

OPINION

TOM O'MARA | 58TH DISTRICT

Keep up the fight against invasive species



Tom O'Mara

New York State recently observed the 6th Annual "Invasive Species Awareness Week" (ISAW) and the fact remains that we can never afford to ignore this critical environmental, economic, and public health concern.

This annual awareness and education week has become an important piece of the overall strategy. The uncontrolled spread of aquatic invasive species like Hydrilla and Eurasian water milfoil would devastate 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 (EAB), Spotted Lanternfly, 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. The Keuka Lake Association, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Seneca Lake Pure Waters Association, Finger Lakes PRISM and numerous other grassroots, regionally based 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, as well as diminished recreational and tourism opportunities. It is a staggering figure and New York is far from immune. 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.

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.

I have welcomed opportunities to sponsor new laws and support the establishment of new programs to aid and advance this fight. 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. Through the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF), the state invests in numerous regional initiatives to protect the quality and economic potential of waterways, agricultural lands, and forests.

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 Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) at www.dec.ny.gov.

On a related note, it is equally critical to highlight another serious threat to area lakes and other waterways: Harmful Algal Blooms, commonly referred to as HABs. These blooms pose serious health threats to people, and pets and livestock, which means we all need to stay informed, practice caution and, importantly, report blooms where and when we see them.

Once again, the DEC website provides comprehensive and detailed information on HABs, including action plans, identifying and reporting HABs (which the DEC highlights as extremely important), and other educational and informational resources. I'll also note that the DEC in cooperation with the Finger Lakes Institute, Corning Incorporated and the State University of New York at Fredonia will host the 6th Annual Finger Lakes Harmful Algal Blooms Symposium on Wednesday, July 31, at Hobart and William Smith College.

Visit the following website for more information: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2019-finger-lakes-harmful-algal-bloom-hab-symposium-tickets-63426231566>.

I cannot do enough to encourage anyone spotting a suspicious algae bloom to use the DEC website to report it.

ANOTHER VIEW



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Thanks to Grace UMC for stepping up

To the Editor,

Thank you to Grace United Methodist Church for stepping up to help those without cars get to Wegmans while the bridge is closed.

Thank you Carla Stephens for raising the issue of public transport at a council meeting.

Thank you to Joe the driver who explained to me that, yes, there is bus service from the north side to Wegmans, but that it involves an hour's wait at the transportation center.

And thank you to Robert White for organizing a corps of volunteer drivers to transport those who cannot walk an extra two miles to get to Wegmans, or afford a taxi both ways.

No thanks to the city which should have brought the community together to address this problem before the bridge closed.

Elizabeth Whitehouse
Corning

July 16, 2019 was a dark day

To the Editor,

History will not judge July 16 kindly. It was the day where our grandchildren will read in history books or on history sites on their I-pads, that America made a symbolic vote to condemn our President's racist tweets, but could not make the resolution a unanimous one.

Instead we gave up moral integrity and embraced racism and division and denigration of others in order not to offend a leader who puts his own self interests, not America, first.

I applaud the four Republicans and one Independent and all Democrat representatives who found the courage to vote their conscience in the formal

resolution on the floor of the House.

They voted to condemn the racist tweets that had been leveled against four newly elected members of the House of Representatives in a 285-187 vote.

Sadly my representative, Rep Tom Reed, was not among those who found that courage; he was one of the 187 nays.

Two hundred forty three years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence, we still are grappling with an "us vs. them" mentality that allows some groups to assert superiority and to hold down those deemed to be inferior.

I urge all Americans to take a long look at who we are as a nation.

Everyone can do something to make our country better. Our diversity is our strength. America's motto once was, "E. Pluribus Unum" meaning "Out of many, one". It is not okay to just sit back and say "I don't do politics". Our democracy is a representative democracy and we must participate somehow, starting with voting, in every election.

Have we given up on aspiring to a more perfect union? Our grandchildren will be watching.

Sally Leeson
Wayland

Defining the Politician

To the Editor,

The Webster Universal Dictionary of the English Language, copyright 1936 defines "Politician - A man of artifice or deep contrivance; a man who adopts politics as a means to his own ends; an intriguer or schemer." Clearly a reprehensible, corrupt human being not worthy of the trust of the people. This same dictionary glosses

over with a short definition of statesman, referencing the material under politician where it states, "Politician, statesman, diplomat - A statesman may lack the qualifications essential to success to politics and diplomacy. A successful diplomat may not be a statesman but he is likely to be a good politician."

Webster's New World Dictionary of American English, copyright 1986 defines Statesman - A person who shows wisdom, skill and vision in conducting state affairs and dealing with public affairs, or one engaged in the business of government. A senior politician, especially a man, who is widely respected for integrity and impartial concern for the public good.

These definitions show we've historically understood the putrefied, self-serving nature of politicians, with their inherent dishonesty and corruption. An entity without conscience, destined to debauchery and rebuffing respectability.

We have seen this so clearly in recent decades, obviously aware of the disgusting nature of the politicians, but accepted it as "We The People" getting the corrupt and greedy government for which we have allowed. A prime example is the acceptance politicians will lie during their campaigns. If they lie then, they will lie anytime lying is expedient and beneficial to their personal selfish agendas.

Perhaps politicians lobbied, connived to put lipstick on the politician pig in more modern dictionaries.

Instinctually we know politicians to be scurrilous scalawags, corrupt and untrustworthy. They constantly show us their colors, yet we continually accept their treachery. Statesmen extinct.

Gerald J. Furnkranz
Millport

LETTERS POLICY

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Sat. 7/20 3:15, 6:15, 8:45
Sun. 7/21 3:15, 6:15
Mon. 7/22 3:15, 6:15
Tues. 7/23 3:15, 6:15
Wed. & Thurs 3:15, 6:15

SPIDERMAN: FAR FROM HOME
(Zendaya, Angourie Rice, Tom Holland) PG-13 (2 Hr: 10 Min)
Fri. 7/19 3:30, 6:30, 9:15
Sat. 7/20 3:30, 6:30, 9:15
Sun. 7/21 3:30, 6:30
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PUBLIC NOTICE

The Steuben County Department of Public Works will be holding a Public Information Meeting for the CR 119 Bridge Project over the Canisteo River in the Town of Cameron on Wednesday, July 31, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. The meeting will be held at the Steuben County Bridge Shop located at 9837 CR 119, Rathbone, New York. Representatives from Steuben County, the NYS Department of Transportation and the project consultant, C & S Engineers, will be present to provide a short presentation and accept any questions, comments and concerns regarding the project.