

OPINION

TOM O'MARA | 58TH DISTRICT

A tribute to compassion and daily work

September is “Hunger Action Month” across the United States. It brings to mind an outstanding local tribute two years ago when Feeding America, the nation’s largest domestic hunger relief organization, named The Food Bank of the Southern Tier as its “2017 Food Bank of the Year.” Feeding America distributes food and groceries to more than 46 million low-income people each year through a network that serves 60,000 food pantries and meal programs in communities across the country. What a remarkable designation it was – and remains -- for The Food Bank of the Southern Tier. It still inspires enormous pride. The Food Bank of the Southern Tier, founded in 1981, is the only New York State food bank to receive the highest designation a food bank can receive – a true milestone considering Feeding America’s organization of 200 food banks throughout the nation. It acknowledges the role a food bank plays in improving the communities it

serves through creative, efficient, and successful programming. The Food Bank of the Southern Tier (<http://www.foodbankst.org>) serves seven regional counties -- Broome, Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben, Tioga and Tompkins – covering nearly 4,000 square miles. Last year, the organization distributed nearly 10 million meals through 163 partner agencies, including food pantries, meal programs, shelters, and after-school and senior programs. The food bank’s thousands of volunteers contributed over 43,000 hours of their time. Other Food Bank of the Southern Tier facts that jump off the page include:

- Nearly 19,000 people (40% of them children, and 15% of them seniors) served weekly;
- 89 cents out of every dollar donated to the Food Bank goes directly to assist those in need;
- 3.1 million pounds of food distributed through Mobile Food pantries;
- The Food Bank’s “BackPack Program”

provides over 100,000 packs to regional children;

- Food drives generate the distribution over 130,000 pounds of food, and assist the distribution of 2.3 million pounds of fresh produce.

Of course, the point of “Hunger Action Month” is to raise awareness, but the hope is that heightened awareness leads to increased action. Everyone can help. For example, varieties of community campaigns are held throughout the year including Fill the Bus, Cheers for Change, Check Out Hunger, and the Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive, among others. There’s also the Tour De Keuka charity bike ride and the Selfless Elf 5K run/walk. Above all, the food bank needs hundreds of volunteers every week to help sort and repack donations and prepare them for distribution. Food and fund drives, awareness and educational events take place year round. To find out more, visit the website (<http://www.foodbankst.org>) or call 607-796-6061.

Food Bank President Natasha Thompson recently wrote, “At the Food Bank, we have long recognized the power of food to help build connections which are essential to developing healthy minds, bodies and communities. We often reflect on how we could not do our work without the support of our community. Our connections are integral to our success and the success of our partners. Community connections are also essential for the people we serve. No one is an island; no one is truly independent. We are all interdependent in a larger ecosystem comprised of family, friends, acquaintances, co-workers, faith communities, schools, towns, counties, states and nations. It can be very easy to take these connections for granted, but they are vital to our ability to survive and thrive.” It is a tribute to commitment, compassion, and daily work to end hunger for families and residents of all ages across the Southern Tier.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Socialism's fallacies

To the Editor, Socialism defined – “a political and economic theory of social organization advocating the means of production, distribution, and exchange should be owned or regulated by the community as a whole.” Pollyanna societal visions, where everyone meets definitions of integrity always, and fairness and honesty reign supreme. Realistically we must admit the people of our society only have power to attain that through our representatives. Politicians voted to office by “WE THE PEOPLE”. Documented in Webster Universal Dictionary of the English Language, copyright 1936 the “Politician

– is a man of artifice or deep contrivance: a man who adopts politics as a means to his own ends; an intriguer or schemer.” Putting entire workings of a nation in the hands of corrupt untrustworthy politicians cultivates treachery in a garden of corruption. “Power corrupts! Absolute power corrupts absolutely!” Your retort might well be those controlling the means of production, distribution, and exchange may be no different than politicians. In many cases that may be true. However, I’d rather have that power and that of government dispersed among more scoundrels than fewer. The private sector is accountable to profit, failure eventually exposed. Government keeps

throwing our money at their own incompetence. Failure stealthily hidden: No accountability. We know there is no honor among thieves (politicians), so infighting often exposes their corruption, if only the people would punish it. The private sector might produce leaders of integrity, perhaps many if the people begin to reject the politicians legislating corruption of capitalism for their own greedy purposes. Supreme power handed over to inherently corrupt politicians fertilizes, corruption flourishes. Socialist leaders lazily deliver equality, condemning subjects into equal states of poverty, leaders living luxuriously on treasures stolen from the people.

Socialists epitomize the saying “Given an inch they take a mile”.

Gerald J. Furnkranz, Millport

What we know about climate change

As individual citizens, what do we actually know about climate change? If we are honest, we’ll admit that our knowledge is generally pretty spotty. Furthermore, the information we think is accurate might be coming from media sources and politicians who are being less than truthful in order to help their benefactors in the oil/energy industries. But we do know that we love our children and grandchildren. Current climate science is clear that the extreme weather events we’ve seen in the last few years are just the beginning of a serious climate crisis. Do we want it on our conscience that we did nothing while extreme weather began to spiral out of control, becoming more and more devastating every decade -- eventually leading, in various locales, to megahurricanes, repeated massive floods, unstoppable wildfires, unbearable heat waves, deadly tornadoes ripping up communities, droughts shriveling up cropland and creating widespread famine, mass extinction of species, hundreds of millions of climate refugees, world-wide economic depression, etc.? The consensus of climate scientists is that we are currently headed toward these disastrous conditions well before the end of this century if we don’t drastically curb our carbon emissions now. (These changes will be effectively permanent, by the way.) The shift away from fossil fuels can be done - it is mostly a matter of public policy - and it must be done. It is not too late. Otherwise, an unknown percentage of our children and grandchildren will not survive this bleak future. Don’t take a chance with the lives of our loved ones.”

Chuck Sher, Petaluma, CA

ANOTHER VIEW



ARTHUR CYR | GUEST VIEWPOINT

Bolton goes overboard in stormy sea

John Bolton’s abrupt departure as National Security Adviser to President Donald Trump is only the latest sudden exit from a top job in this troubled administration. The White House is the center of the turmoil, but for that reason, the instability reverberates widely and powerfully throughout Washington, the federal government and the nation at large. The imagery of the United States government as a “ship of state” is historically rooted in ways that speak directly to contemporary times, including the exceptionally turbulent White House. The captain of even a small ship cannot afford to constantly change direction. Staying on course is crucial. Serious storms are a danger, but can often be avoided or deflected. This is true in politics as in seamanship. Bolton may have been fired or he may have initially offered to resign, as he testifies. This event is only the latest sudden change in what is now a non-stop merry-go-round of senior officials coming and then going, often very quickly. The latest D.C. tempest provides an opportunity to reflect on the significance of the event. More important is long-term lack of consistent trends in policy in this administration, given the now undeniably ceaselessly erratic course. In this context, there has been relative stability at the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), a particularly influential player among our multiple federal intelligence agencies. Mike Pompeo joined the current administration as CIA director, and then became Secretary of State in April 2018. Gina Haspel, his successor at CIA, is the first woman director and a career professional. Both qualities are major strengths, professionally and politically. In the current environment, a military officer would be a good choice for National Security Advisor. Pompeo is a former Army officer and West Point graduate. Generals Colin Powell (Reagan administration) and Brent Scowcroft (Ford and G.H.W. Bush administrations) were successful in the

difficult job. Effective cooperation between civilian and military intelligence officials is essential. General H.R. McMaster’s tenure under Trump ended because of poor personal chemistry. Military officers have been vital to government leadership in U.S. intelligence and national security. At CIA, established in 1947, the first four directors were all senior military officers: Rear Admiral Sidney W. Souers, General Hoyt S. Vandenberg, Vice Admiral Roscoe H. Hillenkoetter and General Walter Bedell Smith. Bedell Smith was chief of staff for Dwight D. Eisenhower during World War II. As such, he was crucial in the most demanding and difficult military alliance in history. During more recent decades, the U.S. paid a high price for alienation between civilian and military agencies. During the Vietnam War, there was general lack of communication between our military and CIA. The latter proved notably accurate - and prescient. Vietnam commander General William Westmoreland, a man of great personal integrity, was so proudly positive about prosecution of the war that he unintentionally surrounded himself with yes-men. Irreverent - and well-informed - CIA pros were shunned. Military Intelligence officers literally were forbidden from talking to them. Late in that war, Congress acted to force cooperation. Accurate intelligence and assessment remains essential to our safety and security. False intelligence that Saddam Hussein was developing weapons of mass destruction led to the costly 2003 invasion of Iraq. Eisenhower stated that a “strange sort of genius” is required to excel at intelligence. Military service is similar in terms of tasks and challenges, including combat and non-combat realms. Good luck to whom-ever is appointed. Arthur I. Cyr is a *Clauser Distinguished Professor at Carthage College* and author of “*After the Cold War*” (Macmillan/Palgrave and NYU Press). Contact acyr@carthage.edu.

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