

OPINION

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COLUMN | SEN. TOM O'MARA

An American tradition



SEN. TOM O'MARA

It's time to share our annual reminder on one of this region's proudest and most successful traditions: the Venison Donation Coalition, which proudly (and rightfully so) states its success this way: "Since 1999, the Venison Donation Coalition has been highly successful in its goal to feed the hungry throughout New York State. We have processed an average of 38 tons of venison each year and in 2012 we surpassed 4 million servings of highly nutritious meat served to individuals and children in need!"

Over the years, the Coalition sure has helped put a good meal on many tables. As noted above, since 1999 the Coalition has coordinated the processing of an average of 38 tons of venison annually and last year surpassed its goal of 4 million servings of highly nutritious, low-fat, high-protein meat. Amazing.

And timely. The most recent Census figures revealed that the state's poverty rate is the highest it's been since 1998. More than three million New Yorkers live below the official poverty level. That's the highest total in 12 years. Timely, as well, because of the fast approaching holiday season, a time of giving, and more immediately, with the regular deer hunting season underway across our region and throughout the Southern Zone until December 8th.

(A brief side note: The beginning of deer season also represents one of the most important economic cycles of the year. Deer hunting is a mainstay of the regional and statewide recreational economy, by some estimates accounting for \$2 billion of economic activity and 28,000 jobs statewide. Steuben County, for example, remains one of the Northeast's premiere deer hunting destinations. In early October, this year's 7th annual, hugely successful Southern Tier Outdoor Show continued to offer further testimony to the importance of outdoor activities to the regional economy!)

But back to the Venison Donation Coalition. It's a foundation supported by sportsmen's organizations, of course, but also by corporations, local farm bureaus, government agencies, civic and religious groups, and individual citizens. I'm glad for this chance to call attention to its meaningful work. In government, particularly in an era like the current one defined by limited resources to address seemingly infinite demands, we're always searching for ways to encourage individual citizens to contribute to the overall quality of our communities.

It's hard to believe that it was 20 years ago when an area "Hunters for the Hungry" program was

prepared to donate 400 pounds of venison for distribution to the needy and discovered that state law prevented them from doing so. As a result, "Hunters for the Hungry" programs operating throughout New York at that time, 1993, were being told they couldn't donate over 10,000 pounds of venison to food banks and other organizations providing meals to the unemployed, shut-ins, senior citizens and other needy citizens. It just didn't make any sense. So the Legislature quickly acted to establish a program to address the appropriate health concerns and allow the donations to be made.

The venison donation program that resulted is now a broad-based partnership that includes a range of area supporters. It's facilitated the donation of venison to food banks, food pantries, soup kitchens and additional not-for-profit organizations and charities that feed the poor.

The response of hunters has been overwhelming. Today the Venison Donation Coalition operates in most of the state's 62 counties. Countless citizens have enjoyed nutritious meals as a result.

It is, very simply, an admirable effort. While it may not readily come to mind as a community development mainstay, it surely is. You can't underestimate the spirit of commitment and giving it encourages. We will continue to develop infrastructure, promote tourism, improve schools, protect citizens, and do anything and everything possible to enhance our economic standing, but along with these fundamental responsibilities is a responsibility to the quality of life for everyone. That's what's important, appropriate and meaningful about the ongoing work of the Venison Donation Coalition.

And we all can help. As the Coalition notes on its website ("Feed 4 People for Just a Buck"), the donation of just \$1 can help provide four meals. For every dollar donated, in fact, the Coalition puts 90 cents toward processing donated venison. For more information, visit the Venison Donation Coalition online at www.venisondonation.com, or call 866-862-DEER (3337).

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.

POLITICS | GEORGE WILL

A hint of 2016 excitement



GEORGE WILL

The New Republic magazine was, appropriately, the stimulant that last week gave the Democratic base a frisson of anticipation about a possible Elizabeth Warren presidential candidacy in 2016. Now in her 11th month as a Massachusetts senator, she is suited to carry the progressive torch that was fueled 99 years ago this month by The New Republic's founding.

Its first editor was Herbert Croly, whose 1909 book "The Promise of American Life" — Theodore Roosevelt read it, rapturously, during his post-presidential travels — is progressivism's primer: "The average American individual is morally and intellectually inadequate to a serious and consistent conception of his responsibilities as a democrat," so national life should be a "school." "The exigencies of such schooling frequently demand severe coercive measures, but what schooling does not?" And "a people are saved many costly perversions" if "the official schoolmasters are wise, and the pupils neither truant nor insubordinate."

Today the magazine, whose birth was partly financed by a progressive heiress, Dorothy Payne Whitney, is owned by Facebook co-founder Chris Hughes. Warren, a scourge of (other) economic royalists, and especially of large financial institutions, is a William Jennings Bryan for our

time: She has risen from among Harvard's downtrodden to proclaim: "You shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of derivatives."

Before she sank to a senator's salary, she was among the 1 percenters, whose annual incomes now begin at \$394,000. Hillary Clinton recently made more than that from two speeches, five days apart, for Goldman Sachs, a prowling Wall Street carnivore that Warren presumably wants to domesticate. Between Warren, hot in pursuit of malefactors of great wealth, and Clinton, hot in pursuit of great wealth, which candidate would be more fun for the kind of people who compose the Democrats' nominating electorate?

Such people are in politics for, among other satisfactions, the fun of it. Americans profess detestation of politics and its practitioners, but their behavior belies their rhetoric. Last month, a poll reported that 60 percent of Americans favor voting out of office all congressional incumbents, including their own representatives. But just 11 months before this poll revealed the electorate's

(supposedly) extraordinary dyspepsia, voters re-elected 90 percent of representatives and 91 percent of senators. Most Americans most of the time have better things to do than feel strongly (aggrieved or otherwise) about politics. They are not as angry about goings-on in Washington as they say they are, or imagine themselves to be, or think they ought to be when a pollster takes their emotional temperature.

Since Andrew Jackson, with his collaborator (and presidential successor) Martin Van Buren, displaced the politics of deference to elites with the politics of mass mobilization by parties, the electoral scramble has been popular entertainment. Analyses of Chris Christie's appeal are neglecting something: He has fun seeking and wielding power, and his fun is infectious.

Can Democratic activists, for whom politics is catnip, cheerfully contemplate the uncontested nomination of someone who will be 69 on Election Day 2016, who will have been conspicuous in the nation's life for a quarter of a century, and who cultivates nostalgia for the last decade of the previous century? Can forward-leaning, clench-fisted MSNBC viewers really work themselves into a lather of excitement about the supposed feminist triumph of smashing the ultimate

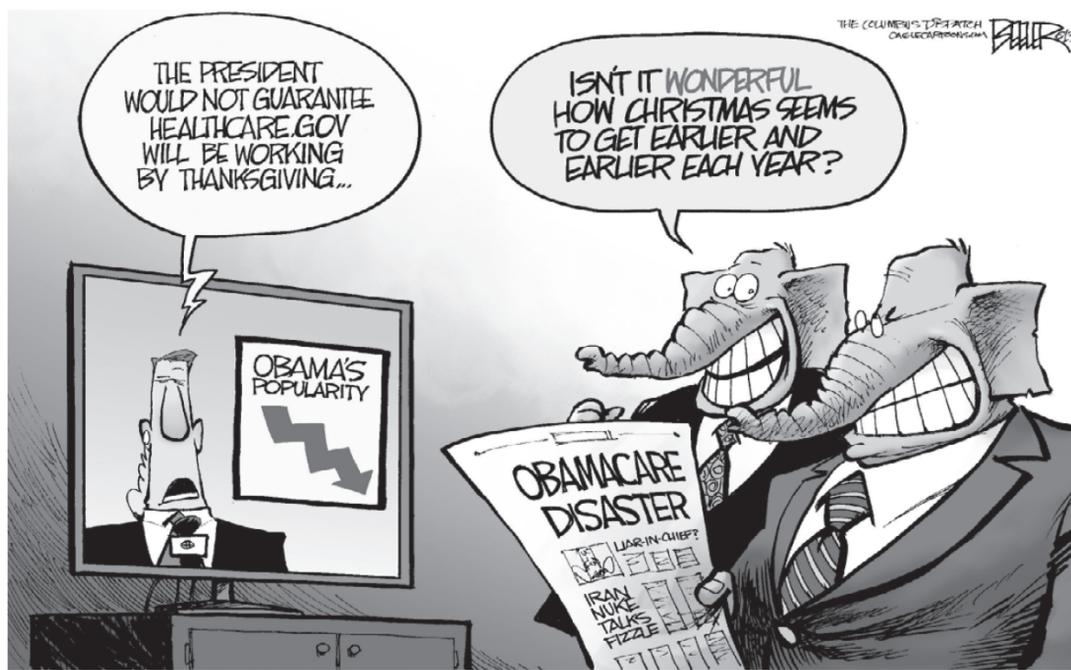
"glass ceiling" for a woman whose marriage took her to the upper reaches of politics? Do Democrats, ankle-deep in the rubble of Obamacare's paternalism, really want to nominate the author of Hillarycare? Before a Democratic-controlled Congress spurned it, she explained her health care plan this way (a delicious quotation excavated by The Wall Street Journal's Holman Jenkins):

"We just think people will be too focused on saving money and they won't get the care for their children and themselves that they need. ... The money has to go to the federal government because the federal government will spend that money better."

Come 2016, Clinton may be the one thing no successful candidate can be, and something Warren (or some other avatar of what Howard Dean in 2003 called "the Democratic wing of the Democratic Party") would not be: boring. The social scientist Robert Nisbet called boredom "one of the most insistent and universal" forces that has shaped human behavior. It still is. So, all those who today regard Clinton's nomination as it was regarded in 2008 — as a foregone conclusion — should ask themselves: When was the last time presidential politics was as predictable as they think it has become?

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ANOTHER VIEW



OTHER VIEW | CHICAGO TRIBUNE

What the new statin guidelines mean

Many of us keep track of our health via a set of easy-to-understand (and worry about) numbers. What's your weight? How high is your blood pressure? And what's your cholesterol level?

You know there's good cholesterol, HDL, and bad cholesterol, LDL. Doctors prescribe statins for people with too much of the bad kind, to lower their risk for heart attacks and strokes. The goal: Reduce the bad cholesterol to a specific, recommended target level.

On Tuesday, however, experts at the American Heart Association and the American College of Cardiology issued groundbreaking new clinical

guidelines that upended decades of medical practice. A major takeaway: Researchers said that hitting a cholesterol target should no longer be doctors' exclusive focus.

The experts now recommend a different approach based on an extensive review of clinical trials. Doctors should sort patients into four groups for which statins are recommended: Patients who have heart disease; all people age 40 to 75 with Type 2 diabetes; people with LDL cholesterol of 190 or greater; and anyone who has a 7.5 percent or greater risk of developing heart disease or stroke in the next decade. The formula for calculating that risk takes into account patients' age, sex,

race, blood pressure, cholesterol levels and whether they smoke or have diabetes.

As a result of the new guidelines, the number of Americans on statins may double to more than 30 million.

Another major change: Some patients who would have been prescribed statins under the old guidelines may now be told to lower their cholesterol the old-fashioned way — via a better diet and more exercise. That's still a terrific way to prevent high cholesterol and heart disease later in life.

But people should remember, high LDL cholesterol is still bad. Statins are generally safe and reduce the risk of heart

attacks and strokes.

There's no evidence, however, that hitting specific cholesterol targets makes a huge difference. That doesn't mean that lowering your cholesterol as much as possible isn't important.

"The question is, 'Am I doing everything possible to minimize my risk?' That's not just about cholesterol, but losing weight and eating right. That's the secret to success, not whether your LDL is 71 versus 69," said Dr. Donald Lloyd-Jones.

That's intriguing. Turns out these new guidelines provide evidence for something we already know: With statins, as in life, more of a good thing is not always better.