

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

COMMENTARY | STATE SEN. TOM O'MARA, R-BIG FLATS

Keep up the fight against invasive species

Throughout the past week in New York State, we observed the 4th Annual "Invasive Species Awareness Week" (ISAW).

The truth is we can never afford to leave this challenge far from our thoughts and actions. It's an especially critical environmental, economic, and public health challenge across the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions.

New York's annual awareness week has become an important piece of the overall strategy to combat the spread of invasive species. Public awareness and education are vital strategies. We are well aware how the uncontrolled spread of aquatic invasive species like Hydrilla and Eurasian water milfoil run the risk of devastating local ecosystems and regional tourism economies. Left unchecked, they would cost local communities hundreds of millions of dollars and thousands of jobs. The

same goes for land-based invasives like the Golden Nematode, Emerald Ash Borer (EBA), Gypsy Moth, and Asian Longhorned Beetle (ALB).

Consequently, we continue to appreciate the work of local leaders and concerned citizens to protect our waterways and other ecosystems from invasive species and secure their well-being for generations to come. The Keuka Lake Association, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Finger Lakes PRISM and numerous other locally based, regional associations and organizations have done and continue to do outstanding work on prevention and detection, control and education, and outreach.

Estimates have pegged the nationwide economic cost of invasive species at \$120 billion annually in terms of environmental cleanup, eradication, destroyed crops, and other agricultural losses, and diminished

recreational and tourism opportunities. It's a staggering figure and New York State is far from immune to it. In fact, our state is home to more than 7,600 freshwater lakes, ponds, and reservoirs, together with 70,000 miles of rivers, brooks, and streams – and let's not forget our extensive forests and woodlands.

According to the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), New York is 63 percent forested – forests cover 18.9 million acres of our 30 million total acres, or 63 percent! Cornell University estimates that the forest industry accounts for more than 60,000 people and directly contributes roughly \$4.6 billion annually to the state's economy.

In other words, we are particularly at-risk to the introduction of aquatic, land-based, and other invasive species.

The overall danger of invasive species runs the gamut from aggressive

aquatic invaders to invasive plants, agricultural and forest pests, and many other plants, animals, insects, and diseases. They diminish agricultural productivity, harm biological diversity, radically reshape ecosystems, reduce wildlife habitat, out-compete native species, and limit recreational opportunities. A broad spectrum of invasive species poses a serious risk to local ecologies and economies.

As chair of the Senate Environmental Conservation Committee, I have been grateful for the opportunity to sponsor new laws and support the establishment of new programs to help combat invasive species. This includes a 2014 law requiring the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to encourage boaters to help prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species by promoting clean, drain, and dry procedures that are a critical first line of defense to

prevent the spread of invasive species from one body of water to another.

Most recently, Yates County and Cornell University were among 35 organizations statewide selected to receive funding through the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF)'s "Invasive Species Rapid Response and Control Grant Program." This program, which the Senate Majority prioritized in last year's state budget, provides state grants to support projects targeting aquatic and terrestrial invasive species. Under the latest round of funding, Cornell University receives \$68,723 for invasive species rapid response and control. Yates County receives \$35,800 for mechanical harvesting of the Starry Stonewort infestation in the Keuka Lake Outlet.

These are just a few examples of many regional initiatives underway to protect the quality and economic potential of waterways, agricultural

lands, and forests statewide. The work continues to develop cost-effective and commonsense strategies to stop the spread of destructive invasive species before they take hold. It represents a comprehensive and proactive effort to enhance public awareness, strengthen accountability, and save taxpayer dollars. Similar efforts are underway across the country and major outdoor outfitters such as Cabela's and Bass Pro are deeply involved in their commitment to prevention.

Again, the undeniable fact is that the uncontrolled spread of invasive species would devastate regional tourism and cost local communities hundreds of millions of dollars and thousands of jobs.

Find out more about state-level invasive species efforts from the state DEC (<http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/105650.html>) and on my Senate website (<http://www.omara.nysenate.gov>).

GUEST EDITORIAL | TOM DIMITROFF, TOM YORIO, WARREN BLACKWELL AND TONY SOFIA – FORMER CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Professional city management: 20 years of progress

During the 1980s and early 90s, the city was experiencing extreme financial difficulties, rapidly deteriorating infrastructure and inefficient operations. The city was having trouble making payroll each week, police cruisers had holes in the seats and a couple of neighborhoods still had a few exposed brick streets. There was no clear direction to address the city's problems.

The business community and a committee of three

Councilmen (Frank Coccho, Tom Yorio and Warren Blackwell) advocated to hire a City Manager. It was time for professional management, someone with the experience and educational background to correct our financial issues and improve service delivery. After a city-wide ballot initiative, the position of City Manager was established in 1995.

Our first City Manager, Suzanne Kennedy, served from 1995-97. Last week, Mark Ryckman celebrated

his 20th anniversary as our second City Manager. Since that time, we have seen tremendous progress in the way the city operates, and its financial stability.

Under Mark's leadership, the city has improved its bond rating from an A3 to an A1. He has secured millions in grants including \$6.4 million for the upcoming Bridge Street Bridge project. Mark has also built a strong partnership with the private sector to establish the Gaffer District. The downtown is

much more vibrant with over 100 upper floor apartments along Market Street, and new investment coming to the Northside.

The City Manager and Mayor are important but separate roles. The Mayor presides over the City Council's meeting, helping to focus the group on policy direction. The Mayor sets the tone of calm and professionalism for the City Council. The City Manager has specific training in public administration and

provides policy advice while overseeing the city's daily operations. As the Chief Executive Officer, he brings department heads and employees together to identify efficiencies, improve operations and secure outside grant funds. He helps the staff develop their professional skills, coaching them and encouraging them to find innovative solutions.

Mark has successfully navigated the city through two economic downturns, cuts in state aid and the burden of unfunded mandates. Despite these challenges, the operations have never been more efficient. He has established financial planning as a core component of his administration. Over the years, Mark has also skillfully

renegotiated contracts with all four of the city's unions to switch to less costly health insurance plans and cap future retiree health insurance benefits for most new hires. During each round of negotiations, he has incrementally moved the needle positioning the city to achieve long-term savings. Although health insurance costs have grown significantly, his actions are an important step to slow the rate of health insurance growth as we await Congress to lower health insurance rates nationwide.

As we continue to develop our community, Mark has identified three strategic initiatives with a high priority: economic development, infrastructure financing and housing. Mayor Rich Negri has appointed Deputy Mayor Bill Boland and Councilman Chris Karam to chair the committees charged with developing the city's strategic direction for these three initiatives. Each of the committees is making progress. We are seeing signs of improvement with additional street paving and housing investment. The housing demonstration area on First Street is removing blight from the neighborhood. Investment in Lamphear Court is redeveloping the long-dilapidated units. Soon, the burned house on East Third Street will be torn down.

As we progress into the future, our City Manager has not forgotten to preserve our past. He was a strong proponent of establishing design guidelines for Denison Parkway, assisted in establishing the city's Historic Preservation Commission, helped save the War Memorial Library and supported the renovation of the city's clock tower.

We could name numerous other accomplishments under this form of government, but there wouldn't be enough room on this page. Instead, we look forward to watching what the next 20 years of professional management brings our community. The future is bright. In the meantime, if you see our City Manager on the street, congratulate him for his 20 years of dedicated service.

Happy 80th Birthday to Allen Havens on July 30, 2017

Help us celebrate with a birthday card party.

Send your card to PO Box 643, Bath, NY 14810-0643

PALACE THEATRE

Voted the Reader's Choice Awards Favorite Movie Theatre since 2013

Show Schedule for Fri. 7/14 thru Thurs. 7/20

*****NOW ACCEPTING ALL MAJOR CREDIT CARDS*****

THE BIG SICK (Kumail Nanjiani, Zoo Kazan, Holly Hunter) R (2Hr 0 Min)

Fri. 7/14	3:15, 6:15, 8:45
Sat. 7/15	3:15, 6:15, 8:45
Sun. 7/16	3:15, 6:15
Mon. 7/17	3:15, 6:15
Tues. 7/18	CLOSED
Wed. & Thurs.	3:15, 6:15

SPIDERMAN: HOMECOMING (Tom Holland, Michael Keaton, Robert Downey Jr.) Rated PG-13 (1/2 HRS 13 Min)

Fri. 7/14	3:30, 6:30, 9:15
Sat. 7/15	3:30, 6:30, 9:15
Sun. 7/16	3:30, 6:30
Mon. 7/17	3:30, 6:30
Tues. 7/18	CLOSED
Wed. & Thurs.	3:30, 6:30

17 W. Market Street (In Corning's Gaffer District) MOVIE PHONE: 607-654-7393

NOW OFFERING: ONLINE TICKET SALES!!! Go to www.corningpalacetheater.com for details & skip the line wait!!!

Crystal Cinemas 8

NOW SHOWING: Matinees: Fri. 7/14 - Wed. 7/19 Evens: Fri. 7/14 - Wed. 7/19

War for the Planet of the Apes (PG13) [12:20, 3:30] 6:35, 9:30

Spider-Man: Homecoming (PG13) [12:30, 3:40] 6:40, 9:30

Wonder Woman (PG13) [12:15, 3:00] 6:30, 9:30

Baby Driver (R) [1:30] 4:00, 7:00, 9:30

The House (R) [12:30, 2:45] 5:00, 7:15, 9:30

Cars 3 (G) [1:30] 4:00, 6:30

Transformers: The Last Knight (PG13) 8:55

Despicable Me 3 (PG) [12:15, 2:25] 4:35, 6:50, 9:05

The Big Sick (R) [1:30] 4:15, 6:55, 9:30

Painted Post, Exit 49 Off I-86 607-937-5008 • www.crystalcinemas8.com

JUMBLE

Answer: CHARGE THOUGH INCOME THWART POLICE BECKON

The boxer was expected to win easily, but his opponent —

BEAT HIM TO THE PUNCH

50# Black Oil Sunflower Seed Only \$19.99 + tax

Wade's Farm & Home Inc. 94 Front St., Addison • 607-359-2424

The Leader Staff

The Leader (ISSN #10501983) The Leader is published daily at 34 West Pulteney Street, Corning, New York 14830 by Gatehouse Media, LLC. Periodical postage paid at Corning, N.Y. 14830-0817. USPS code | 0586-160 Postmaster: Send address changes to The Leader, 34 West Pulteney Street, Corning, New York 14830

Publisher Rick Emanuel | Group Publisher 936-4651, Ext. 303

Editorial Shawn Vargo | Executive Editor 936-4651, Ext. 361 svargo@the-leader.com

Circulation Corinne Mulligan Customer Service/Sales Manager 936-4651, Ext. 328

Advertising Heather Falkey | Ad Director 936-4651, Ext. 347 hfalkey@the-leader.com

Business Office Becky Post | Administration 936-4651, Ext. 306 bpост@the-leader.com

Classifieds 936-4651, Ext 651 **Retail** 936-4651, Ext 653

Postal rates

Steuben County	
One month	\$39.12
Three months	\$117.36
Six months	\$234.72
One year	\$469.44

ELSEWHERE IN USA

One month	\$49.47
Three months	\$148.41
Six months	\$296.82
One year	\$593.64

Home delivery subscriptions reflect basic subscription rates before additional charges. Due to the added value of special editions there will be an additional charge for each special edition which will accelerate the expiration of your subscription. There will be no more than 12 special editions per year.

CAC Comfort Is Our Business Corning Appliance Corp. Service, Heating, Cooling, Fire Place, Water

Pre-Season Tune Up SPECIAL \$89.95 Expires: 7/31/17

Call 936-4328 Ext. 299 EPA CERTIFIED TECHNICIANS SERVING THE TWIN TIERS

TO SCHEDULE YOUR AIR CONDITIONING TUNE UP

Your Pre-Season Tune Up Includes:

- Check Operating Pressures
- Check Voltage and Amperage to all Motors
- Check Air Temperature Drop Across Evaporator
- Check Evaporator Super Heat
- Check Pressure Switch Cut-out Settings
- Check Belt and Adjust Tension
- Check All Wiring and Connection
- Clean Condenser Coils
- Check Air Temperature across Condenser
- Check that Condensate Drain is Open
- Check for Adequate Refrigerant Charge and Possible Leaks

CLIP THIS AD AND SAVE \$10.00 (Add additional checks for 1/2 price).