OPINION

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

Driver awareness needed for bicycle safety

the death of 68-year-

old Charles Rogers who

was hit and killed by an

intoxicated driver while

Grand Central Parkway.

These tragic accidents

attempting to cross

and deaths have led

legislation to make

our roadways safer.

In addition to the

legislation the Senate

approved last week, I

also continue to sponsor legislation (S1439/A283)

to establish a "three-feet,

safe-passing zone" as the

minimum distance that

motorists must provide

when passing bicyclists

on roadways. The legis-

lation is currently in the

Senate Transportation

Committee. If enacted,

New York would join

32 others states that

have enacted three-

feet, safe-passing laws.

Supporters say that as

the state Department

of Transportation

(DOT) continues to

install more and more

bike lanes on roadways

throughout New York,

the legislation is timely

ensure the safety of the

increased bicycle traffic.

the following "Bicycling

in New York" web page

that includes valu-

able safety recom-

mendations and other

educational informa-

tion: https://www.

dot.ny.gov/display/

Making all drivers

more aware of sharing

pedestrians is the most

effective way to make

our roadways safer.

the road with cyclists and

programs/bicycle.

The state DOT offers

and necessary to help

the local cycling community to get behind

ccording to estimates, the surge in bicycling's popularity has resulted in more than 200,000 bike riders taking to roadways daily. Census data, in fact, has revealed that New York ranks second in the number of residents who bike or walk to work.

May is National Bike Month, an event sponsored by the League of American Bicyclists (www.bikeleague. org) and celebrated in states across America. According to the organization's website, "For generations past and to come, the League represents bicyclists in the movement to create safer roads, stronger communities, and a bicycle-friendly America. Through information, advocacy and promotion, we work to celebrate and preserve the freedom cycling brings to our members everywhere."

Last week the state Senate approved legislation (S5228) that I have long supported — and cosponsored in the past - to enhance bicycle safety by requiring the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to incorporate a "bicycle and pedestrian safety" component into the pre-licensing driver's manual and exam.

The Senate has approved this legislation in the past, but there has been no similar action from the Assembly. Specific provisions of a new driver awareness and education component could include instruction

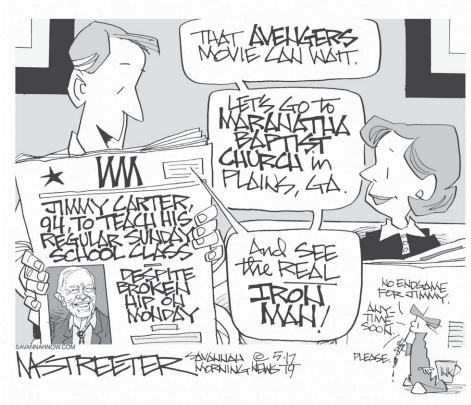
on safely passing cyclists on the road; special considerations while driving in urban areas; the definition and designation of bicycle lanes; how to navigate an intersection with pedestrians and cyclists; and exiting a vehicle without endangering pedestrians and cyclists.

With more and more cyclists sharing our roadways, we should take every reasonable step to make all drivers more conscious of the need for safety. This legislation would help make motorists more aware of bicyclists on the road, and help prevent accidents and save lives. The Assembly should approve it.

Sadly, our region has had - and continues to have - more than its share of bicycling accidents and fatalities. In fact, I first pledged support for the measure at the "Awareness Ride in Memory of Matt Miller" in May 2014. Matt, an Elmira Free Academy graduate, was just 43 years old when he was struck head-on and killed by a left-turning motorist while riding his bike on Hendy Creek Road in the town of Southport in late April 2014. The motorist was ticketed for failure to yield.

Last Wednesday, as part of the worldwide annual Ride of Silence, local riders gathered in Elmira's Wisner Park to commemorate riders who have been injured or killed in traffic accidents. This includes two accidents in the city of Elmira in April, one of which resulted in

ANOTHER VIEW



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Coccho responds to May 12 article

To the Editor, It's been a while, but lo and behold, Jeff [Smith] did it again. In his May 12 front page article, Jeff only gave your readers half a loaf.

He failed to print a complete and full account of all emails Councilman Hyde and I exchanged.

Jeff only published the first email of the May 7 interactions between Hyde and me which was only a portion of our dialogue.

The first account he wrote was complete. However, Jeff failed to report subsequent exchanges as follows: May 7 - "Hello again Marshall, I'd like to begin by noting your first statement: 'In an evening full of procedural gaffes in two meetings.' Perhaps you might share those gaffes with me." (NOTE: As of this writing, I have not received an explanation of the alleged "gaffes").

Next, I have to admit I was being a bit facetious about not "sleeping well last night."

"I certainly agree it is your choice how to vote even if it doesn't make sense. I can't remember during my tenure ever telling a colleague to change their vote so I could have 'a perfect

little row of yes votes.' "As I recall, I didn't

suggest you 'change your vote.' (We hadn't voted yet). Rather, I suggested (during the discussion phase of the resolution) you might reconsider abstaining and vote in favor of the resolution so we could boast of being totally united to our colleagues across our region."

(NOTE: It was/is my intent to request other governmental bodies to follow our lead.)

"Second... During my tenure on the City Council, I have never heard anyone vote 'Not tonight' on a resolution. If you should respond to a question in that manner again, be assured I will rise to a point of order compelling you to cast a meaningful vote. Should you refuse, I would then move to censure."

"Right of Abstention" "Although it is the duty of every member who has an opinion, he can abstain since he cannot be compelled to vote..." "At best, it is my opinion you could have maintained your duty and responsibility to your constituents (because of your uncertainty) by voting NO on the resolution."

Thank you Mr. Editor for allowing me the opportunity to explain, as

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Paul Harvey would say: "The rest of the story."

Frank Coccho, Councilman **6th Ward**

Stamp Out Hunger a success

To the Editor, Thank you to all who participated in the recent "Stamp Out Hunger" Food Drive.

Our Corning Community Food Pantry received almost 3,000 pounds of food which will go a long way in helping us to feed the hungry in our area.

We often think of giving during the holidays, but the need is year around. Donations are especially helpful at this time of year since soon the schools will not be in session and many children who depend on school lunches will not

have them available. We really appreciate all the postal workers who collected food and the many neighbors who contributed food items.

We are most grateful for

Jean K. Krebs, Corning **Community Food Pantry**

Alleged killer not a relative

To the Editor, Two South Carolina men are charged with murder after Sheriff's Deputies found two bodies buried at a house just outside Spartansburg, S.C.

The arrest came after one of the suspects shot himself in the head in front of deputies, survived, then told deputies he witnessed the other man kill his girlfriend.

Arrested were Jonathan Galligan, 39, and Christian Daniel Hurlburt, 41, local news outlets report.

Deputies say that they found buried the bodies of 27-year-old Christin Renee Bunner and 40-year-old Melissa Fairlee-Rhymer. Galligan is charged with Bunner's death, while Hulburt is charged with killing Rhymer.

I want people to know that Jonathan Galligan is not my son.

Raymond Galligan, **Prattsburgh**

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