

# OPINION

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**Mail:** LETTERS TO THE EDITOR, THE LEADER  
PO BOX 1017  
CORNING, NY 14830  
**Fax:** 607-936-9939  
**Email:** sdupree@the-leader.com

Online at [www.the-leader.com/opinions](http://www.the-leader.com/opinions)

## The LEADER

34 W. Pulteney St., Corning, NY 14830  
[www.the-leader.com](http://www.the-leader.com)

Stella DuPree..... Editor  
Derrick Ek..... Assistant Editor

### GUEST VIEW | ROLLAND KIDDER

## Who will supply our natural gas?

Today, new technologies for unlocking natural gas have revolutionized the industry. A half-century old process called hydraulic fracturing combined with a relatively new ability to drill horizontally in shale formations has made America more energy independent than it has been in fifty years. The Marcellus Shale, conveniently located here in the Northeast, has become one of the biggest international energy stories emerging in the past five years.

Yet, New York has decided to “opt-out” of participating in this economic opportunity. That does not mean that our state does not like to consume natural gas. According to statistics published by the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), in 2012 New York consumed 1.2 trillion cubic feet of natural gas. Statewide, 29% went to heat homes, and 40% was consumed to make electricity.

So what has New York decided to do about it? We have decided to say “No” to this new technology. The State has essentially shut down the natural gas producing industry through a “moratorium”, a decision to not issue permits for the production of shale gas within the boundaries of New York State.

This produces a conundrum for those of us who live in this state. We need natural gas. We expect it to be delivered to our doorsteps, to our apartments, to our businesses... and especially to our plants that produce electricity. We like the clean-burning, environmental benefits of natural gas, but we apparently don’t want the inconvenience of producing it.

Where do we want to get our energy? Do we want to go back to importing more oil from the Middle East? Do we want to become an energy-starved country

like Japan which needs to import liquefied natural gas (LNG) from other countries? We do want to be known as the most environmentally enlightened state in the Union. We say we are for renewable energy, yet are unwilling to support production of the natural gas required to back it up and insure its reliability on the electric grid. In short, New Yorkers seem to have an attitude that “we can have our cake and eat it to.” Let someone else worry about our natural gas supplies.

The most recent statistics from EIA indicate that about 34 percent of the natural gas being consumed in the country today is coming from shale formations. This energy cannot be produced without these modern technologies which, in essence, release the gas that is trapped in the rock. Though we New Yorkers are sitting on billions of cubic feet of shale gas, we are unwilling to produce it. Albany needs to “change its tune.” Our State should be a producer, not just a consumer of this clean-burning energy.

During this year’s cold winter, even the most ardent opponents of natural gas in New York were being kept warm by it. The fact that over a third of the energy heating our homes was coming from shale gas reservoirs in neighboring states seems to be over-looked. Where would we be without it? Who, in the future, will supply the natural gas that we need? Shouldn’t New Yorkers be a part of the solution?

*Roland Kidder was a Democratic member of the New York State Assembly from 1975-’82; a member of its Environmental Conservation Committee; and a founder and former owner of a New York state natural gas exploration and production company based in western New York.*

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### POLITICS | SEN. TOM O’MARA

## No hiding from twin drug plagues

Different state government leaders and observers will give you different to-do lists for the final weeks of this year’s legislative session. In recent days New York’s governor has been pushing an agenda that’s heavily focused on state taxpayer-funded college education for illegal aliens, and a system of state-taxpayer funded political campaigns.

I won’t, in this column, wade too far into the politics behind this latest Cuomo administration agenda. Let’s just say for now that there’s more important work at hand. And last week the Senate sent clear signals that we’re aiming in at least a few different directions.

I’ve recently highlighted the need to stay focused on job No. 1, which is the need for jobs. How about public health and safety? Two recent headlines from our region serve to highlight additional end-of-session priorities:

“Waiting lists for addiction treatment grow, as region sees increase in heroin use”

“6 charged in Savona meth lab probe”

Meth and heroin are the twin drug plagues facing the Southern Tier



SEN. TOM O’MARA

and Finger Lakes regions. There’s no hiding from that fact. So when the state Senate returned to the Capitol last Monday, one of our first orders of business was to approve, with strong bipartisan support, legislation I sponsor to further outlaw meth labs.

Earlier that same day, I was in Oneonta at a hearing of the Senate Task Force on Heroin and Opioid Addiction, on which I serve as a member.

Our task force has been conducting these hearings statewide since late April, and we’ll be bringing one to our region in the very near future.

The hearings are proving extremely effective to highlight the threat and to spread public awareness – and they’re going to help us put together a comprehensive set of legislative recommendations for action before the end of this year’s

session. We’re receiving valuable testimony from law enforcement officers, drug addiction counselors, treatment providers, social services and mental health professionals, and other experts -- as well as directly from former addicts and families trying to help addicted loved ones -- about the range of complex challenges posed by heroin.

Common threads of testimony are emerging and we’re working to determine the most effective combination of law enforcement, awareness and education, and treatment and prevention to better protect our communities and save lives, especially, it seems, young lives. According to figures from Cayuga Addiction Recovery Services, the numbers of 19-to-25-year-olds in the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes treated for drug abuse increased more than 35 percent from 2007 to 2012. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has estimated that approximately 23 percent of those who use heroin become dependent on the highly addictive drug.

Numerous experts continue to point to New York’s crackdown on the

abuse of prescription painkillers as the driving force behind the surge in heroin abuse, since heroin’s a cheaper and more easily obtainable substitute for satisfying the addiction. Whatever the reasons – and believe me there are many – the alarm is undeniable.

Same goes for meth. Week after week there’s another meth-related incident somewhere in the region. The recent arrests in Savona in Steuben County, which involved the Steuben County Social Services Department and the State Police, including the Contaminated Crime Scene Emergency Response Team, continue to drive home the point that meth labs pose unacceptable risks to our neighborhoods, threaten the safety of police officers and first responders, and burden local systems of health care, criminal justice and social services

Last week’s Senate-approved legislation would implement a series of increasingly severe felony offenses for the possession of meth manufacturing material and the unlawful manufacture

SEE DRUGS, A5

### ANOTHER VIEW



### COLUMN | STELLA DUPREE

## Wanted: Fosters, foster failures

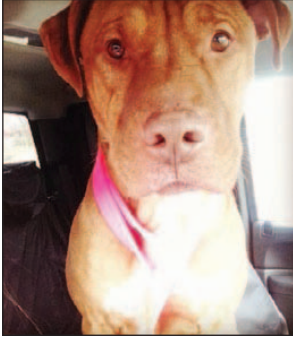
Bailey-Jean the Rottie needs to lose weight after a life spent mostly indoors. She likes other dogs, children and sits a mean couch, even if it’s already occupied.

Harlie, a female lab mix, loves to cuddle. Sir Oliver, the Manchester terrier, likes kids.

Ella Mae, a Jack Russell terrier, likes to play fetch with adults, but isn’t fond of other dogs, cats or children.

Reese, a female mastiff-collie mix, just wants to come inside after a lifetime spent outdoors.

All – except one – are looking for a place to stay until they find a permanent home. Unfortunately, foster families are in short supply right now, said Sue



Preset, a board member for Tanner’s PAWS, a not-for-profit organization that rescues and finds new homes for dogs such as the ones mentioned above.

Sue sounded the alarm last week on Tanner’s PAWS’ Facebook page. Tanner’s does not have a large shelter and relies on foster families to help care for the dogs before they

are adopted.

I would take them all in if I could. However, my husband quickly and firmly reminded me that we have three dogs, three cats, two children still at home and one soon to return from college.

To keep my husband’s sanity and our marriage intact, I decided that recruiting fosters for Tanner’s PAWS was the way

to go.

I have to be up front, though. Fostering isn’t easy. Adam, the kids and I tried it once, and failed.

We responded to an urgent plea for foster families a few months ago. Five dogs needed foster homes, and quick.

Their time was running out. You know what

SEE FOSTERS, A5

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### Publisher

Phil Husick | Group Publisher  
936-4651, Ext. 303  
[phusick@the-leader.com](mailto:phusick@the-leader.com)

### Editorial

Stella DuPree | Managing editor  
936-4651, Ext. 361  
[sdupree@the-leader.com](mailto:sdupree@the-leader.com)

### Advertising

Adam Mingos | Ad director  
936-4651, Ext. 388  
[amingos@the-leader.com](mailto:amingos@the-leader.com)

**Classifieds** 936-4651, Ext 651  
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Elmer Kuehner | Circulation director  
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