

# OPINION

TOM O’MARA | 58TH DISTRICT

## Don’t wait: Summer’s gone in a blink

Let’s take a break from poli-tics and focus, instead, on summer. Simply stated, summer across the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions is one of the great seasons anywhere. It literally roared to a start this past week-end with the return of international motors-ports to Watkins Glen International and the Sahlen’s Six Hours of the Glen. NASCAR will be back in town during August’s first weekend with Go Bowling at The Glen. Find out more on theglen.com.

It cannot be over-stated: We are incredibly fortunate to have one of the world’s iconic sporting venues right in our backyard at Watkins Glen International.

Two of the region’s premier events arrive in July: the Finger Lakes Wine Festival on July 12-14 (flwinefest.com) followed by the Finger Lakes Cheese Festival on July 27 (flxcheese.com).

The state Office of Parks and Recreation has reported that atten-dance at state parks and historic sites rose for the seventh consecutive year in 2018 – reaching a record-setting 74 mil-lion visitors! New York boasts one of America’s outstanding systems of state parks. It includes an unrivaled network of historic sites, parks and trails throughout the Finger Lakes and Southern Tier regions, such as the Watkins Glen State Park Gorge Trail and the newly redone Sampson State Park Marina. A celebra-tion of regional trails, Finger Lakes Trails Days (FingerLakesTrailDays.com) is coming up on July 26-27 at the Steuben County Fairgrounds.

These places and the outdoor recreation they invite are power-ful economic engines for local economies. Every investment made to enhance them is smart. In fact, Parks and Trails New York (PTNY) puts the economic impact of New York’s 178 state parks, 35 historic sites, 1,350 miles of hiking trails and over 8,000 campsites (not to men-tion boat launches, beaches, swimming pools and nature cen-ters) at nearly \$2 billion in revenue, almost \$500 million in employment income and 20,000 jobs.

In New York alone, outdoor recreation gen-erates nearly \$35 billion in consumer spending, directly supports over 300,000 jobs, and is responsible for more than \$12 billion in wages and salaries.

Of course, never forget the fishing (find out more on iloveny.com).

The regional grape and wine industry attracts visitors by the mil-lions. The state Wine and Grape Foundation has pegged the eco-nomic impact of grapes, grape juice and wine in New York State at an estimated \$5 billion. Summer is always an active time across Finger Lakes wine country, celebrated with numer-ous festivals and events (stay updated on finger-lakeswinecountry.com). The same is true for craft brewers (fingerlakes-beertrail.com), cideries and distilleries.

This state -- and our own Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions -- takes great pride in a nationally renowned lineup of agricultural products. It makes getting around to local farmers’ markets a real pleasure. These mar-kets are overflowing with high quality, New York-grown offerings. The state Department of Agriculture and Markets offers an online, interactive map to help locate one near you: <http://www.agmkt.state.ny.us/AP/>

ANOTHER VIEW



GUEST VIEW | MAUREEN KELLY

## Planned Parenthood supports LGBTQ communities

Every June, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-gender, and queer (LGBTQ) communities around the world come together to celebrate their strength and resilience. Fifty years after the birth of the modern LGBTQ movement at Stonewall on the shoul-ders of the activism of transgender women of color, we recognize that the progress we’ve seen on LGBTQ rights is rooted in principles that also underlie reproductive rights: that politicians should not get to decide what we do with our body or what our family looks like, and those rights should not depend on the community we live in.

Despite the progress made, LGBTQ people continue to face relent-less attempts to undo the progress of the last half century and attack their health and lives. Since taking office, we have seen the current admin-istration systematically attacking people’s health and rights and passing policies that take away the rights of people of color, people with disabili-ties, LGBTQ people, and women.

LGBTQ people have unique health care needs. We experience greater obstacles to obtaining sexual and reproductive health services than non-LGBTQ people. People of color, people with low incomes, and people who are undocumented face additional discrimination and can find it even harder to access care.

At Planned Parenthood, we take pride in providing high-quality, compas-sionate health care for LGBTQ people in our communities, including hormone and transition related care for trans-gender and non-binary people. We are very proud to have been the first Planned Parenthood in New York State to offer this care and to be one of the 28 states where Planned Parenthood offers hormone care to transgender and non-binary people. We see this critical service as one that goes to the heart of our mission. Gay and bisexual men as well as transgen-der women – particularly transgender women of color – continue to be disproportionately impacted by HIV. At Planned Parenthood we provide HIV testing and pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), a daily pill that helps prevent HIV when taken correctly.

We also know that LGBTQ youth are often denied accurate and queer-inclusive sex education. Our educators collaborate with schools on programming and training and our LGBTQ youth groups help to provide supportive, caring social environments that allow youth to know they are not alone. We work to be sure they get the information and support they need.

LGBTQ people, young and old, have stood up to oppression year after year, pushing this coun-try forward. Pride Month is the perfect time for our parents, relatives, neighbors, colleagues and friends to also stand firm against those who would seek to deny rights or services to us, simply because of who we are or who we love.

Our LGBTQ patients, supporters, and staff members come from all walks of life, and Planned Parenthood is proud to stand with them at the intersections of their identities We under-stand that the struggle for LGBTQ liberation is deeply connected to justice for all. We reaf-firm our commitment to building a world where no one experiences discrimi-nation or violence because of their gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation.

*Maureen Kelly, vice presi-dent for Programming and Communication, founder, Out for Health, Planned Parenthood’s LGBTQ Health and Wellness Program of Planned Parenthood of the Southern Finger Lakes*

ANOTHER VIEW



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