

## Grins and groans

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

**OUR OPINION** | Groan to class-less graduations, the wrong place for babies. Grin to a true champion.

### Groan

College graduation season is now firmly behind us, but the most recent ceremonies can offer some lessons for the upcoming high school graduations.

Parents, siblings, relatives and friends of graduates – treat the ceremony like what it is, a solemn event honoring hard work, dedication and sacrifice.

Don't treat it like the fourth quarter of a Buffalo Bills game.

The behavior at some recent college ceremonies would make New York City construction workers blush.

When you choose to honor your graduate with shouts, whistles and cat calls, all you are doing is taking attention away from where it should be, the graduates, and drawing it to yourself.

Yes, your graduate knows you love them. Screaming their name every time they stand up won't make them think you love them more. It will just embarrass them.

So, once you get home, feel free to throw a big, fat, redneck graduation ceremony. But show some decorum in public.

Please, leave the signs, noise makers and air horns at home.

### Groan

Speaking of leaving noisemakers at home, parents with small children, especially infants, should think twice before bringing them to graduation ceremonies.

Granted, sometimes it's impossible to find a baby-sitter or circumstances won't allow leaving small children with friends or relatives, but if the option is available, take it.

Children, especially babies, are unpredictable. Maybe they'll keep quiet during the two hour ceremony, and maybe they won't.

Do you really want to take the chance of missing your graduate's big moment because you had to quiet a fussy baby?

### Grin

A hearty congratulations go out to Sriram Hathwar, who finished in the top 10 of the Scripps National Spelling Bee.

Hathwar, who was sponsored by *The Leader*, was one out of only 13 contestants to make it to the final round, out of a field of 275.

Only 11 years old, Hathwar has three more years of eligibility left. With a little luck and perseverance, Hathwar could make it back to the finals next year.

### LETTERS POLICY

- Letters should be typed or neatly printed.
- Letters must be signed and include an address and phone number. No letters will be published unless verified with the author in person or by telephone.
- Letters may be edited for space considerations.
- The publication of any letter is at the discretion of the editor.
- All letters become the property of *The Leader* and cannot be returned to sender.

**Mail your letter to:** **Fax your letter to:**  
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR Attn: Joe Dunning  
THE LEADER (607) 936-9939  
PO BOX 1017  
CORNING, NY 14830

**E-mail your letter to:**  
jdunning@the-leader.com

|  |       |   |          |
|--|-------|---|----------|
| <b>The LEADER</b><br>The Leader (ISSN #10501983)<br>The Leader is published daily at<br>34 West Pulteney Street,<br>Corning, New York 14830<br>by Liberty Group Corning Holdings, Inc.<br>Periodical postage paid<br>at Corning, New York 14830-0817.<br>USPS code   0586-160<br>Postmaster:<br>Send address changes to<br>The Leader, West Pulteney Street,<br>Corning, New York 14830<br>Publisher: Dennis Bruen<br><b>ON THE FRONT PAGE</b><br>Corning clocktower by artist<br>Larry Barone |       | <b>CIRCULATION</b><br>Elmer Kuehner   Circulation director<br>936-4651, Ext. 320<br><br><b>EDITORIAL</b><br>Joe Dunning   Managing editor<br>936-4651, Ext. 362<br>jdunning@the-leader.com<br><br><b>ADVERTISING</b><br>Classifieds (607) 936-4651, Ext. 651<br>Retail (607) 936-4651, Ext. 653<br>Adv fax (607) 962-0782<br><br>Kurt Bartenstein   Ad director,<br>936-4651, Ext. 388<br>kbartenstein@the-leader.com |          |
| <b>POSTAL RATES</b>  |       |   |          |
| <b>STEBEN COUNTY</b>   |       | <b>ELSEWHERE IN USA</b>   |          |
| 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    |

### ARTIST'S VIEW



COMMENTARY | STATE SEN. TOM O'MARA

## Putting the pieces together

We opened this year's legislative session back in January intent on setting in motion, as far as Albany's recent track record goes, a never-before-seen emphasis on revitalizing the New York State economy. Six months later, it's starting to take shape. There's one heck of a long way to go, we know that and the daily economic news still bears it out far too often. But the pieces are coming together.

There's an undeniable consensus forming around the old idea that a strong economy will be the engine that drives so many other changes and improvements. This year's state budget included a few important steps in the areas of fiscal reform, tax relief and a better business climate. On that last note, the early reviews from the statewide business community have been largely positive. We're on the right track. Very soon a series of regional economic development councils, first proposed by Governor Cuomo and included as part of the budget, will get to work on identifying locally-based targets for additional investment.

So there's movement in the right direction. There have been some big-ticket actions. But it's equally important to note that the kind of sustained economic turnaround many of us are hoping for is a complicated puzzle, one that demands a steady, long-term effort to complete. If there's one thing that probably won't change anytime soon about the legislative process is that you never get it all done, all at once. On some good ideas, it's still about rolling up your sleeves and keeping at it.

Take, for example, a little-noticed piece of legislation recently approved by the state Senate. It's called the "Academic Research Information and Access Act" or ARIA, and it's been kicking around the Legislature for several years. It would enable public and private academic and research libraries statewide, including those across our region, to create an information infrastructure that would be unrivalled anywhere in the world. While you probably haven't read or heard anything about it, don't underestimate its importance. Here's what Cornell University Librarian Anne Kenney had to say recently, "As New York strives to build an information age economy, New York needs ARIA."

It's worth noting here again that one of New York's greatest overall strengths is what many consider the nation's largest and most diverse collection of public and private colleges and universities. A recent report pegged the State University of New York's statewide economic impact at at least \$20 billion, while it's been shown that the state's 100 or more independent colleges and universities generate upwards of \$55 billion. So these institutions are undeniably economic engines and our region is blessed with quality in this regard.

But back to ARIA. The goal is to establish a mechanism whereby college- and university-based academic and research libraries can pool their resources to establish an information infrastructure that will expand access to cutting-edge research and other information. While to some it might sound as

mundane as watching the grass grow, it would be big news and make New York an absolute leader in the world of access to cutting-edge research and information in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

"It makes fiscal sense in these challenging times and making cutting-edge information available to those outside of campus communities will support regional economic development," said Laura Anglin, president of the state Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities.

In other words, it would be a building block and a true competitive edge for New York in the high-tech, information-based economy of the future. So it's no surprise that ARIA has gained support across the spectrum of business and industry, higher education, health care, and high technology interests in New York.

"The importance of university research in expanding New York's innovation economy cannot be overstated ... This legislation is an important building block for the state's future tech-based economy," said Brian McMahon, executive director of the New York State Economic Development Council.

So the next time you read or hear about a splashy achievement for the New York State economy, remember that there are a hundred other pieces of this complicated puzzle, like ARIA, making their way through the process with a lot less fanfare, but no less importance.

■ **State Sen. Tom O'Mara, R-Big Flats, represents the 53rd Senate District.**

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

#### Thanks to all responders

**TO THE EDITOR** | On the morning of May 8, 2011, on his way back home in the Buffalo area, our son had an accident on I-86 near Exit 46 in the Corning Area. We would like to thank everyone personally, but we do not know all the

players. First, to the people who cared enough to call 911 and get the teams coming ... Corning City Fire Dept., police, ambulance, flight team, towing company, State Police, fire and medical personnel. You are all to be praised for the fine and speedy jobs you did. Without all of your efforts our son's

outcome could have been much worse. He was in ICU and the Robert Packer Hospital for about a week. He is home and back to work. The Hotchkiss family would like to say "Thanks to all of you!"

**The Hotchkiss Family**  
Waverly

## Fracking proceeds despite suit

New York State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman is suing the federal government in an attempt to save the people of this state from the environmental effect of hydrofracking.

In a suit filed last week, he charged that the Delaware River Basin Commission, with the backing of other federal agencies, approved the process without doing a full review as required by the National Environmental Policy Act.

**THE INSIDER** One Peter Deluca, federal government representative on the commission, claims that



agency isn't subject to the environmental policy act because it's not a federal agency.

Deluca is division commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Schneiderman argues that the act applies because the Corps is involved.

Environmentalists claimed in April that they had delivered 30,000 comments opposing natural gas drilling. The complaints were turned in before the public comment period on the commission's draft regulation had expired.

The commission estimates that if the proposed regulations are accepted between 15,000 and 18,000 gas wells will be drilled within the river basin which includes this area.

The commission regulates water use in a 13,539-square-mile area that supplies drinking water to 15 million people including Philadelphia and half the population of New York City.

The state has imposed a moratorium of gas drilling in its part of the Marcellus shale formation while it establishes industry regulations. Final rules aren't expected until this fall.

Meanwhile fracking is proceeding full speed in Pennsylvania, eastern Ohio and West Virginia.

•••  
A reader from western Steuben County says "There is much talk about proposed cuts in entitlement programs especially those relating to senior citizens – Medicare and Social Security.

"If this does happen, will there be equal cuts in these social programs – Social Security disability, Medicaid, welfare, workmen's comp, food stamps, unemployment benefits, etc.?"

"If cuts are necessary then all responsible Americans should be patriotic and take a decrease in their benefits or equally pay more. That would be fair to all who have contributed money for those many benefits – even for those who can't contribute.

"I sincerely doubt if the Democrats would like my proposal. Let the readers know what you think," he concluded.

Well, reader, if you want to march the country back into the heart of another recession, your idea sounds like a good starting point. Sorry, but you and I are

SEE ROLFE | 5A

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