the road base, curbs, underground utilities and pavement.

The combination of the Council's budget commitment and the City Manager's approach have helped us pave numerous streets in the past few years. This year alone, we will be paving 45 blocks of streets and alleys. We have received positive feedback from the public as a result of this approach.

The property tax impact on an \$85,000 home for the additional street funding added to this year's budget was \$2.62 per month. Street work is costly, but raising a few dollars each year will help us avoid larger costs in the future. Thank you for your continued patience and support as we work to improve our roads.

— Rich Negri is the mayor of Corning.

Balancing the needs of our city with the tax burden is often a difficult job for the City Council and City Manager. There are basic services such as street paving which need to be met, while remaining sensitive to increases in property taxes.

During the past couple of weeks, you may have noticed paving crews working in the neighborhoods. This work is the result of two factors. The first is the City Council's commitment to adding additional street funding to the budget. For the past five years, we have added \$100,000 each year to the City Manager's proposed budget to bring our streets up to an acceptable standard. This is consistent with the street financing plan the City Council adopted in 2012 and will help provide a sustainable stream of revenue to maintain our roads.

The second factor is our paving strategy. For

COLUMN

No success without thinking success

Earlier this month, New York Federal Reserve President William Dudley, a prominent and highly influential leader in global finance, saw fit to take a swing through the Southern Tier to touch base with members of our Southern Tier Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) and other economic development leaders.

President Dudley visited the region to hear it firsthand — not especially about where the Southern Tier has been, but more about where we're headed. Some of you may recall last summer when the Federal Reserve delivered a less-than-hopeful (to put it mildly) assessment of the Southern Tier economy, going as far as comparing it to the troubled economy of Puerto Rico.

So President Dudley sat down with leaders (including Southern Tier REDC co-chair Tom Tranter of Corning, Inc.) of the Southern Tier economic development community over the course of a few days and, when all was said and done, he left on a more promising note. His assessment was that what we're doing is positive, that we're identifying the strengths, pouring the foundations on which to build future growth and that, overall, we're poised for a turnaround.



TOM O'MARA

Perhaps most importantly, President Dudley left us with these words of encouragement and promise, "You can't succeed if you don't think you're going to succeed."

I'm certainly a believer in the Southern Tier REDC (as well as the Finger Lakes REDC which includes Yates County in the 58th Senate District I represent) and the short- and long-term strategies the Council has identified and is steadfastly putting in place. I believe that what we've been developing and fighting for over the past several years, since 2011, will be successful.

Donna Howell, Southern Tier Regional Director for New York's leading economic development agency, Empire State Development, told President Dudley, "We're brimming with innovation. We're at the tipping point."

"The recovery won't happen overnight but we're poised to have a unique competitive advantage," added Cornell University Vice President for Human Resources Mary George Opperman.

Late last year, the Southern Tier REDC's victory of the \$500-million Upstate Revitalization Initiative was a game changer (especially after being selected as a top winner in four of the first 5 REDC awards). So is the city of Elmira's recent \$10-million Downtown Revitalization Initiative award. We're focused on our downtowns and on our farms. We're focused on our schools and our workforce. We're focused on job development. We're focused on conservation and environmental protection. We're focused on tourism, and on infrastructure.

And New York government, at every level, has a strong role to play. Take manufacturing, for example. The manufacturing sector remains a strong foundation for job growth regionally and statewide. According to the Manufacturing Association of Central New York (MACNY), there are approximately 462,000 manufacturing jobs statewide.

Kenneth J. Pokalsky, Vice President of the Business Council of New York State, says, "New York's 15,000 manufacturers employ more than 455,000 people, and generate nearly \$70 billion in economic output. Maintaining our manufacturing base is critically important to the state's economic

future, especially in the regional economies of upstate New York."

Without question we need to continue taking aggressive actions — tax relief, regulatory reform, reducing energy costs, workforce development and more — to maintain, strengthen and grow our manufacturing sector for the future. Revitalizing and strengthening manufacturing remains a central hope, in my opinion, for turning around upstate regional economies through good, well-paying jobs and long-term economic security for workers and their families.

There will always be naysayers willing to write off a comeback or along-term future for manufacturing. I'm not one of them.

"You can't succeed if you don't think you're going to succeed," President Dudley reminded us.

I'm on the side of many other economic development leaders across the Southern Tier who believe we're going to succeed — if we keep acting and building on the foundations we're putting in place and fighting for.

— State Sen. Tom O'Mara represents New York's 58th Senate District, which includes Steuben, Chemung, Schuyler and Yates counties, and a portion of Tompkins County.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Reed loose with the facts

TO THE EDITOR | As usual, Rep. Tom Reed is playing loose with the facts and trying to deceive his constituents. Mr. Reed tweeted on July 16th that he opposed the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade deal from the beginning unlike John Plumb, his opponent for New York's 23rd congressional district seat. Mr. Reed has a conveniently short memory. In an article published in The Leader on October 7, 2015, Mr. Reed suggested that Dr. Plumb had prematurely rejected the TPP agreement and that he would not make his final decision until after he had studied the details. Furthermore, Mr. Reed actually voted for fast-track authorization for TTP. Contrary to Mr. Reed's assertion of July 16, Dr. Plumb was out-front in opposition to the deal with Mr. Reed dragging behind. On July 16th, Mr. Reed also tweeted that John Plumb is trying to take away the right to bear arms. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Dr. Plumb is an avid hunter and a responsible gun owner who has qualified as an expert with a pistol and a sharpshooter with a rifle. Dr. Plumb simply wants a common sense approach to preventing suspected terrorists from acquiring assault rifles which Mr. Reed opposes under the guise of protecting Second Amendment rights. Contrary to Mr. Reed's assertions, Dr. Plumb is concerned about our security and safety while Mr. Reed seemingly wants to protect the Constitutional rights of terrorists. Differing on fundamental issues offers a choice to the

electorate and makes our country strong. Lying about your opponent's views and trying to deceive the electorate is sleazy, slimy politics. The New York 23rd Congressional District deserves better than sleaze and slime. The New York 23rd Congressional District deserves better than Tom Reed.

Robert A. Mitchell,
Corning

The meaning of TRUMP

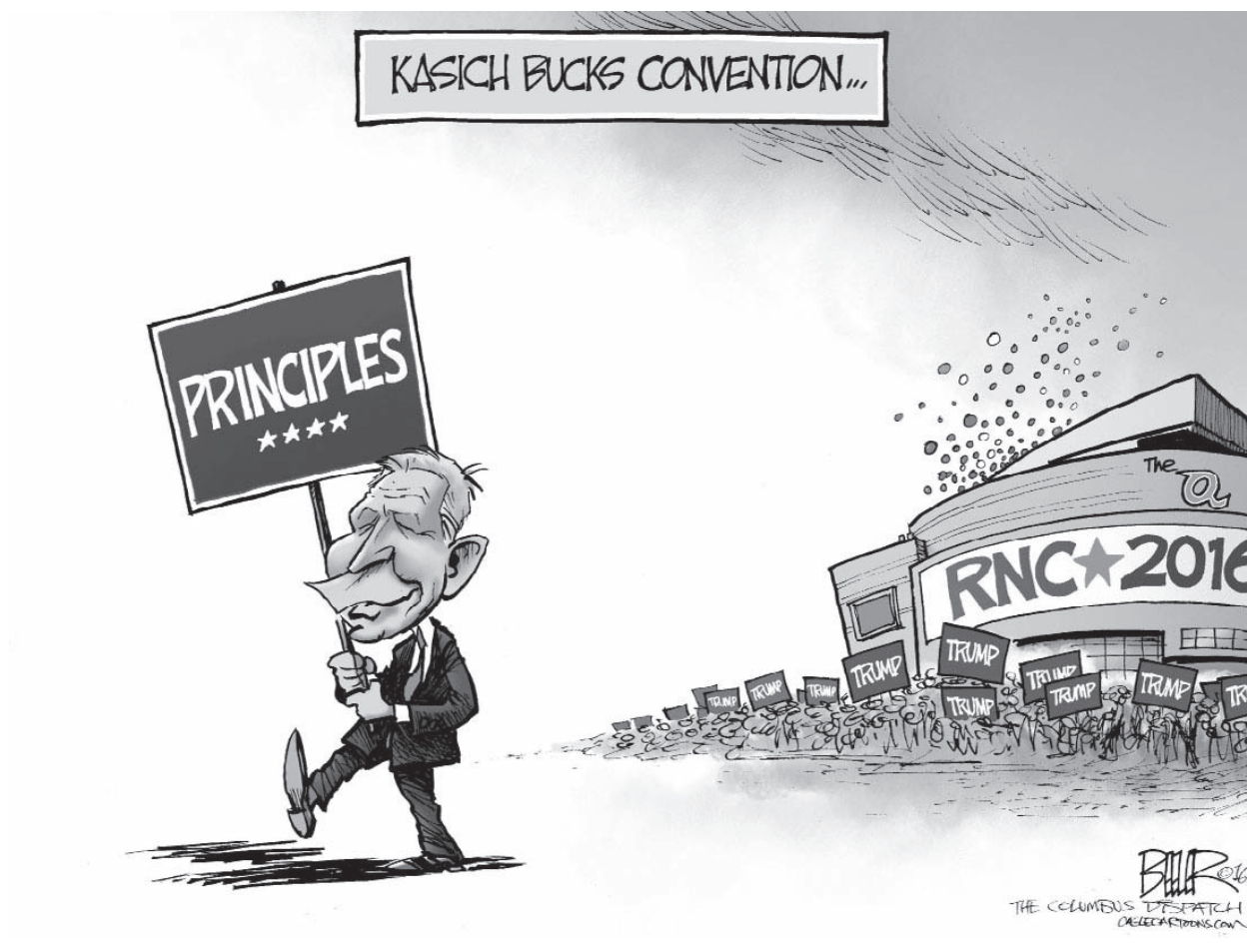
TO THE EDITOR | America shifted disgustingly barbaric under the Cheney Bush regime when torture was codified into law during the Iraq War. Now, narcissist Donald Trump is wanting to take us further down the barbarous route by advocating "going after families" of those who commit crimes, inciting ethnic hatred and advocating use of even worse torture methods than used at Abu Ghraib.

Hey America, let's get with the slogan "Make America Principled Again" starting with outlawing all torture for good and voting out unprincipled politicians who are abandoning the sinking GOP ship only to scurry about Trump's pirate ship that will be used to steal the decency of most Americans as he destroys all standards of civilized behavior. Since Congressman Tom Reed became Trump's lead man in New York, he must either refute Trump or be voted out.

TRUMP now stands for Tom Reed Unfit Misguided Politician.

Wayne W. Wells,
Cameron

ANOTHER VIEW



COLUMN

SHIPs help New Yorkers navigate Medicare

Every day, 10,000 people across the United States become eligible to receive Medicare. In New York state, 3,357,000 are eligible for Medicare. Every year, they must choose among Original Medicare (and numerous supplemental Medigap insurance policies), 30 insurance companies that offer 128 different Medicare Advantage plan options, and 22 prescription drug plans.

Thankfully, Medicare beneficiaries in New York State do not need to navigate this complicated system alone: More than 600 counselors from the Health Insurance Information, Counseling

and Assistance Program, or HIICAP (called State Health Insurance Assistance Programs — SHIPs — nationally), give unbiased, one-on-one guidance. They not only help individual beneficiaries find plans that best meet their needs, they answer questions about coverage, costs, and appeals. Medicare beneficiaries can also call 1-800-Medicare to get questions answered, but SHIPs are the only source of in-person counseling. Every year, 1-800-Medicare refers over 250,000 callers to SHIPs nationally for help with complex cases. An average counseling session lasts almost an hour, due to the complexities

of Medicare and the in-depth nature of SHIP counseling. Last year, HIICAP helped more than 158,000 people in New York State.

National funding is needed each year to support the important work of the SHIP program. Our state's SHIP has 400 counselors who are volunteers. Our volunteers are valuable partners, but this work can't be done by volunteers alone, and volunteers can't go it alone. Funding is needed to screen, train, and support these valuable partners.

The Senate Appropriations Committee has allocated no funds for the SHIP program for next year; however, the House Subcommittee on

Labor, Health and Human Services and Education approved a bill that would provide funding for the SHIP program at its current level.

For more information about how SHIP can help you or a loved one, please call 1-800-701-0501 or go to www.aging.ny.gov. To find a SHIP in another state, call 1-877-839-2675 or go to www.shiptacenter.org.

— Pamela M. Brown, Director, Chemung County Department of Aging and Long Term Care; Tamre Waite, Director, Schuyler County Office for the Aging; Patricia Baroody Director, Steuben County Office for the Aging

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