

OPINION

LETTERS POLICY

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READER VIEW | JEFF HELLER

Are you up to the test?

As an ex-U.S. history teacher I cannot resist a little “almost – history” quiz. See if you can identify the author of the following quotes. We will make the test multiple choice rather than the preferred essay. Hint – the source will be a political leader.

“If it is in the public interest to maintain an industry, it is clearly not in the interest by the impact of regulatory authority to destroy its otherwise viable life.”

“The Commission (Federal Power Commission) should be authorized to exempt from the rate regulation up to 100 percent of the small individual producers of natural gas.”

“With respect to the processing of pipeline construction permits, the Commission should be authorized to exempt from all or part of its procedures up to 100 percent of those applications by interstate pipeline companies ...”

“The formulation of these standards will require creative imagination: but the alternative is to defend bureaucracy for

bureaucracy’s sake.”
 Source choices: (A) George Bush, (B) Dick Cheney, (C) Ronald Reagan, (D) none of the above.

The correct answer – None of the above ! It was in fact John F. Kennedy in an April 13, 1961 letter to Congress on regulations.

The real point here is that in the past even Democratic party leaders could be, in a sense, pro – natural gas. Actually, to be Fair and “balanced” you have to recognize that a lot of current liberal Democratic leaders and governors are pro-natural gas. In fact there is only one governor in the nation, whose state is located above a major shale play, who is anti-gas drilling. If you cannot guess who he is, let me give you another hint : He’s the governor who is following Yoko Ono (his leading authority on gas drilling), dancing to her favorite song and dance routine – “Don’t Frack My Mother”. If you haven’t seen the video, you really should!

Jeff Heller is a Bradford resident.

READER VIEW | MARY LU WALKER

Our library serves entire community

I am one of the many enthusiastic and dedicated Friends of the Library who volunteer to fill a number of needs in the daily operations of our great Southeast Steuben County Library.

Twice a year the Friends organize and work on a Used Book Sale – one of the major fundraisers for the library. One of the beneficiaries of the proceeds of the sale are the outstanding summer concerts/performance for all area children.

The staff of the children’s department is top notch with outreach programming, in-house weekly lap sit and toddler programs, activities for teens, and in the summer free breakfasts and lunches for children.

The Mad Hatters storytelling troupe travels to schools, festivals, and village celebrations. For years, the Friends have sponsored and organized Books Sandwiched In, a noon-time series of book reviews by local presenters. A well attended midwinter diversion.

Coffee, Tea, and English, one of the newest groups, brings together volunteers and participants who want to improve their English speaking skills. Many warm friendships have been formed at these informal and relaxed weekly

gatherings. Every other Friday evening the “usual suspects” show up for a free movie digitally projected on a state of the art screen. The sound system is exceptional and a newly installed hearing loop system aids people with hearing problems.

The community rooms are well used and open for lectures, civic gatherings poets, writers, musicians, book reviews, AIDS memorials, controversial activists, yoga demonstrations, Saturday movies for children (with popcorn!) and just recently, for the memorial celebration of the life of a local citizen.

Southeast Steuben County library is living proof of the new concept of what “library” means. Here in our small town we have a treasure that serves a whole community of varied interests. By growing and changing with the times it attracts the young and stimulates the old with new ideas and experiences. The very atmosphere is exciting to me (one of the “old”) and I look forward to what the future holds for this unique and vibrant organization. I am proud of and love my library! Please join me in voting YES on Dec. 17.

Mary Lu Walker is a Corning resident.

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

ANOTHER VIEW

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POLITICS | TOM O'MARA

Bringing high-tech to a boil

I’ll call it one great big pot of exciting economic news.

That’s just one way to think about the latest round of funding through the state’s Regional Economic Development Councils (REDC) initiative, announced last week. But I think it serves to make the overriding point of just how many key local ingredients are in the process of being mixed together, stirred up and served in a way that this region’s never seen before.

New York’s economic development councils were created in 2011 and established regionally based coalitions of business, community, education and government leaders to develop – in other words, to spark a brand new way of achieving grassroots economic and community development, and job creation. There are 10 councils in all, including the Southern Tier REDC (which covers Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben and Tompkins counties in my 58th Senate District) and the Finger Lakes REDC (which includes Yates County in my district). You can read more about the work of each council, including last week’s project awards, online at <http://regionalcouncils.ny.gov/>

And it’s worthwhile reading. Take a look at the latest awards and you’ll find that there’s whole lot going on: Rural development.

Agriculture- and tourism-related initiatives. Health care advances, including telemedicine.



TOM OMARA

Infrastructure improvements. Broadband expansion. Energy. Education. Housing. You name it. In each region, including the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes, there’s a wide ranging list of regional initiatives that, together, offer an exciting menu of community and economic development.

Of course that makes it sound far too easy. The truth is it’s the product of a lot of behind-the-scenes, hard, detailed, thoughtful work and planning over the past several years. In our case, the work’s been carried out by regional leaders like Corning Enterprises President and CEO Tom Tranter, who co-chairs the Southern Tier REDC. They’ve dedicated their energy, expertise and vision – to say nothing of their abiding desire to see our communities succeed. They’ve continually assessed regional strengths and weaknesses, identified specific priorities and put in motion short- and long-term strategies to keep us moving toward a more secure economic future.

Very simply, these regional public-private partnerships are providing the economic leadership we need in this tough economy to keep strengthening existing and building new economic foundations so

that our employers and our workers can compete with anyone, anywhere for the jobs of the future and across-the-board economic growth.

With that in mind, I’ll highlight just one initiative from the Southern Tier REDC which, by the way, was recognized as a “Top Performer” this year.

The emerging cornerstone of the council’s strategy, in my view, is the establishment of the “Southern Tier Innovation Hot Spot.” It’s joining, like never before, existing research and development infrastructure and investment at Cornell University, Binghamton University and the Ceramics Corridor Innovation Center in Painted Post to create a regional, high-tech business start-up incubator. The latest REDC funding cycle also supports a major expansion of the Southern Tier Network, one of New York State’s leading broadband expansion endeavors, as well as the establishment of a Cornell University-affiliated business incubator in downtown Ithaca.

Back in September in this column, I wrote of the proposed Southern Tier Innovation Hot Spot, “We’re talking about revitalization through the commercialization of incubator facilities, by encouraging new entrepreneurs and start-up high-tech companies, by attracting new capital investment, energizing workforce development, and leveraging existing state programs and services to keep advancing our future – and our fortunes.” Now it’s underway and

it has the potential to carry us a long way in securing a prominent place in the statewide, national and worldwide competition for high-tech jobs and economic opportunities. It’s important work and we’re fortunate to have it taking place at Cornell University, at Corning Inc., at the Ceramics Corridor Innovation Center and at so many other regional institutions, including a Rochester-based Finger Lakes Innovation Hot Spot that’s also being created.

The Southern Tier and Finger Lakes Innovation Hot Spots hold out the promise of a broadly based Finger Lakes-Southern Tier corridor of high-tech business development, job creation, innovation, and cutting-edge research and development.

It’s all about creating good jobs and long-term economic security for communities, workers and families. It’s about creating the economic opportunities that will keep the incredible young talent already living and learning at our colleges and universities living and working and raising families in our communities throughout the next generation.

It’s about continuing to leverage ongoing state and federal investments that can lead us in so many exciting, significant and diverse directions.

State Sen. Tom O'Mara, R-Big Flats, represents New York's 58th Senate District, which includes Steuben, Chemung, Schuyler and Yates counties, and part of Tompkins County.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Will vote for tax, but with regret

TO THE EDITOR | I think I speak for a lot of people in the Corning school district. I realize how important the library is. I think it should be supported and I would hate to see it close, but I really resent the insinuation that the people who question the proposed funding plan are somehow anti-library.

The people who are opposed to the new funding

plan are people who have seen their school property taxes skyrocket to the point that many wonder if they will be able to keep their house or will be forced to sell and move somewhere where the property taxes won’t crush them.

The property tax burden in New York state is completely out of control. My wife and I have been blessed with the opportunity to purchase our retirement home near Phoenix, Ariz. Our plan

is to live in Arizona in the winter and come back here in the summer, but we are seriously considering selling our house that we love here because the property taxes in Arizona are 1/10th what we pay in New York state.

Anything that will add to the already ludicrously high property taxes we now pay is something that is questioned by many pro libraries, but anti new-property tax people. I feel compassion is a

two-way street. Compassion should be shown to people who use the library, but it should also be shown for the people who pay the bills, the property taxpayers.

I personally will probably vote for the new library funding formula, but will do so with much regret and concern for the future of the tax capitol of America: New York state.

Richard Davis
 Corning