

Get involved in fight against hunger

THE ISSUE | Thousands are going hungry in the Southern Tier.
OUR OPINION | The hunger crisis is not going to go away any time soon. Do what you can to help your neighbors feed their families.

In today's economy, most of us have had to tighten our belts and change our eating habits.

Travel mugs filled with coffee made at home have replaced \$4 lattes. Last night's leftovers are today's lunch. Dinner at a restaurant that serves meals on plates and not in wrappers is reserved for a special occasion; going out for ice cream – a real treat.

A real bummer, yes, but it could be worse. Much worse.

Because while you're cutting back on dining out, thousands of your neighbors are cutting back on dining at all.

According to a study by the Food Bank of America of the Southern Tier and Feeding America, more than 10 percent of people living in Steuben, Chemung and Schuyler counties are battling food insecurity – they are not always sure where their next meal is coming from.

In Steuben County, 13,860 residents do not have access at all times to enough food to provide all family members an active, healthy life. In Chemung, 12,780 and in Schuyler, 2,320 residents are food insecure.

We all know times are tough, but still, those numbers are startling. Too many of our neighbors are going hungry. Even worse, the study estimates that 27,800 children in Steuben, Chemung, Schuyler, Broome, Tioga and Tompkins counties are food insecure.

To fight the problem, the Food Bank created the Backpack program, which last year sent home bags of food each week to 1,400 children in 19 school districts in the region.

This summer, nutrition programs at various sites throughout the country provided children free breakfast and lunch.

Food pantries continue to help families put food on the table.

But that's not enough. More needs to be done, and it won't come cheap, the study said. In Steuben County, an additional \$5.5 million is necessary to adequately address the county's hunger problem. An additional \$4.9 million is needed in Chemung County.

That's a lot of additional money for agencies, such as the Food Bank and the food pantries, which are run by Catholic Charities.

They need our help.

So what can we do?

Get involved, of course.

■ Write a check to the Food Bank. No amount is too small.

■ Peanut butter, tuna fish, macaroni and cheese, apple sauce: Add those or other inexpensive, nonperishable items to your grocery cart and place them in collection boxes often found near the exit of your local market.

■ Raid your pantry when your church or Boy Scout troop hold a can drive. Better yet, start a drive of your own.

■ Hold a party and charge "a can of food" to get in.

■ Volunteer at the nearby food pantry or soup kitchen. Not sure where? Check out the Food Bank website. You may be surprised how many there are.

■ Next spring, help your children plant a garden at the Food Bank.

■ Create a cause on Facebook to benefit the Food Bank.

■ Participate in a Crop Walk.

■ Ask for food to donate instead of birthday presents.

There's plenty of other ideas at the Food Bank website, <http://foodbankst.org/>.

Just do something, because our neighbors are hungry.

You can reach the Food Bank by calling 796-6061.

ARTIST'S VIEW



COMMENTARY | STATE SEN. TOM O'MARA

September 11

For each generation of Americans, certain dates become etched forever in memory. These dates, too often associated with national tragedies, resonate for a lifetime. December 7, 1941. The attack on Pearl Harbor. November 22, 1963. The assassination of President John F. Kennedy in Dallas, Texas. And April 4, 1968 – the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

These dates come quickly to mind as examples. And so it is with September 11, 2001.

In a speech to the nation from the East Room of the White House three months later, on December 11, 2011, former President George W. Bush offered the following words to a nation still in shock, mourning and outrage: "... and so we remember. We remember the perfect blueness of the sky that Tuesday morning ... We remember the courage of the rescue workers and the outpouring of friendship and sympathy from nations around the world ... The republic is young, but its memory is long. Now we have inscribed a new memory alongside those others. It's a memory of tragedy and shock, of loss and mourning ... It's also a memory of bravery and self-sacrifice, and the love that lays down its life for a friend – even a friend whose name it never knew."

The president concluded his remarks that day this way, "We will remember where we were and how we felt ... And in our time we will honor the memory of the 11th day by doing our duty as citizens of this great country, freedom's home

and freedom's defender."

His words remain fitting and poignant even today, ten years after 9/11. Opening this week (and continuing through the end of September) in 30 communities throughout New York state, including the cities of Elmira and Ithaca, a series of "New York Remembers" exhibitions will offer New Yorkers a moving and powerful place to remember September 11th – to honor the memory of the fallen, to rekindle the heroism of those who responded, and to reenergize the spirit of resolve that has helped our nation recover.

These "New York Remembers" exhibits have been organized by and feature historical artifacts from the collections of the New York State Museum (www.nysm.nysed.gov/exhibits/special/remembering911) and the National September 11 Memorial & Museum (www.911memorial.org/memorial). You can find out more about them on the websites just noted.

In his announcement of "New York Remembers" earlier this month, Gov. Andrew Cuomo said, "These exhibitions will give New Yorkers in towns, villages and cities all across the state a gathering place to once again stand as one community to make sure we never forget those who lost their lives on September 11th and to embrace the spirit of unity that brought us together on that day of devastating tragedy."

In Elmira, "New York Remembers" is located at the Clemens Center, 733-5639, and in Ithaca the exhibit can be found at the Rothschild

Building at Ithaca Commons, 277-8679. All of the "New York Remembers" exhibits will be open Sunday, September 11th. They join a wealth of 9/11 television specials, news articles and other publications, and many additional observances in the weeks ahead – including a "Healing Field" flag memorial that I'll help unveil at the St. Mary Our Mother School in Horseheads on Friday, Sept. 9 at 6:30 p.m. and where a 10th anniversary observance will continue thru September 11th. More information on the Healing Field event can be found at www.healingfield.org/horseheads.

I'll be proud to remember those who perished and recall how so many emergency services volunteers, not-for-profit organizations, school classrooms, business leaders and other concerned citizens from across the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions responded in positive, uplifting ways in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks.

I'll be proud to remember how so many of this nation's citizens, young and old, from all walks of life, responded to one of America's darkest days with a powerful, enduring determination to help our nation carry on, to recover, to rebuild – and how, to this very day, this memory serves to remind us that even in the toughest of times Americans face a future of hope, that the fundamental values of decency, honor and respect will keep this nation strong.

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

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OTHER VIEW | L.A. TIMES

Steve Jobs' Midas touch

Steve Jobs announced this week that he won't be resuming his duties as Apple's chief executive, ending a remarkable run that transformed Apple from an also-ran computer maker into one of the most valuable publicly traded companies in the United States. He'll remain chairman of Apple's board, so it's too early to declare the Jobs era over. Yet it's a good time to reflect on Jobs' seemingly magic touch.

It's not Apple's ability to invent technologies as much as Jobs' uncanny sense of how to design and package them into products and services that consumers didn't realize they needed. It's not the power that Apple put at people's fingertips as much as the easy utility. And it's not the novelty as much as the quality of the experience – the insistence that the first version of an Apple product work better than the competitors' second or third.

Although he's well known for being a micro-manager (his name can be found on more than 300 Apple patents, including several for the boxes its products came in) and a control freak, Jobs doesn't get all the credit for these successes. The company has attracted extremely talented engineers and designers, most notably Jonathan Ive, the longtime chief of design who helped put the dazzle into Apple's sleek devices. Nevertheless, one of Jobs' unique contributions to Apple appears to be a phenomenal sense of timing – in particular, an ability to recognize when the public may finally be ready to adopt a disruptive technology.

That's why Apple's products over the past decade have not only been wildly popular, they have accelerated the industrial transformations made possible by digital technology. The iPod and the iTunes Store hastened the move from plastic CDs to downloadable singles. The iPhone turned the cellphone into an uninterrupted online pipeline of content and connections. The iPad opened a convenient, portable window into the growing trove of media online. None of these devices or services was the first of its kind – in fact, they all arrived years after their pioneering competitors – but they were the first to be embraced by the masses.

Granted, Apple's success has hindered the companies whose ideas for digital media didn't jibe with Jobs' notion of what the public wanted. For example, subscription music services struggled for years because Jobs disliked them and Apple's iPods didn't support them. On the other hand, Apple wouldn't be where it is today without Jobs' singular vision – as well as the company's ability to translate it into products that it marketed brilliantly. Wednesday's announcement wasn't surprising, considering Jobs' long struggle with pancreatic cancer and its aftershocks. It was, however, a reminder that the Steve Jobs era won't last forever. Here's hoping that it's not over yet.

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