

## Grins and groans

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

**OUR OPINION** | A grin for mothers. A groan for Mother's Day.

### Grin

William Makepeace Thackeray, and later Brandon Lee, said "Mother is the name for God on the lips and hearts of all children."

In a perfect world, we wouldn't need a holiday like Mother's Day. We'd instinctually remember the countless sacrifices mothers make for us every day and shower our mothers with our gratefulness and love more than one day a year.

Unfortunately, this world is far from perfect, and as the demands of everyday life intrude, it's easy to forget all the little things mothers provide - love, support, encouragement, advice and cooking that can't be duplicated anywhere.

So even though Mother's Day has passed for another year, take some time and call your mother.

Chances are your call will make her day.

### Groan

It's almost too easy to complain about the commercialization of holidays, but the exploitation of Mother's Day is especially egregious.

It's not that the advertising blitz is any worse for Mother's Day than other holidays. It's just that it's so unnecessary.

Most mothers don't want expensive baubles from jewelry stores. A card and a dish of homemade brownies would be more appreciated.

It's a sign that our mothers have done their jobs well that we want to shower them with gifts on Mother's Day. Maybe someday we as a society can celebrate Mother's Day by spending something more valuable than money - time.

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

#### Vote for Meter

**TO THE EDITOR** | I would like to add my support to Janelle Meter in her quest to win a seat on the Corning-Painted Post school board. I have known Janelle for many years and know her to be an intelligent and tireless worker. She will devote the necessary careful thinking to the issues before the board, and will make well thought out and informed decisions that will be good for both our students and our community. Her background lends itself well to the current consolidation plans as she was a key leader in the recently passed facilities plan. Additionally she has taken the time to thoroughly study what is important for our school district beyond just the facilities plans. She understands the district as well as anyone can. I believe she is the right candidate at the right time, and for that reason I will be voting for Janelle Meter. I ask that you do too.

**Thomas E. Blumer**  
Corning

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**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](mailto:jdunning@the-leader.com)

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### ARTIST'S VIEW



COMMENTARY | TOM O'MARA

## Hear about the efficiency probes?

Between the time of the Royal Wedding and the killing of Osama bin Laden, I suppose it's no great surprise that a few news reports about waste in state government went largely unnoticed. After all, it was pretty difficult over the course of those few, dramatic, historic events to turn the page or change the channel to anything else.

But there they were on Friday, April 29, on the pages of the *New York Times* and the *New York Post*. Stories about Cuomo administration investigators uncovering what was characterized by reporters as "massive waste" in New York government. Outrageous waste like state agencies paying as much as \$9 per dozen for ballpoint pens.

Unbelievable inefficiency with audits showing the state paying more than 1,700 vendors to provide basic office supplies, like paper and paper clips, throughout the bureaucracy.

And other practices like paying millions of dollars to operate toll-free telephone numbers - even though half of them haven't been dialed in months.

If you're interested,

I've provided links to both stories on my website, [www.omara.ny.senate.gov](http://www.omara.ny.senate.gov). But I'm confident you can already see the picture developing.

"There is no end to the horror stories," the governor's director of state operations, Howard Glaser, told the *Post*. He's leading the administration's crackdown on waste and mismanagement across New York's sprawling bureaucracy in the form of a series of audits, dubbed "efficiency probes," performed since the beginning of the year.

The *Times* story reported that state government operations "are plagued by waste and often bewildering inefficiency." According to *The Times*, the initial audits are nearly complete and could yield more than \$1 billion in savings over the next several years. The *Post* said the audits could produce \$50 million in immediate savings.

The findings will soon be turned over to the newly created Spending and Government Efficiency (SAGE) Commission, first proposed by the governor and included as part of this year's state budget, which will

continue leading the first major overhaul of the state bureaucracy since the late 1920's.

My first reaction when the stories broke? Keep it up. Keep turning the page on the state's fiscal practices. We've long suspected that out-of-control spending has undermined the cost-effectiveness of the state bureaucracy. Now we're finding out that's exactly the case. And now we need to get our own house in order. We can't do enough to encourage this focus to root out the waste, inefficiencies and mismanagement that have clearly taken hold of state government in too many places and throughout too many operations.

While the initial stories on the Cuomo efficiency probes may have been overwhelmed by more historic news, you can bet that between now and this time next year, we're going to hear it again and again.

There can be no turning back. The taxpayers deserve this long-overdue accounting.

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

### LETTER TO THE EDITOR

#### Thank you for support

**TO THE EDITOR** | The Arnot Ogden Medical Center Auxiliary's "Orchids and Candlelight" is an annual fundraiser for cancer care at the hospital and it celebrated its 21st year in 2011. This year 53 parties were held with over 1,200 people attending. Over \$42,000 has been raised to help with the purchase of a linear accelerator machine for the Falck Cancer Center. We wish to thank: The thousands of

guests, hosts and volunteers who have supported Orchids since its inception in 1991.

Major sponsors whose generosity allows all money from guests to be donated to cancer care.

Fulkerson's Winery, Lakewood Vineyards, The Clemens Center, Thom Wise and New Sarrasin's, Bruce Brennen, Davis Garden Center, Kevin Cole for his musical talents, Lowe's and John Jasiczek from AOMC Facility Engineering who once again put together a beautiful display of

shrubs and flowers which is always a show-piece at the Clemens Center reception.

Plans are already in progress for "Orchids 2012" and the reception will be held on Saturday, April 21. New hosts are always welcome, so whether you're a first time host or have hosted in the past, please contact Alene Goodman at [agoodman@aomc.org](mailto:agoodman@aomc.org).

**Glynis Scott**  
President, Arnot Ogden Medical Center Auxiliary  
Elmira

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**U.S. Rep. Tom Reed, R-Corning**  
1037 Longworth HOB  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
Phone: (202) 225-3161  
Fax: (202) 226-6599



**U.S. Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y.**  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
Phone: (202) 224-6542  
Fax: (202) 228-3027



**U.S. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y.**  
478 Russell  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
Tel. (202) 224-4451  
Fax (202) 228-0282

## Proposed tax increase too high

The Insider has believed that Mark Ryckman is an excellent city manager.

I still do but I don't like parts of his proposed 2011-12 city budget.

In these economic times, a 5.74 percent tax increase seems very unwarranted.

I know Ryckman compares the difference to the amount people spend on their cable bill but I still think it's too high.

And increasing garbage fees by 50 cents a bag also seems a bit much.

Under his proposal, the tax rate would go up from \$10.27 to \$10.86 per \$1,000 of assessed property value.

For the owner of the proverbial \$85,000 house that comes out to \$50.15 a year.

I know that sounds like a comparatively minimal amount but Ryckman has crafted his budget so that it presently makes possible - but does not demand - any more layoffs of city workers.

While that may be the most sympathetic approach to the problem, it may not be the most proper.

The city workforce has taken considerable hits in recent years. And that is unfortunate. But the income of a large number of Corning residents has not increased in that time period.

Coming Inc. may be seeing the good old days return but there are many people in town who don't work there. There is a large population of people on fixed incomes. And while the tax increase might average only \$4.18 a month that, coupled with an extra 50 cents for each garbage bag, might put many perilously close to the edge of insolvency.

Yes, the streets need vast amounts of improvements and repair. But Rome wasn't built in a day nor would a day suffice to restore it to its former glory.

Everybody has their own list of investments the city should make. But there are also built-in costs to consider.

Ryckman projects an increase in health insurance costs of 15 percent and pension costs will gain 21 percent from the current levels.

The city must also fund a \$1.6 million bond payment, a \$307,871 contribution to the Southeast Steuben County Library and if nothing else changes there is still \$5.2 million in salaries that would be required if Corning continues to have 103 city employees.

I'm sure the City Council will whack a few numbers when they get into detailed budget analysis. But at the same time there are those who would like to spend more, particularly for street repair.

As much as the streets need fixing, it can't all be accomplished at once.

It is a fine motivation to attempt to preserve the jobs of the people Corning employs. But it may not be possible to keep all 103 individuals now on the payroll.

This is not the season for being over-generous to anyone.

■ **Bob Rolfe, a retired Leader reporter/editor, can be reached by writing The Leader, PO Box 1017, Corning, N.Y. 14830 or email to: [theinsider1@aol.com](mailto:theinsider1@aol.com).**