

## Grins & groans

### Grin

To state Education Commissioner Dr. John King Jr. allowing C-PP's \$97 million facilities project to move forward despite a recent legal challenge. Upgrades for Corning's schools are desperately needed and long overdue. And after a workable plan finally got passed, it's a shame C-PP officials had to jump through yet another hoop. Let's hope the commish's decision isn't appealed. It's time to move forward.

### Groan

To something rotten in the Town of Rathbone, Maybe. Steuben County election officials have contacted authorities with concerns about possible election improprieties, specifically the absentee ballots. They aren't giving further details but there was an unusually high number of absentee ballots in Rathbone, and 94 out of 97 supported the same candidate in the key race for town supervisor. We'll wait for this to be sorted out, but it doesn't look good. Is a scandal brewing?

### Grin

To the news that Corning Inc. plans to help the Corning-Painted Post school district meet a likely shortfall as it prepares a budget for the next school year.

Corning Inc. has a long history of supporting local schools, and gave \$4.2 million so C-PP could avoid deep cuts for this year's budget.

But the state's new two percent tax levy cap hits schools especially hard, and without adequate compensation in state aid, the outlook is even more grim this year for C-PP. It won't solve all the problems, but Corning Inc.'s pledge of support is huge.

### Groan

To the Georgia man who admitted dumping 800 gallons of toxic sludge from a Bradford County, Pa., gas well on nearby state game lands. It's not an indictment of the industry as a whole, but every time an incident like this occurs it makes New Yorkers more leery about allowing fracking here.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### Penn State made correct choice

**TO THE EDITOR** | In two recent columns, Bob Rolfe opines that for all of Penn State Coach Paterno's accomplishments, his firing was too harsh. But the buck stops with Paterno even though it is his assistant coach, Jerry Sandusky, who is charged with 30 counts of sexually assaulting boys over a period of 15 years. That is a long time for witnesses to have turned a blind eye.

The evidence was strong enough for university officials to fire Paterno rather than put him on administrative leave. If superiors such as Paterno's do not act firmly to set an example, then how does society stop sexual predators? Look how long similar cover-ups were made within the Catholic Church hierarchy and the damage it did. From what other institutions or sports teams do children need protection?

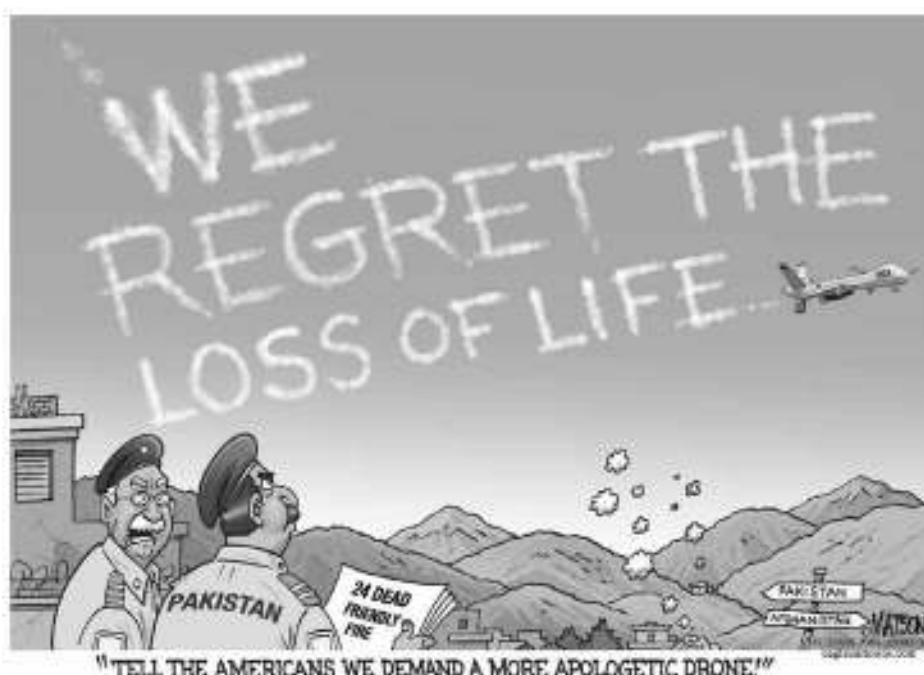
Bob Rolfe, like the Penn State rioters who supported Paterno, shows an irrational sympathy for a coach who conceded he should have done more about allegations against Sandusky, and a lack of sensitivity to the scarred lives of the assaulted minors.

I laud the Penn State administrators who had the guts to penalize Paterno and to sideline the irrelevant fact that the coach helped the athletic program earn an estimated \$91 million annually for the university. They scored a touchdown for human decency and good sportsmanship.

**Karen Biesanz**  
Corning

<b>The LEADER</b> 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 <b>ON THE FRONT PAGE</b> Corning clocktower by artist Larry Barone		<b>CIRCULATION</b> Elmer Kuehner   Circulation director 936-4651, Ext. 320  <b>EDITORIAL</b> Stella DuPree   Managing editor 936-4651, Ext. 361 sdupree@the-leader.com  <b>ADVERTISING</b> Kurt Bartenstein   Ad director, 936-4651, Ext. 388 kbartenstein@the-leader.com	
<b>POSTAL RATES</b>			
<b>STEBUEN COUNTY</b>		<b>ELSEWHERE IN USA</b>	
One month	\$28.60	One month	\$36.85
Three months	\$85.80	Three months	\$110.55
Six months	\$171.60	Six months	\$221.10
One year	\$308.88	One year	\$397.98

## ARTIST'S VIEW



POLITICS | U.S. REP. TOM REED

## Looking back, ahead

It is hard to believe that a year has passed since I was sworn in to represent New York's 29th District in the House of Representatives. It is a true honor and privilege to represent our great area and I will do my best to make you proud.

After taking the oath in November 2010, I learned very quickly that Washington does not operate in a functional manner. Nothing moves except in the eleventh hour of a crisis and difficult decisions are delayed until the last possible minute.

Constant operation in crisis mode is a very bad way to make policy. Unfortunately, that has continued into this year. That frustration aside, there have been many highlights in our first year.

Our first year has completed more than 1600 constituent cases. While the publicity is about legislation, the larger portion of the job is going to bat for constituents. Whether it involves IRS problems, Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid assistance, veteran's affairs or other issues involving federal agencies, our most important job is helping people navigate the federal bureaucratic maze. This is

my top priority and I am glad we have been able to help so many.

We also try to represent you with complete accessibility. We have conducted 42 public town hall meetings as well as dozens of teletown halls and public events throughout the district. Having these constant conversations and truly listening to you is critical to doing the job in Washington.

We have introduced seven bills in the House. Three dealt with improving job opportunities for all and others dealt with making the necessary infrastructure investments so hard working Americans and entrepreneurs can open new businesses that will ignite our economy. These include the Roofing Efficiency Jobs Act, Grape Region Accelerated Production and Efficiency Act, and the BUILD Bridges Act. Other bills I introduced included the Low Income Heating Improvement (LIHEAP) Act and the Help Hospice Act.

We burn the midnight oil reading bills and budgets. That work resulted in sponsoring multiple successful amendments in the appropriations process that stopped more than \$173 million in wasteful spending

including defunding of the Tijuana, Mexico sewer project. I worked across the aisle to successfully sponsor amendments dealing with the West Valley nuclear site and the threat to our lumber industry from the Emerald Ash Borer.

One of our greatest accomplishments is intangible. I ran for Congress to put an end to out of control borrowing and spending. (Our national debt recently rose above \$15,000,000,000,000 – 15 trillion dollars!). We can no longer pretend that we aren't going bankrupt.

Since January when so many other new members came to Washington, the conversation has changed. It has changed from increasing spending to freezing spending to now cutting spending. This is a tremendous step forward.

Our freshman class has also begun to change the culture of Washington. We now require a time period to actually read a bill before we vote on it and any member, Democrat or Republican, can submit amendments for a vote in the House. We now start our conversations with the substance, rather than the

SEE REED | 5A



POLITICS | STATE SEN. TOM O'MARA

## Shop online safely

"Cyber Monday," the day after the traditional Thanks-giving weekend start to the holiday shopping season, began a flurry of online purchasing which, according to reports, generated more than \$1.25 billion this year – the heaviest day of online spending in history.

One thing we know for certain about our rapid, global march into the world of e-commerce is that it's become big, big business. But we also recognize that there's an unprecedented exchange of online information occurring, which compels this reminder: Don't overlook the privacy and other public policy issues raised by our ongoing leap into this age of modern technology.

The New York State Senate has held a number of legislative hearings over the years to give creditors, law enforcement officials, computer security experts, and others the opportunity to share their thoughts

on mapping out more effective strategies to address a host of privacy-concerns. These concerns include one that's become commonly known as "identity theft," arguably the overriding fear underlying our caution in today's online economy.

It's been reported that identity theft costs more than eight million American consumers an estimated \$40 billion annually. According to the Identity Theft Data Clearinghouse, in 2009 New York state ranked eighth in the nation in per capita identity theft complaints. It's clear that the availability of information in computer databases and the rapid growth of Internet commerce have produced a new breed of criminals who abusethechnologies to steal consumer information and ruin consumer credit. Indeed, identity theft is considered the No. 1 and fastest-growing financial and consumer crimes of this era.

The tactics of today's

cybercriminals change as fast as our technology, often faster. It all serves to highlight the ongoing challenge to keep identity theft laws ahead of identity thieves. New York became the 43rd state in the nation to enact an identity theft law in 2002.

But security studies continually point to the overriding reality that we have to update our laws as frequently as cybercriminals update their ability to break them. It's no easy task.

One important new law approved a few years ago enables consumers to place a "security freeze" on their credit reports if they suspect they are victims of identity theft. A security freeze prevents an identity thief from taking out new loans and credit under their victim's name. We've also strengthened New York's identity theft protections by enacting new laws to restrict the ability of employers to use an employee's personal

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## What took so long?

Sorry, gang, but I think John B. King, Jr., New York State Education commissioner, is lazy.

Last year, former Corning school board member Tom O'Brien filed a serious appeal regarding the school district's facilities plan.

Voters approved that massive undertaking last year and work has already begun.

But that happened with no ruling from the commissioner.

King did not give a verdict on the legality of the whole matter until last week.

At the same time, residents in the southern corner of the district filed an appeal against the closing of the

Lindley-Presho Elementary School.

The commissioner again made no decision and allowed the school to be shut down with no action on the residents' objections.

King finally got around to dismissing that complaint again last week.

I'm sorry, Mr. King, but could you please explain why no ruling was given until months after the bond issue was approved and the school was closed?

Issues of this importance should have been decided before voters went to the polls last year.

Rulings made so long after the fact are ridiculous and basically have no meaning.

I know, the job of the education commissioner is a complex one and his schedule overflows.

But doing nothing is not an answer to public concerns.

O'Brien had a legitimate question about the legality of the funding mechanism for the facilities project.

The residents of the Lindley-Presho district also had genuine concerns and wanted only to save their school.

The commissioner turned down both appeals as is his right. But why did he wait months after the fact when his ruling in effect was meaningless?

The Insider's hat is off, lifted in praise of the Albany County District Attorney.

Governor Andrew Cuomo last month set an 11 P.M. curfew on Albany's Lafayette Park which the state owns.

Target of the action were the Occupy Albany protesters who had been using the park as headquarters.

The governor sent in armed state police and local officers with orders to clean out the protesters.

This they did with considerable violence.

Their actions left a bad taste in the mouths of many Albany residents who saw the incursion by club-wielding police as an over-reaction to the situation.

Several hundred people faced charges after the armed cops did their thing.

But when they got to court and pleaded innocent, they found that the DA refused to prosecute.

That action came because there was no allegation of property damage or violence by the protesters.

As a result, the charges were dismissed and the protesters went home.

Bob Rolfe, a retired Leader reporter/editor, can be reached by writing The Leader, PO Box 1017, Corning, N.Y. 14830 or theinsider1@aol.com.