

OPINION

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Propane storage, tourism can co-exist on Seneca

TO THE EDITOR | I served as Reading's Town Supervisor for 9 years, and as a Town Board member for the 21 years before that. As I retire from public service, I want to share my perspective on the Crestwood proposal to reopen US Salt's propane storage business, which has been the one of the most disputed issues during my tenure.

First, I want to make it clear that the individuals you see in photographs protesting and getting arrested do not speak for locals. Protesters have come from all over to disturb our small community. If you want proof that they do not represent Reading, look no further than the past two elections. For consecutive cycles, candidates for town offices who campaigned against Crestwood's proposal lost by wide margins. We had record voter turnout this past year, too.

Gas storage has been part of everyday life in this area for decades. Facilities operate largely out of sight, but play an essential role in our local economy. Crestwood is the largest taxpayer and employer in town, and is a big reason why Reading has the lowest property taxes and highest incomes in Schuyler County. I can remember when propane was stored at US Salt and can tell you that Crestwood's plans will significantly benefit Reading. The facility will create good jobs that folks around here need while generating tax revenue for the town. Having been involved in the budgeting process year-after-year,

there's no question that adding revenue is critical to keeping taxes down and improving our infrastructure and public services.

I've farmed around here my entire life, and I want Reading to remain a good place to live and raise a family. Over the past seven years I've heard every concern imaginable about Crestwood's proposal. I have no special training in geology or engineering, which means like everyone else I form views by listening to the experts. The history of local gas storage is one thing, but what really convinced me is what regulators have said and done.

New York's geologist and the DEC's experts have said the storage facility will be safe, and federal and state regulators have consistently rejected opponents' arguments.

Upstate needs companies willing to invest in our people and communities. Reading is no different. Long time residents from here know from experience that you can have propane storage, a healthy environment, and tourism all at the same time. I personally can not see a legitimate reason why tourism and commercial enterprises should not be able to coexist. I am encouraged by the resilience of our local leaders and those residents who recognize Crestwood's contributions to our town.

Our communities should not be swayed by scare tactics or the antics of a vocal few, and neither should our state representatives. Governor Cuomo has the opportunity to prove his commitment to Upstate New York, and help communities like Reading by

approving projects – like Crestwood's – that have proven to be safe while creating good jobs and tax revenue.

Marvin Switzer
Reading Town Supervisor

Cornell professor's article on junk food way off base

TO THE EDITOR | As a practicing physician who treats hundreds of patients with obesity and diabetes each year, I was dismayed to see the title of the article published by Professor Wansink out of Cornell this past week: "Fast Food, Soft Drink, and Candy Intake is unrelated to Body Mass Index for 95% of American Adults." The fact that Dr. Wansink is a member of the McDonald's Global Advisory Council did not seem to make it into the press releases that ran with this study, but it does seem like a tremendous conflict of interest. This is a misuse of science and horrendous use of data.

To utilize NHANES (National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey) data on food recall without incorporating calorie count or portion size seems at best intellectual malpractice, and at worst the public health equivalent of yelling "fire" in a crowded theater. Professor Wansink should be well aware that these foods are in general calorie dense, and that giving the public carte blanche to take in these foods has the potential for undermining all of the work that the medical community is doing to stem the obesity epidemic.

If anyone is looking for good data and responsible science, I am happy to supply them with any

number of studies that fly in the face of the aforementioned study out of Cornell. We now have good prospective randomized data that show weight gain increases with sugar sweetened beverage intake.

As when Big Tobacco tried to convince us that smoking didn't cause lung cancer, Professor Wansink is trying to convince the American public that they can continue with behaviors well-known to cause obesity, diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and the like.

His study utilized "eating episode" data. They did not identify quantity of food eaten. So if a person with a BMI of 20 eats one oreo and a person with a BMI of 35 eats a bag of Oreos, they are statistically considered the same thing in this study. Portion size is of utmost importance in weight management. People who maintain a healthy body weight do so because they manage their portion sizes.

Six ounces of soda and 20 ounces of soda can not be considered equivalent when making recommendations to the public, who is already conflicted as to the cause of their burgeoning waist size. This is an epidemic that is reaching into all socioeconomic groups and is impacting our children. We can not afford to have poor science undermine the good work that the medical community is doing to educate patients on healthy behaviors that will improve quality of life and decrease cost of care in an age of "fast food, soft drinks, and candy."

Dr. Kathleen A. Hallinan
Corning

WEEKLY COLUMN | SEN. TOM O'MARA

Getting a read on public opinion

What's your opinion?

The next session of the State Legislature gets underway this week. The governor delivers his State of the State message and unveils his proposed 2016-17 state budget on Wednesday, January 13th. It's a day when everyone's attention quickly gets refocused on the enormous economic, fiscal and other challenges facing cities, towns and villages across New York — and anticipates the chance to start dissecting the executive's blueprint for addressing them.

So that's a common question at the outset, What's your opinion?

Every year, I hear from thousands of area residents who take the time through an e-mail, a letter, a phone call, a community meeting or in some other way to share their ideas and, especially, their views on the issues of the day. The input — negative or positive, constructive or not — is what matters. It provides an insight and understanding that every legislator needs in order to try to most effectively represent his or her legislative district.

Since late last year, I've been joining our regional representatives in the State Assembly for a series of community meetings across the 58th Senate District, which encompasses Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben and Yates counties, and a portion of Tompkins County. I'll be joining Assemblymen Phil Palmesano and Chris Friend for two meetings in Chemung County later this week, on Wednesday, January 7. We'll be at the



TOM O'MARA

Erin Town Hall from 5 to 6 p.m. Then Assemblyman Friend and I will conduct a second meeting, from 7 to 8 p.m., at the Ashland Town Hall. Later this month, Assemblyman Palmesano and I will be in Steuben County, on Wednesday, January 27, at the Urbana Town Hall (from 5 to 6 p.m.) and at Corning City Hall (from 7 to 8 p.m.).

In addition to these community meetings, I'll soon be launching a "Community, Jobs and Economy Survey" on my Senate website, omara.nysenate.gov. The goal of this annual online questionnaire is to try to encourage input on a range of specific challenges facing the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions (as well as the state as a whole), including, generally speaking, private-sector job creation, government reform, education, public safety, transportation, and health care.

One of the new year's key decisions, of course, will be whether to raise the statewide minimum wage to \$15 an hour. Governor Cuomo will be making this a top priority in 2016. It's going to be important that the potential consequences of such a dramatic increase in the minimum wage, nearly 70 percent, be given careful

SEE O'MARA, A5

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ASK THE ALLERGISTS

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OBITUARIES/NEWS

OBITUARY

Floyd W. English Jr.



Floyd W. English, Jr., age 91, of Horseheads and formerly of Painted Post, NY passed away on Monday, December 28, 2015 at Guthrie Corning Hospital.

Floyd was born on May 14, 1924 in Corning, NY, the son of the late Floyd W., Sr. and Marian (Tew) English. He was a graduate of Corning Free Academy and Alfred University. He was a United States Army, World War II Pacific Theatre Veteran serving from 1942 to 1945. He married Carolyn Cilley in 1946. His life career was in the Insurance business, and he was senior partner of the Corning Painted Post Insurance Agency.

Floyd led a life of service. He was a lifelong

Scout and Scouter in the Boy Scouts of America, having achieved his Eagle with Palms, Silver Beaver, and Wood Badge. He was an honor camper at Camp Gorton and a Scout leader in a number of national and world jamborees. Over the years, his dedication inspired eight of his family members to become Eagle Scouts. He was a 32nd degree Mason, past President of the Painted Post Board of Trade, past President and drive chairman of the United Way, and the 15th recipient of the Errol Shand Award. Floyd was also a devoted Rotarian having served as past President of the Corning Rotary Club. He was a Paul Harris Fellow and had 60 years of perfect attendance - a true testament to service above self.

He is survived by his loving wife: Carolyn C. English of Horseheads, NY; three sons: David (Marcia) English of Penn Yan, NY, Douglas (Rebecca) English of Rochester, NY, Thomas English of Painted Post, NY; two brothers: Robert (Mary Lou) English of FL, William (Elizabeth) English of CA; grandchildren: Brian English, Andrew English, Eric English, Lynne (Michael) Spies; four great grandchildren;

and several nieces and nephews.

In addition to his parents, Floyd was predeceased by his sister, Mary Ellen Drach.

Family and friends are invited to call on Wednesday, January 6, 2016 from 2:00pm to 5:00pm at Phillips Funeral Home & Cremation Service, 17 W. Pulteney St., Corning. A funeral service will immediately follow at the funeral home at 5:00pm, Rev. Glenn Kennedy officiating. A private family burial will take place at a later date in the family plot at Fairview Cemetery, Painted Post.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Floyd's name may be sent to the: Corning Rotary Club, for the benefit of Camp Star, P. O. Box 84, Corning, NY 14830 or to the Five Rivers Boy Scout Council, for the benefit of Camp Gorton, 244 West Water St., Elmira, NY 14901.

Kind words and memories may be shared at: www.PhillipsFuneralHome.com



DEATH NOTICES
Edward C. Barket

Edward Christopher Barket, 79, of Wellsboro, Pa., died Friday, Jan. 1, 2016. Private services will be held at the convenience of the family. Arrangements are by Buckheit Funeral Chapel in Mansfield, Pa.

Catherine S. Callahan

Catherine S. Callahan, 102, of Horseheads and formerly of Batavia, died Wednesday, Dec. 30, 2015.

A Mass of Requiem will be held at 11 a.m Jan. 16 at St. James' Episcopal Church, 405 E. Main St., Batavia. She will be placed alongside her husband in St. Joseph's Mausoleum immediately following. Arrangements are by Sullivan's Funeral Home in Horseheads.

David J. DeLosa

David John DeLosa, 94, of Covington, Pa., died Friday, Jan. 1, 2016. Calling hours are from 11 a.m.-noon Thursday at Buckheit Funeral Chapel,

637 S. Main St., Mansfield, Pa. Services will follow at noon at the funeral home.

Thomas H. O'Brien

Thomas H. O'Brien, 87, of Corning, died Friday, Jan. 1, 2016. Calling hours are 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Tuesday at Carpenter's Funeral Home, 14 E. Pulteney St., Corning. A traditional Latin Mass will follow calling hours at 1 p.m. at the funeral home. Burial with military honors will follow at St. Mary's Cemetery in Corning.

REPUBLICAN TRAIL

Abrasive Cruz tries to use personality to his advantage

By Scott Bauer
The Associated Press

MECHANICSVILLE, Va. | Ted Cruz's reputation as an arrogant, grating, in-your-face ideologue has dogged him throughout the Republican presidential race. But it hasn't stopped the Texas senator's rise.

Cruz is increasingly embracing his irascible persona, trying to turn what could be a liability into an asset.

"If you want someone to

grab a beer with, I may not be that guy," Cruz said at a Republican debate this fall when asked to describe his biggest weakness. "But if you want someone to drive you home, I will get the job done and I will get you home."

Cruz and his supporters relish his outsider status, highlighting his conflicts with fellow Republican senators. Not one has endorsed him for president.

A group backing Cruz's candidacy sent out a fundraising email plea in December

with the subject line "Washington hates Ted Cruz." Cruz frequently rails against the "Washington cartel," which he argues is scared that conservatives are uniting behind him, and says he's glad that "Washington elites" despise him.

Cruz supporters, including some who turned up for a large rally at an evangelical church near Richmond, Virginia, in December, are embracing the abrasiveness that's caused Cruz to clash with other Republicans.

obviously it can't even begin to cover every single issue on everyone's agenda. That's why there's a section for anyone interested to provide additional comments and to at least highlight their particular area of concern.

There's no quick-fix on most issues. We're particularly going to have to confront economic and fiscal challenges for the foreseeable future. So it's important to continue to have a full public airing of what we're facing and this survey is one, small, additional way to share it. I've been offering these online legislative surveys since beginning my tenure in the State Senate in 2011. They're not scientific polls in any traditional sense,

but they do offer meaningful and useful snapshots of some of what's on the minds of area residents paying attention to state government and willing to give some thought to the choices being debated at the Capitol.

Again, I can't say enough about the value of this local input as the Legislature begins working in earnest toward solutions in 2016. It's timely, it's informative, and the participation is appreciated.

My best wishes to all of you for the New Year.

—State Sen. Tom O'Mara represents New York's 53rd Senate District, which includes Steuben, Chemung, Schuyler and Yates counties, and a portion of Tompkins County.

2016 STATEHOUSES



ABOVE AND BELOW: Opponents of an Indiana religious objections law rally outside the State House March 28, 2015 in Indianapolis. An intense debate over gay rights already is shaping up in Indiana, where a religious-rights law passed last spring thrust the state into the national spotlight over concerns it could sanction discrimination against gays and lesbians. PHOTOS BY DOUG MCSCHOOLER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

States plan renewed debate on issues

LGBT rights, religious freedom top list

By David A. Lieb
The Associated Press

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. | With same-sex marriage now legal nationwide, lawmakers in numerous states are preparing for a new round of battles in 2016 over whether to grant discrimination protections to LGBT people or religious exemptions to nonprofits and businesses that object to gay marriage.

The tussle over civil rights and religious freedoms is one of several hot-button issues that could drive states in opposite policy directions, as lawmakers seek to appeal to voters during a year in which more than 5,800 state legislative seats will be up for election.

Republicans hold majorities in two-thirds of the states' legislative chambers, meaning they get to set the agenda. Those priorities could include attempts to exempt businesses from providing wedding-related services to gay couples, expand gun rights and further restrictions on abortions.

Democrats, meanwhile, will likely be pushing in the opposite direction.

"What we've got is division," said William Pound, executive director of the National Conference of State Legislatures.

He predicts there will be a "significant number of bills" seeking to advance either religious rights or the civil rights of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people.

"You've got the Democratic states reacting very differently, a lot of the time, than the Republican states to these issues," Pound said.

Those potentially divisive debates will be playing out as legislators also struggle with some traditionally difficult financial issues, such as budget shortfalls and calls to boost funding for public schools and infrastructure.

Education issues are expected to be at the forefront in more than a third of the states, according to an analysis by Associated Press statehouse reporters around the country.

At least 10 states might consider new revenue for transportation in 2016, building on a trend in which at least half the states already have acted in the past several years.

States that rely heavily on the energy industry for tax income, such as Alaska, Oklahoma, West Virginia

and Wyoming, are taking big budget hits due to falling oil, natural gas and coal revenue. But tax cuts could be on the agenda in more than a half-dozen other states, including Arizona, Florida and Maine.

States' general revenues are expected to grow by about 2.5 percent in 2016, according to the National Association of State Budget Officers. As they prepare their next budgets, "states are still going to be very pinched" to meet rising costs for K-12 schools, Medicaid and core services, said David Adkins, executive director and chief executive of The Council of State Governments.

Added to the mix will be several emerging issues, such as how to quell a rise in opiate addictions and overdoses, and whether to extend regulations to online fantasy sports and to individuals renting rides or lodging through the "sharing economy."

Some states also will be wrestling with unique local issues, including flood recovery in South Carolina, whether to keep the Confederate emblem on the Mississippi flag, as well as ethics overhauls following political scandals in New York, Missouri and New Mexico.

Influential national groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union and the Family Research Council are preparing for a new round of legislative debates after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in June that states must allow same-sex marriage. Their focus now is on the effect of that ruling.

There are 22 states with laws barring discrimination based on sexual orientation and 21 with laws limiting the government's ability to burden the free exercise of religion. But just four states — Connecticut, Rhode Island, Illinois and New Mexico — have both.

The ACLU will be seeking to expand the list of places barring discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. It's targeting at least a half dozen states — Arizona, Florida, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and Pennsylvania — that have Republican-led legislatures and also may be pivotal in presidential elections.

The Supreme Court's decision "certainly provides momentum on the issue," said Pennsylvania Rep. Dan Frankel, a Democrat from the Pittsburgh area who has been unsuccessfully sponsoring gay rights bills for more than a decade.

He said challenges



"What we've got is division." — William Pound, executive director of the National Conference of State Legislatures

remain and pointed to a November referendum in which Houston voters rejected a city ordinance extending nondiscrimination protections to gay and transgender people.

The Family Research Council, which opposed the Houston ordinance, is supporting state measures that would grant broad protections "from government discrimination" against people "who have a sincere belief — religious or not — in natural marriage," said Quena Gonzalez, the group's director of state and local affairs.

Missouri House Majority Leader Mike Cierpiot said many of his Republican colleagues were alarmed by the Supreme Court ruling on gay marriage.

"I think there's a lot of states that are looking at this and seeing what can be done to make sure that religious freedoms are respected," said Cierpiot, a Republican from suburban Kansas City.

An intense debate over gay rights already is shaping up in Indiana, where a religious-rights law passed last spring thrust the state into the national spotlight over concerns it could sanction discrimination against gays and lesbians.

A coalition of 150 businesses is backing legislation to ban discrimination in housing, employment and public accommodations based on a person's sexual orientation or gender identity.

An LGBT rights proposal outlined by Indiana Senate Republicans would grant broad exceptions intended to protect small business owners and religious schools, nonprofits and adoption agencies. For example, a wedding-related business with fewer than four employees could refuse to do work for a same-sex marriage.