

Grins and groans

Groan

At a time when the city is trying to tackle its ongoing issue with aging, dilapidated city streets, the most knowledgeable department of public works person retires. Mike Dawson, city assistant superintendent of public works, retired Thursday, ending a 33-year career with the department. “He gave us a lot of insight to the ongoing street issues both surface and infrastructure,” said Councilman Myron Crispino, chairman of the council City Capital Finance Committee. DPW staff members have called Dawson’s knowledge of infrastructure issues irreplaceable. Dawson has said he will really miss working with the DPW staff. It’s too bad to see him go as the city continues to try to tackle its many infrastructure issues.

Grin

The opening of a massive facility in Chemung. The grand opening of the CVS/pharmacy distribution center, just north of Interstate Highway 86 near the Chemung-Tioga county line. The 751,000-square-foot facility is responsible for providing merchandise to more than 100 CVS stores in the region. More than 300 people work at the facility and more than 600 full-time employees will eventually work at the location. It will serve as a great benefit to the economy of the region.

Groan

Friday was the end of an era, the closing of Steuben Glass. The luxury glass was treasured worldwide for more than a century. Steuben Glass was made in Corning and the Corning Museum of Glass will discontinue its Steuben line. The flagship store on Madison Avenue in New York City has also closed. Corning Inc. sold the company in 2008, to a private firm in order to move away from the luxury glass business and into the innovative technology and the industrial component industries.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Thank you for event’s success

TO THE EDITOR | We would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the participants and volunteers in the National Soaring Museum’s 19h Annual Community Soaring Day, on Saturday, Sept. 24. Community Soaring Day’s success is due in large part to the following organizations:

Hawk Creek Wildlife Center, Finger Lakes Regional Burn Association, Magician Tim Cleary, the trolley from Chemung County Transit, Sharon Chiang, Chemung County Historical Society, Corning Community College Star Lab, Chemung County Steele Memorial Library Bookmobile, Twin Tiers N-Trak train club, Free Spirit Hang Gliding Club, Harris Hill Soaring Corporation Juniors, Pratt Hobbies, Classic Café and Image Packaging.

We also appreciate the support we received from: Holiday Inn Riverview, Wegmans, Pepsi Bottling Co., Sam’s Club, Dunkin Donuts, Minier Brothers and the Horseheads Do-It Center. A special thanks to Robert Pfuntner and Brian Stoll from 94 Rock for the live remote and promotion of the event.

Despite some early morning mist, the day turned sunny and warm. Each of these organizations offered educational and fun activities. Many families experienced the Birds of Prey, the paper airplane and rocket model workshops and the Star Lab is always a special treat. Once again, there was a crowd around the magician all day. Many of our visitors traveled from Vestal, Washington D.C., and outside Williamsport.

No event would be complete without our dedicated volunteers, Tammy Schoonover, Sally Schoonover, Anastasia Castilone, Neil Egan, Brian Reigal, Tom Berry. Thank you all for your generosity.

With continued support from these organizations, the local business community and the volunteers, we look forward to bringing you the 20th Annual Community Soaring Day next year.

Lisa Bartlett

Gift Shop Manager/Visitors Services
The National Soaring Museum

The LEADER

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EDITORIAL

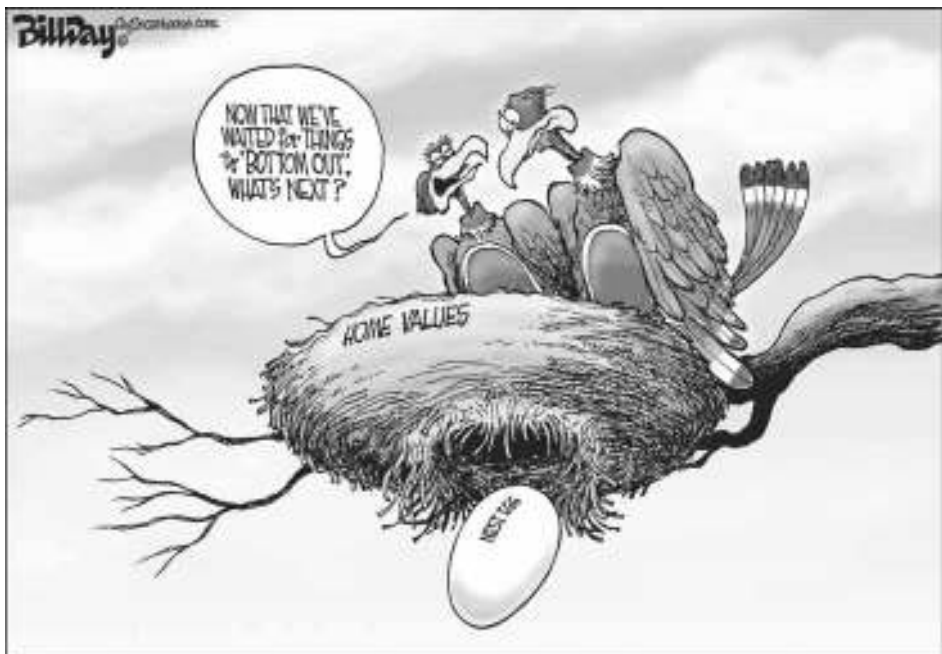
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ARTIST’S VIEW



POLITICS | SEN. TOM O’MARA

Open for business

“New York can rise again,” was the theme of former President Bill Clinton’s keynote address to kick off last week’s “NY Open for Business” economic summit at the state capital. The former president’s words, ranging from inspirational to informative, sounded the right note at a time when New York state endeavors to rebuild, reenergize and regain economic strongholds in the global economy.

In short, the economic summit left many of us who attended and participated in last week’s conference eager to get out of our seats, up on our feet and right to work turning words into realities. So for those of you who may not have seen the coverage of last week’s conference, I think it’s worthwhile to review some of what took place there, put it into the larger context of what it signals for the year ahead in New York government and, finally, share a few of my own impressions as a conference participant.

The Sept. 27 conference was convened by New York Gove. Andrew Cuomo, who from the very first day of his administration has stressed the goal of “jobs, jobs, jobs.” It marked the first time the state’s 10 Regional Economic Development Councils met together to explore local solutions and share new ideas on private-sector economic growth and job creation. These councils were established as part of the 2011-2012 state budget and are currently at work in regions across the state, including the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions, developing local economic strategies that will compete for state economic development aid.

While the Clinton keynote address spun off on the lofty idea of New York rising again, he also applauded and encouraged the work of the regional councils and even singled out Corning Inc. for its manufacturing

commitment and innovation, recounting in some detail the history and modern-day success of Corning’s “Gorilla Glass.” He went on to highlight a series of assets and strengths that he felt were particularly important to New York and that each regional council would do well to focus on: manufacturing exports, the overriding importance of public-private partnerships, innovations and advancements in the energy-related economy, and the promise of higher education. This speaks directly to our region, which can draw on a wealth of these assets, and I considered it a source of renewed hope and renewed energy for the work ahead of us locally.

The conference also featured an early morning announcement by Governor Cuomo of a \$4.4-billion public-private computer chip research and development initiative that’s estimated to create and retain upwards of 7,000 across the upstate region and signal New York as a leader in this exciting high-tech field.

In the afternoon, the conference agenda got down to the nut-and-bolts of local economic development through a series of individual panels convened to examine key sectors of the state’s economy in detail, from agribusiness development to venture capital, and from higher education partnerships to technology. I was invited to help lead a panel discussion titled “Success Stories: Manufacturing.”

Those of us who have spent a lifetime living and working in upstate New York know all too well about manufacturing’s decline. But we also shouldn’t forget that a strong manufacturing sector remains productive, successful and hard at work here. We must stay focused on ways to build on these strengths and recognize the opportunities that exist for a 21st Century manufacturing foundation in New York State. President Clinton himself noted, for exam-

ple, the opportunities that abound in exports, an area of competition that’s also been noted in some detail by the research arm of the Business Council of New York (see the report “Let’s Make it Here: Keys to a Manufacturing Resurgence in New York” from the Public Policy Institute at <http://www.ppinsys.org/>).

Anyone interested can find more information on the “Open for Business” initiative and the work of the Regional Economic Development Councils at the following website: <http://nyworks.ny.gov/>.

As far as the bigger picture goes, the recent “Open for Business” conference served as an important agenda setter for a 2012 legislative session that many of us hope will be focused like never before on building a stronger state economy and a better business climate. It was an important and impressive kick off to New York’s renewed and revitalized focus on job creation and private-sector economic growth throughout the year ahead. Now we need to turn ideas and inspiration into the bread-and-butter strategies that will work to turn around our local economies, create jobs, and secure New York’s long-term ability to, in fact, rise again in the competition for economic opportunities here at home, nationally and around the globe.

It’s reassuring to recognize that the economic development professionals, chambers of commerce leaders, and community advocates who have been hard at this work for many years across our region -- and whose efforts have helped us at least hold our own through a whole lot of economic challenges and crises -- remain front and center in the current mission to explore the new ideas and put in place the new initiatives that are going to help us succeed in this new economy.

■ **Tom O’Mara is a Republican state senator from Big Flats.**

LETTERS POLICY

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Israel actions threaten peace process

It’s hard for me to understand why Israel is so determined to do everything that militates against peace between it and its Arab neighbors.

The latest kick in the face to the Palestinians is the decision by Israel to build 1,100 new Jewish housing units in East Jerusalem.

The government denies this move is intended to anger its neighbors. But the Palestinians have long claimed East Jerusalem as the capital of their nation that does not yet exist.

Israel, on the other hand, maintains it has claimed the contested area for the past 18 years.

THE INSIDER



Bob Rolfe

Said a spokesman for the government, “Gilo is not a settlement nor is it an outpost. It is a neighborhood in the very heart of Jerusalem only about a 5-minute drive from the very heart of town.”

Gilo, which has about 50,000 residents, is very near the Palestinian city of Bethlehem.

Although Israel claims it has annexed East Jerusalem, that claim has never been recognized by the international community.

If Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu sincerely wants to make peace with the Palestinians and come up with negotiated boundaries between Israel and its new neighbors, this sort of construction project can only have a deleterious effect.

Does this make you wonder what the prime minister really has in mind for his erstwhile neighbor?

...

There are few things as mysterious as the operation of the Italian justice system. That has become obvious since Americans focused their attention on the legal problems of a Seattle college student, Amanda Knox.

She was convicted two years ago of participating in the murder of her roommate during what prosecutors claim was a sex orgy in Perugia four years ago.

Initially sentenced to 26 years in prison, Knox appealed and that case is now nearing its conclusion.

A lawyer for another defendant in the case, Carlo Pacelli, has declared Knox to be “a demonic, satanic, diabolical she-devil” and “a spell-casting rich, a virtuoso of deceit”. Pacelli can certainly never be accused of disguising his real thoughts on the case. But the evidence that has come out shows the original prosecutors failed miserably to prove anything.

The initial conviction was based on DNA testing but independent exam of the same evidence has shown that it absolutely does not support any of the original prosecutors’ contentions. In effect, it says Knox is innocent.

Hopefully, this will mean that Knox will soon be on a plane for Seattle.

And it warns all Americans to be very careful of their behavior if they are in Italy.

Who knows? Spitting on the sidewalk may be a capital crime.

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