

PRATTSBURGH TOPS J-T TO ADVANCE

SPORTS, PAGE B1



A-ROD HAS PAIR OF HITS FOR YANKEES

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Horseheads
places 9th at state
SPORTS, PAGE B1



The LEADER

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STATE

\$1.8B school aid hike proposed

New York's Democrat-controlled Assembly has proposed increasing aid to public schools by \$1.8 billion to nearly \$25 billion for the fiscal year that starts April 1. Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie says they're making a commitment to all the state's children. The proposal is \$830 million more than Gov. Andrew Cuomo proposed and doesn't link increases to revamped teacher evaluations based more on student test scores as he proposed. The Assembly majority would extend mayoral control of New York City schools until 2022. Their proposal would raise funding for universal pre-kindergarten to \$835 million.

LOCAL

Corning man charged with raping underage girl

A Corning man has been charged with raping an underage girl, according to Painted Post-based New York State Police. Evin A. Swartout, 23, was charged with third-degree rape, a Class E felony, after the Steuben County Probation Department alerted state police to a report that Swartout had sexual relations with an underage female at his residence on East Second Street in the city. Swartout was arrested at his residence, arraigned before Judge Matt McCarthy in Corning City Court and sent to Steuben County Jail to await his next court appearance.

Cops: 1 charged after underage party busted

A Thurston teen was arrested this weekend after police responding to a report of an underage drinking party allegedly found 24 people under the age of 21 and a large quantity of alcohol. Mitchell A. Keesey, 19, of Hamilton Road, Thurston, was charged under the county social host law and issued an appearance ticket, the Steuben County Sheriff's Office said. The New York State Police assisted in the investigation.

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STATE POLITICS

O'Mara meth bill passes Senate

Penalties for meth would be the same as for heroin, cocaine

By Derrick Ek
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ALBANY | The state Senate has approved a bill sponsored by Sen. Tom O'Mara, R-Big Flats, that would toughen New York's penalties for possessing and selling meth, making them the same as for cocaine and heroin. The Senate approved

the legislation, S.1150, by a vote of 56-3, on Monday afternoon. A twin bill in the Assembly, sponsored by Assemblyman Sean Ryan, a Democrat from Erie County, is still in the Assembly Codes Committee. "I'm hopeful that these tougher new laws will help in the punishment of meth crimes," O'Mara said in a statement. "We also hope tougher anti-meth laws will act as a stronger deterrent among our young people at risk of falling prey to this cycle of addiction and tragedy."

Steuben County District Attorney Brooks Baker - who oversees a task force that uses investigators from multiple local law enforcement agencies to fight drug trafficking - said he was pleased to see O'Mara's bill get through the Senate. "Methamphetamine has created sort of a whole new drug culture that has spawned a tremendous amount of ancillary crime and hit areas like Steuben County, Chemung County - most of Sen. O'Mara's district - harder than other parts of the state," Baker said.

"It is uniquely dangerous in that it's produced here, and it's production puts so many other folks at risk, so there's certainly no reason to treat it as a lesser offense than heroin or cocaine," Baker added. "It is just as deadly in its use, and it's probably more deadly in its production." Cooking meth uses toxic and explosive chemicals, and can be made almost anywhere, Baker said. It typically costs \$10,000 or more to clean up a meth lab because it requires police officers with specialized training and gear, a cost

that is borne by taxpayers, he added. O'Mara is also sponsoring a bill, S.1140, that would increase penalties for manufacturing meth, and for possession of the materials used to make it. The bill is also sponsored by Ryan in the Assembly, but is still at the committee level in both houses. O'Mara introduced the same two bills in 2013. Both were passed by the Senate last year but never made it out of the Codes Committee in the Democrat-controlled Assembly.

ROUGH ROADS AHEAD

Pothole season could be worst in years

By Jeffery Smith
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CORNING | After a long, cold winter, the Southern Tier is finally seeing spring-like temperatures. And potholes. A lot of potholes. Some officials are warning motorists to watch out: Pothole season is here, and it's going to be a bad one. Larry Wagner, Corning superintendent of public works, said frost in the ground has already heaved several streets throughout the city. "It wouldn't surprise me if this was a more aggressive year (for potholes)," Wagner said. "When it warms up and the frost comes out that's



SEE POTHOLES, A8 Potholes are making for a bumpy ride on Dodge Avenue. JEFFERY SMITH/THE LEADER

50TH ANNIVERSARY

Reed, back from Selma, highlights Voting Rights Act

By James Post
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U.S. Rep. Tom Reed stood with approximately 100 of his Congressional colleagues Saturday to mark the anniversary of a historic march for voting rights that ended in bloodshed. Reed said he wanted to remember "the historic efforts made by John Lewis and so many others." Lewis, now a member of the House of Representatives from Georgia, was present Saturday as he was 50 years ago in Selma, Ala., as a leader of the civil rights movement. Reed said Monday it was

amazing "to watch John Lewis introduce the first African-American president to us." He also praised President Barack Obama's speech Saturday in Selma. "He definitely delivered a very good speech ... in a very dramatic setting," Reed said. "He talked about ... not only do we need to protect the right to vote, but we as citizens have an obligation to use that right." "I applaud the president for being there," he said. Reed also said he was touched by another historic event over the weekend.



U.S. Rep. Tom Reed, center, stands outside Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church in Selma, Ala., along with Reps. Bob Dold, R-Ill., Kevin Yoder, R-Kan., and Alabama police officers. PROVIDED

SEE SELMA, A8

GRAND LARCENY

Lindley woman to face sentence

Butler pleaded guilty to stealing from mother-in-law

By James Post
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BATH | A woman who pleaded guilty to felony charges related to stealing hundreds of thousands of dollars from her mother-in-law will be sentenced Wednesday. Lisa Butler, 43, of Lindley, pleaded guilty in January to two counts of second-degree grand larceny, a class C felony. Police say Butler systematically stole money from the woman's accounts during a period from June 2007 to June 2012. An investigation began after a report to the Steuben County Sheriff's Office in August 2012 that an elderly woman was missing more than \$1 million from various bank accounts. Eventually charged in May 2013 were Lisa Butler and husband Bruce Butler, 45, also of Lindley. Both were charged with second-degree grand larceny, second-degree welfare fraud and offering a false instrument for filing. The welfare fraud charges stem from allegations that the two also received \$117,000 in welfare benefits during the same time period while failing to report income. Lisa Butler was allowed

SEE STEALING, A8

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