

Grins and groans

THE ISSUE | Grins and groans from news of the week.

OUR OPINION | Groan for making something out of nothing, a tone-deaf president. Grin to the doggie paddle.

Groan

Yes, it's technically presidential campaign season, and yes there's a predictable segment of the right wing who are going to criticize the president for doing anything, but at some point it's got to stop.

Those hypocrites on the right who attack the president for taking a vacation on Martha's Vineyard are showing their blatant partisanship.

So far President Obama has taken 61 vacation days. Ronald Reagan, the hero of the right, had taken almost twice as many at the same point in his presidency.

But neither can hold a candle to former President George W. Bush.

Three years into his presidency, George W. Bush had already taken 180 days, a whopping six months.

This is an issue that both sides should give a rest. For the president, there's no such thing as a true vacation. Every one of them is a working vacation and both the left and the right should stop using this as an issue.

Groan

Even if President Obama has a perfect right to take a family vacation, could he have chosen a place that screams out-of-touch louder than Martha's Vineyard?

With the economy in the tank, the president's opponents already have enough ammunition to use against him.

He really doesn't need to be handing them another issue.

Grin

The City of Corning's Parks and Recreation department does a great thing to mark the end of the summer.

As the department gets ready to close the Stewart and Denison pools for the season, they open the pools a few times to let man's best friend cool off.

Each pool hosts a couple dog swims, and judging by the unbound enthusiasm of some of these pooches as they dive into the water, the events are a big hit.

Judging by the smiles on the faces of more than one owner standing poolside, the dogs aren't the only ones enjoying themselves.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR (607) 936-9939

THE LEADER
PO BOX 1017
CORNING, NY 14830

The LEADER

The Leader (ISSN #10501983)
The Leader is published daily at
34 West Pulteney Street,
Corning, New York 14830

by Liberty Group Corning Holdings, Inc.
Periodical postage paid
at Corning, New York 14830-0817.
USPS code | 0586-160

Postmaster:
Send address changes to
The Leader, West Pulteney Street,
Corning, New York 14830

Publisher: Dennis Bruen

ON THE FRONT PAGE
Corning clocktower by artist
Larry Barone

POSTAL RATES

STEBUEN COUNTY		ELSEWHERE IN USA	
One month	\$26	One month	\$33.50
Three months	\$78	Three months	\$100.50
Six months	\$156	Six months	\$201
One year	\$288	One year	\$372

CIRCULATION

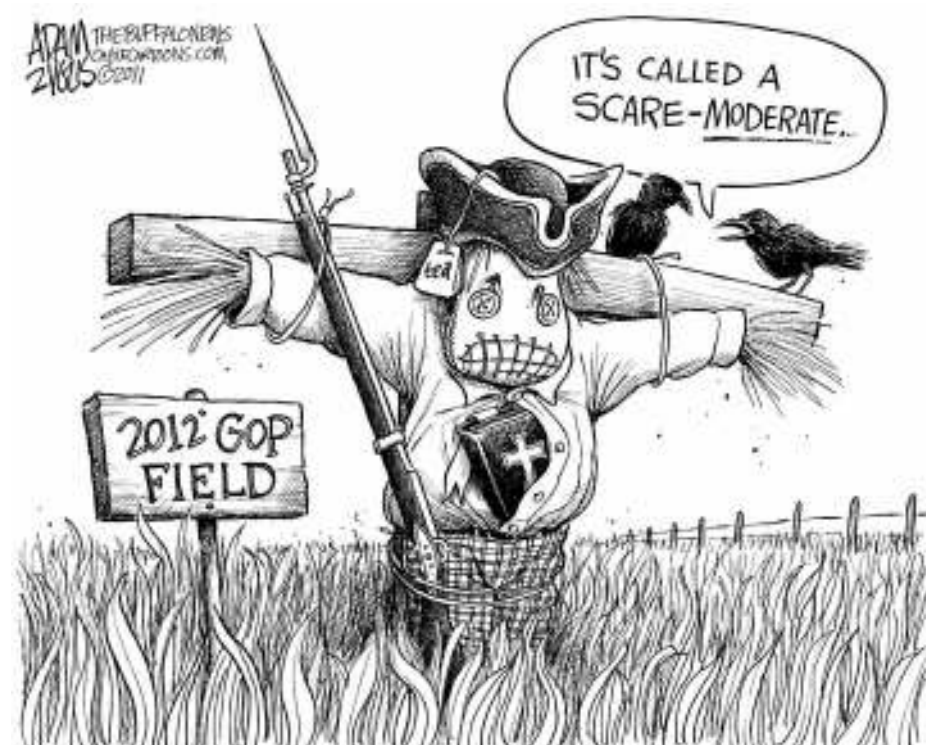
Elmer Kuehner | Circulation director
936-4651, Ext. 320

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ARTIST'S VIEW



COMMENTARY | STATE SEN. TOM O'MARA

Building at home

For decades now, the popular picture that's been painted of upstate New York manufacturing has told a story of lost jobs, abandoned factories and declining communities.

So as a slate of regional economic development councils created as part of this year's state budget begins to focus on ways to rebuild, reenergize and restructure the state economy, one of the key questions will likely be this one: is there still a place for manufacturing?

Let's hope the answer is a resounding yes.

Because while one widely held perception might view manufacturing as a lost cause, the facts are still trying to tell a very different – and much more optimistic – story.

The decline of manufacturing has been undeniable in many once-proud upstate cities and towns, but the broader picture's not without hope.

Just over a year ago, for example, the Syracuse-based Manufacturers Association of Central New York (MACNY), which represents approximately 350 businesses and 55,000 workers across 19 upstate counties, launched a new public policy arm called the "Manufacturing Research Institute of New York State."

The Institute's inaugural report, "Twenty First Century Manufacturing: A Foundation of New York's Economy," included this summary, "Despite reduced employment counts, manufacturing remains a foundation of New York's economy. Communities across Upstate are especially dependent on local factories, often for more than

25 percent of all private-sector payrolls. New York's manufacturing sector is not as large proportionally as those in most other states – yet its high rate of value added in production and high-paid jobs make it possible for the state to retain its position as a national industrial leader."

The report and a subsequent study that surveyed the suggestions and thoughts of 100 of New York's top manufacturing executives (both of which can be found online at www.mriny.org) provide an interesting and valuable historical and modern perspective on manufacturing's importance to regional economies state-wide – especially, it's important to note, in our own Southern Tier.

It serves to raise awareness of the key changes that this sector has undergone, but also stresses the relevant place it continues to offer for the future. As one top MACNY official said in testimony before the Legislature's fiscal committees earlier this year, summarizing the survey's conclusions, "An underlying message should be clear: (manufacturers) are here, they are doing business, and despite a difficult business climate, they want to continue doing business here. These businesses and our sector as a whole are ready and willing to turn this climate around, together, one step at a time."

A similar note was sounded earlier this year by the Public Policy Institute, the research arm of The Business Council of New York State. Its study, "Let's Make it Here: Keys to a Manufacturing Resurgence in New York," fully acknowledged the chal-

lenge but also sounded a hopeful note. The study (which you can find on www.ppiny.org) also concludes that manufacturing remains critical to state economic growth and job creation: "Making New York a frontrunner in this industry is crucial to the economic health of our state. According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, for each dollar spent on manufacturing another \$1.41 is generated in other sectors of the economy. Manufacturing also provides well-paying jobs, especially in upstate New York, where the average manufacturing wage is \$54,181. Massive state and local tax burdens, however, coupled with overly-rigorous environmental standards have discouraged growth in the sector."

The overriding importance of these studies is twofold. First, each very clearly sounds the alarm on the challenges ahead. We can never be reminded enough on that front. But secondly, they offer still timely reminders that while the upstate manufacturing sector has undergone rapid change over the past generation, it remains a crucial segment of the overall state economy and, most critically, a foundation on which to build a better, stronger future.

That's a message that needs to keep resonating across New York government which, as so many of us have said time and time again, has a vital role to play in helping to create the kind of favorable economic climate in which manufacturing can be renewed and thrive again.

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

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Trip to benefit organization

TO THE EDITOR | Tick bites have been on the rise this year. There is a local, all-volunteer non-profit organization dedicated to help relieve those suffering from and distressed by the effects of Lyme and other tick-borne diseases and to promote community awareness, A Hope 4 Lyme. One way A Hope 4 Lyme is offering support is by providing \$50 gas

cards to help offset travel expenses for those undergoing treatment. We provide service to the following counties: N.Y. – Broome, Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben, Tioga and Tompkins; Pa. – Bradford, Lycoming, Potter and Tioga. To help support their cause, A Hope 4 Lyme is hosting a bus trip to Christmas in the Woods and Grove City Outlets on October 8th and 9th. The bus will be departing from Painted Post, N.Y. at 6 a.m. with pick up stops in

Tioga, Mansfield and Linden, Pa. There are still seats available. If you are interested in traveling with us, full payment must be received by August 31st. For details on the bus trip, download a gas card app, or information on tick-borne diseases, visit their website at www.ahope4lyme.org or call (570)537-6616.

Linda Wales
Director/Treasurer
A Hope 4 Lyme, Inc.
Elmira

Only 13% approve of Congress

Congratulations, boys. Members of Congress are disliked by more people than Casey Anthony.

A new Gallup poll shows that only 13 percent of Americans approve of Congress, tying the record for public disapproval set last December.

Asked if they disapproved of Congress, 84 percent said yes. That is a level one point higher than the worst judgment ever recorded.

The Gallup poll has been checking people's opinion of Congress since 1974 and the average over those years has been about 34 percent approval.

The current level is less than half that average.

Both Democrats and Republicans indicated they don't like what's being done by their elected representatives and voters who call themselves independents were the most critical of all. In that group just 9 percent approved of what's been happening while 86 percent said a resounding no.

It seems difficult to understand how the country can function when so large a percentage of the population despises the action of their elected representatives.

But this is the Congress on whose watch the country's credit rating was lowered, raising the debt ceiling took a full month and the stock market has shown more zigzags than a car driven by a 5-year-old boy.

We elect 'em to do a job and yet, obviously most people don't think they're doing it. Look for the outcome of next year's election. It will be interesting to see how many of these clowns still have a job.

Hopefully it will be just a handful.

●●●
Last week's NASCAR Sprint Cup race at Watkins Glen International was the finest show seen in Schuyler County in years. Indeed, it may well have been the race of the year for the series.

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