

OPINION

LETTERS POLICY

■ Letters should be typed or neatly printed.
■ Letters must be signed and include an address and phone number.

■ 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: 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

The LEADER

34 W. Pulteney St., Corning, NY 14830
www.the-leader.com

Fred Benson Publisher
Stella DuPree..... Editor
Derrick Ek Opinion Page Editor

POLITICS | SEN. TOM O'MARA

September 11

One piece of legislation I sponsored earlier this year, as chairman of the Senate Elections Committee, was a measure to change the date of this week's Primary Day from Tuesday, September 11, 2012 to wThursday, September 13th in order to recognize and fully respect the significance of this year's anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on America. Not surprisingly, it was overwhelmingly approved by the Legislature and swiftly signed into law by Governor Andrew Cuomo. It's just one more example of our nation's deep-rooted desire to forever honor the lives lost on September 11, 2001. That's as it should be.

For each and every American generation, there are days and dates that become forever etched in the national consciousness. The attack on Pearl Harbor, and the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy, Robert F. Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. come to mind as examples.

And so while this year's 9/11 observances arrive in the midst of a presidential election season here in New York State and across America, it simply cannot be overshadowed. It's a day, most of us believe, that must always remain a day of remembrance and honor. Three months after the September 11th attacks, President George W. Bush said in a speech to the nation, "We will remember where we were and how we felt...And in our time we will honor the memory of the 11th day by doing our duty as citizens of this great country, freedom's home and freedom's defender."

September 11th is recalled as one of our nation's darkest, most shattering days. Yet it's also recalled as a day when Americans, everywhere, were bound together in mourning and outrage, perseverance and strength – and an overwhelming desire to somehow respond. This undeniable national spirit has carried on and will be on display again this week in services in so many American communities.

We see it, maybe most of all, within the respect we carry for our police officers, firefighters, EMTs and other first responders. Not long ago in this column, in fact, I had the opportunity to express a collective thanks to all of the men and women who responded in the aftermath of the tornado that struck Elmira and several surrounding communities in late July. It bears repeating here that we must always raise a heartfelt salute to all of our local police officers, firefighters and other



TOM O'MARA

emergency responders for their immediate, courageous and capable first response and dedication. We're always reminded, it seems, that our communities are truly fortunate to have these men and women constantly on guard and standing ready to protect our lives and property, safety and security.

And we see it in our ongoing expressions of gratitude and respect for our veterans, and the servicemen and servicewomen serving at this very moment to protect and promote freedom here at home, and around the world.

Last September arrived with the opening of the National September 11 Memorial in New York City, on the now sacred ground where the Twin Towers once stood. This memorial takes its place among other national sites memorializing the sacrifices and the tragedies which mark our nation, places like Gettysburg and other Civil War battlefields, and the powerful remembrances of World War II, Korea and Vietnam that define our nation's capital.

You can read these words -- and many others -- on the National September 11 Memorial website (www.911memorial.org), "The National September 11 Memorial is a tribute of remembrance and honor to the nearly 3,000 people killed in the terror attacks of September 11, 2001 at the World Trade Center site, near Shanksville, Pa., and at the Pentagon, as well as the six people killed in the World Trade Center bombing in February 1993. The Memorial's twin reflecting pools are each nearly an acre in size and feature the largest manmade waterfalls in North America. The pools sit within the footprints where the Twin Towers once stood...a powerful reminder of the largest loss of life resulting from a foreign attack on American soil and the greatest single loss of rescue personnel in American history."

We must always honor September 11th. These remembrances are important – to honor the memory of the fallen, to rekindle the heroism of those who responded, and to reenergize the spirit of resolve that has helped our nation recover.

Tom O'Mara is a Republican state senator from Big Flats.

COLUMN | DICK POLMAN

Republicans for Clinton

In an attempt to rewrite history that should have George Orwell spinning in his grave, Republicans have been heaping praise on the presidential tenure of Bill Clinton.

The Romney campaign is suddenly lauding Clinton as a wise moderate who reached across the aisle and inspired Republicans to meet him halfway. Romney surrogate John Sununu is extolling Clinton's "credibility" on economic issues. Paul Ryan says Clinton is reminding us "how good things were in the 1990s," when the budget was balanced and 20 million new jobs were created. And back in June, conservative activist and ex-presidential candidate Mike Huckabee said Clinton was so pragmatic and conciliatory that "Republicans want to get the bumper strips that say, 'I miss Bill.'"

Obviously, Republicans are embracing Bill for political reasons. He is making an eloquent case for President Obama's re-election - most recently in his convention speech Wednesday night. So the GOP, mindful of the ex-president's 69 percent approval rating and the public's nostalgia for the peace-and-prosperity '90s, is intent on convincing voters that Obama is no Clinton. This critique of Obama as a failure hinges partly on the idea that Clinton was a rousing success.

Orwell spins, and the mind reels. Isn't this the same Bill Clinton the Republicans impeached in 1998, wasting a year of America's time because the guy had lied under oath about sex? Their moral crusade prompted a substantial majority of Americans to side with Clinton.

Let's revisit the '90s - the actual '90s, not the alternative-reality '90s the GOP is determined to dwell in - and take a look at what Republicans were actually saying and doing while the Big Dog had the big job.

As I well recall, the GOP was not trying then to depict Clinton as a combination of Cicero and Pericles. Quite the contrary: It viewed him as an illegitimate president by dint of his victory with only 43 percent of the vote in the three-way election of 1992.

Then came the really fun stuff. GOP-friendly media, led by Rush Limbaugh, the National Review, and the American Spectator, attacked Hillary Clinton so relentlessly that a Chicago Tribune columnist wrote that their antipathy suggested "a need for psychological help." Bill, meanwhile, was accused of ordering the deaths of several associates (the Rev. Jerry Falwell distributed a video featuring a "Clinton body count") and smuggling drugs through an Arkansas airport.

Some congressional Republicans amplified these charges, calling for hearings to investigate the "frightening" number of Clintonites who had died "under other than natural causes." After Clinton aide Vince Foster killed himself in a public park, one top House Republican tried in vain to prove that he had been murdered, conducting ballistic tests on a watermelon in his backyard.

Meanwhile, in the policy realm, Republicans sought to paint the president as a doctrinaire liberal who would wreck the economy.

It's amusing now to hear Team Romney praise Clinton as someone who "worked with Republicans," because the truth is that, at a pivotal juncture in 1993, they refused to work with him. Clinton was determined to mop up the red ink that had been bequeathed to him by Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush. So he pushed for an ambitious budget reconciliation package that would slash the deficit, in part by raising taxes on the richest Americans.

Care to guess how many House and Senate Republicans worked with Clinton on this budget package and voted for it in the end? The answer is none.

Today, some Republicans are saying Clinton was a sage economic steward; back in the day, they denounced his budget

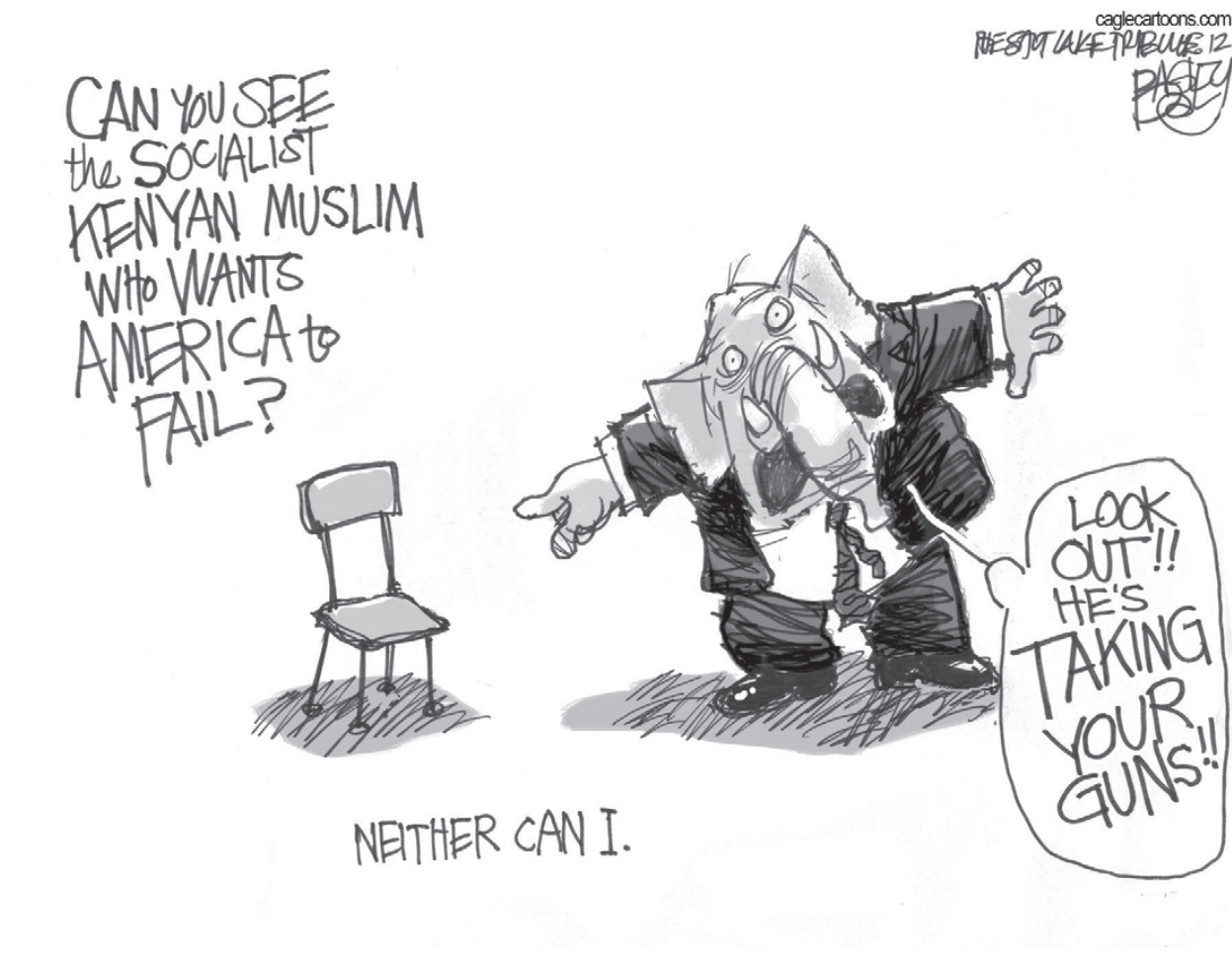
package (which passed anyway) as folly. Newt Gingrich predicted that the '93 tax hikes would "kill the current recovery and put us back in recession." His GOP colleagues in the House agreed. Christopher Cox said, "This is really the Dr. Kevorkian plan for our economy." Robert Michel said Americans "will remember who set loose this dreadful virus into the economic bloodstream." John Kasich said Clinton's plan would put the economy "in the gutter."

Actually, Clinton's plan slashed the deficit and put the economy on the road to recovery. But it's odd now to hear Republicans praise him for creating 20 million jobs, when they did their best at the time to thwart the budget package that planted the seeds for those jobs.

Revisionist Republican love for Clinton is only a temporary election season tactic anyway. But considering how fiercely Clinton spurned them on Wednesday - mocking the GOP's "alternative reality" and denouncing its "you're on your own," "winner take all" ideology - Republicans aren't likely to feel the love much longer.

Dick Polman is a columnist for the Philadelphia Inquirer. Readers may write to him at: Philadelphia Inquirer, P.O. Box 8263, Philadelphia, Pa. 19101, or by email at dpolman@phillynews.com.

ANOTHER VIEW



OTHER VIEW | KANSAS CITY STAR

President Barack Obama had a tough act to follow on Thursday night in accepting the Democratic presidential nomination - himself, four years ago. At that point, he and the nation were in a swoon of possibility, justifiably proud of breaking the race barrier to the White House and lifted by his words of bipartisanship and a new way of governing.

At his inauguration, he warned that the road back from the economic abyss would be steep and hard.

How right he was. The recovery has been slow and rancorous. Thursday night, Obama owned up

to the shortcomings, disappointments and challenges remaining.

What he did right, and in welcome detail, was delineate clear differences with his GOP opponent, Mitt Romney. He spoke out against intolerance, tax breaks for millionaires and vouchers for Medicare, and he defended government.

"We don't think government can solve all of our problems. But we don't think that government is the source of all of our problems - any more than are welfare recipients, or corporations, or unions, or immigrants, or gays, or any other group we're told to blame for our troubles."

What he didn't offer was a surprise. He stuck with his State of the Union-like wish list.

The president had a lot of help in wooing the crowd and national audience. Former president Bill Clinton offered perhaps his best political speech ever, explaining Obama's policies in folksy, clear fashion, credibly arguing that Republicans left the Democrat a mess no president could dig out of in only four years. The opening night, Michelle Obama wowed the audience by weaving stories of family into a passionate endorsement of her husband's determination to help others through the

door of opportunity.

The back-to-back national party conventions - stuffed with heartwarming stories of difficult childhoods, family struggles and individuals overcoming disadvantages - spoke to their bases and the nation in broad strokes.

Obama called on voters not to buy into cynicism and actively participate in the elections: "It's about what can be done by us, together, through the hard and frustrating but necessary work of self-government." Surely, on that point, both camps can agree. Bring on the debates.

Follow us on Twitter

The Leader: @TheNewsLeader1
Stella Dupree: @TheLeaderDupree
Shawn Vargo: @TheLeaderVargo
John Zick: @TheLeaderZick
Chris Gill: @TheLeaderGill
Bob Benz: @TheLeaderBenz