Huumbled to receive Frank Watts Award

n March 9, I had the honor of being presented the Frank Watts Memorial Award by the Corning-Painted Post Sports Hall of Fame.

According to the Hall of Fame, the award is presented to a person in recognition of long time support of sports in the Corning-Painted Post area.

I was truly humbled. And then Larry French began telling the audience about how horrible a bowler and a golfer I am and thenwell ... I digress.

When you think that the Hall of Fame was celebrating its 45th year in 2019 and that I have covered roughly a third of them as the Sports Editor at The Leader, I began to look back on my career.

There were many highs ... and many lows, as well. Immediately, I recall the 2006 Corning East football state championship in Syracuse and the joy and jubilation involved with that day. I also recall that the previous year, the players refused to talk to the media following their loss in the title game.

I think back to my longest day - one that began at 3 a.m. as I drove 250-plus miles to Queensbury to watch a Corning freshman named Jessica Lawson win her first state title in cross country.

Roughly 190 miles later, I took photos at an Elmira Express playoff football game at Union-Endicott.

I took a sunrise photo outside of Albany, then a sunset pic leaving the football game. I think my day ended at around midnight, or so.

I recall driving to Long Island for a Corning East state championship lacrosse game and having my transmission break while driving over the George Washington Bridge into the city. My car limped to the game, but when I attempted to leave, I no longer had reverse.

Thankfully, it could go forward, as long as I continued to keep transmission fluid in it. I continued to drive that car for several months (without reverse) until my wife and I could afford to get it fixed.

Many miles were driven, many stats were taken and many stories were written. However, many hours were spent away from my family - which was always the other side of the doubleedged sports writers sword.

As Larry French added, there were also many hours taking part in charity bowling and golfing events in order to be supportive of many local causes. While my addition to a team may immediately cause it to not be in the running for a first, second or third place prize - we were guaranteed to have great deal of fun (in my opinion, anyway).

I also fondly look back at many years of coaching both for Painted Post Little League, as well as EVPP softball.

By receiving the Frank Watts Memorial Award, my cup runneth over.

Thank you again to the C-PP Sports Hall of Fame. Thank you to all of the area athletes, coaches and parents that have helped me along the way. Thank you to my family, which has always been supportive of my time away from home to live my dream.

Finally, a tip of the hat to Tom Passmore, who has to follow in my footsteps - all by himself. I am truly thankful for the effort he brings to The Leader to be a jack of all trades while covering all of the area schools solo.

Shawn Vargo is the Executive Editor of The Leader and can be reached at svargo@the-leader.com.

It's truly a labor of love.

ANOTHER VIEW



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

A nightmare for farming communities

mong many critical issues facing New York farmers, not one is more alarming to family farmers than the move afoot in the state Legislature to mandate overtime pay for farmworkers.

The New York Farm Bureau is leading the charge against a plan euphemistically called the "Farmworkers Fair Labor Practices Act." For farmers, there's

nothing fair about it. Farm Bureau Public Policy Director Jeff Williams said at a recent news conference, "If supporters of this bill don't take the farm community's concerns seriously, the face of New York agriculture as we know it will change. Rural New York matters. Local food production matters. We need to make sure farms have the opportunity to not only survive but thrive for the sake of their families and employees."

Versions of the legislation (S.2837/A.2750), which I strongly oppose, go back as far as 2008. However, with the state Senate now under

Democratic control, the farm community is on high alert this year, recognizing that an extreme action like this one could very well become the law of their land.

In short, the Act's approval would decimate net farm income for every sector of our leading agricultural economy and put thousands of family farms out of business.

I share this alarm with many colleagues, including area Assemblyman Phil Palmesano. In recent correspondence to the state's Democratic leaders, we called for statewide public hearings to give farmers, growers, agribusiness owners, farm community leaders, and all others the opportunity to testify against this action. We believe this testimony would finally dispel the falsehoods and myths surrounding the proposal.

In part, we wrote, "The misguided and misrepresented Farmworkers Fair Labor Practices Act poses an extreme action at a time of already severe economic struggle for New York State farmers. Worse, the Act's consequences

would produce a nightmare of a ripple effect across local communities in every region of this state and profoundly diminish the future of high quality, local food production." It would indeed be a

nightmare of a ripple effect. Some of the scenarios are stunning. It's already been shown that total farm labor costs in New York State are at least 63 percent of net cash farm income, compared to 36 percent nationally. Now, Farm Credit East estimates the new Act would increase farm labor costs by nearly \$300 million or close to 20%, resulting in a drop in net farm income of 23%. For vegetable growers, according to the Farm Credit East economic analysis, net farm income would decline by 43%. Fruit growers would face a 74% drop in net income. For greenhouse and nursery operations, income losses would approach 60%.

For New York State dairy farms barely making ends meet under current economic conditions (and keeping in mind

that New York State has already lost nearly 20% of our dairy farms over the past five years), the Act would wipe out remaining net farm income.

One Southern Tier generational dairy farmer said at Farm Bureau's recent news conference that the legislation would drive up her costs by more than \$200,000 and put her family's farm out of business.

She said, "We value our employees greatly. We house our employees and pay them everything they need free of charge. Having the payroll go up by that much will put us out of business. We haven't paid ourselves in pretty much a year. We are trying to do what is right and paying our employees

and paying our bills." In short, far from implementing fair labor practices, this action would in reality spark an enormous loss of family farms and the thousands of livelihoods these farms support across the industry and throughout hundreds of local economies statewide.

It is alarming and it cannot go forward.

LETTERS POLICY

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Have a plan for St. Patrick's Day

To the Editor,

Today is St. Patrick's Day - a day for drinking green beer, eating corn beef and cabbage

50# Black Oil Sunflower Seed Only \$1999 + tax PER BAG

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oted the Reader's Choice Awards Favorite Show Schedule for Fri. 3/15 - Thurs. 3/21

CAPTAIN MARVEL (Brie Larson, Gemma Chan, Ben Mendelsohn) PG-13 (2 Hr 4Min

Sun. 3/17 Mon. 3/18 Tues. 3/19 Wed. & Thurs. HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON: THE HIDDEN WORLD

Sun. 3/17 Mon. 3/18 3:15, 6:15 6:15 *Closed 6:15

SPECIAL EVENTS FIVE Seasons: The Gardens of Piet Oudolf Friday March 15, 2019 at 1pm

A Panel Discussion to follow OFFERING: ONLINE TICKET SALES!!!

and a big day for drinking and driving.

Police will be out with all the different police agencies in full force looking for drunk drivers.

It is one of the big celebrations for DWI arrests. A drink is a drink. It takes your liver

about an hour to metabolize one drink. How are you going to get home? Cab, des-

ignated driver, uber, or do not drink at all. A DWI costs money. Court costs, IDP class costs \$234, time lost from work, insurance, lawyer and reputation just to name a few.

And possibly your job. A DWI can cost one arrested for almost \$10,000 - an expensive night drinking. Do not let that happen to you.

Over the 35 years I worked in this field, I have seen many people from all walks of life get arrested who all thought it was not going to happen to them on celebrating a special occasion like St. Patrick's Day. Not even St. Patrick can get you out of a DWI. Only you can by having a plan before you start to drink

to prevent this happening to you and ruin the first spring celebra-

tion of the new year. Happy St. Patrick's Day and have a plan and think and make the right choices to truly enjoy this day and other special occasions coming up in future months. Do not let good celebrations turn into nightmares that you never wanted because of the attitude that I have done this before, I can handle it, I only live a few blocks away from home, I am only having one or two, or I parked the car far away from the bars.

Fran Avagliano Corning

Donald J. Trump

To the Editor,

The word for "ladder" in Spanish is "escalera" and the term for sale is "por venta".

An open letter to President

They sell ladders in Mexico and all countries south of Mexico. They come in all sizes and lengths.

Please remind us again why you wish to spend billions of dollars for a wall between Mexico

and the United States.

While you are at it, would you please clarify how many bankrupt cies you have incurred in your private life before your inauguration?

Thank you. Pura Vida. **Ruth Young Horseheads**

(Editor's Note: Due to the subject matter of this letter, we are forgoing our normal one letter to the editor per 30 days restriction)

Twaz's death affecting many

To the Editor,

So saddened by the news of the death of Robert S. Thompson.

Twaz was a gentleman and was a true genuine person. He influenced so

many people over the years, family, friends, the students that he taught and coached. He was a real prince

of a man and person. He was always fun and left some strong footprints to everyone that knew him, and those

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