

OPINION

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OUR VIEW

Carnival's fate now in hands of community

Officials sounded the alarm last week:

Without the community's help, the future of Colonial Days - and the parade held during the carnival - is threatened.

In a nutshell, if more people do not volunteer to plan and run the carnival, Colonial Days will disappear - and with it the parade it funds.

The Painted Post Area Board of Trade - which organizes the annual carnival - discussed the issue last week at a public meeting.

Only about a dozen folks came to share their ideas, and some of those kind of missed the boat on what the real problem is. Some of our readers who commented on the story posted on our Facebook page did as well.

While all suggestions on how to run and improve the carnival and parade are welcome, only one thing will save Colonial Days and its parade:

Volunteers. In its heyday, as many as 150 volunteers have helped plan and run the carnival, parade and pageant, not to mention handle the finances, promotion and do the behind-the-scenes jobs.

Last year, about eight people - with the help of last-minute parade volunteers - organized and operated Colonial Days.

Eight people! That's not enough to put on a church dinner, let alone a multi-day carnival that draws hundreds.

So folks, while you may have good ideas on how to improve Colonial Days, you can't just make the suggestion and leave the work to others. You're going to need to present the plan and tell organizers how you'd like to implement and then run it.

Are you willing to do that? Organizers hope so. And if you are happy with the current Colonial Days, are you willing to volunteer your time to keep it going?

Because of the few hands involved, the carnival was only three days, instead of the usual four, last year.

Can you give the time necessary to get it back to four?

It's not just about having an extra day to enjoy fried bread dough, the merry-go-round and the beer tent. It's about raising enough money to fund the parade.

It's about keeping a hometown tradition alive. You need to decide if Colonial Days is worth YOUR time and effort, not just someone else's.

We urge you to do what you can. Attend the next Board of Trade meeting - we'll let you know the date as soon as it's announced. Bring your ideas - but most important - bring your calendar. And volunteer.

Maybe you can give just a few hours ... but as the saying goes ... many hands make light work.

Please folks, it's only a matter of time.

WEEKLY COLUMN | SEN. TOM O'MARA

Let it kick you forward



SEN. TOM O'MARA

Every month on the calendar brings its fair share of national observances.

In September, for example, we observed National Preparedness Month, Hunger Action Month, and National Infant Mortality Awareness Month.

October brings many too but I'll highlight just one in particular this week: October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Consider just a few of the following "truths" about breast cancer, courtesy of the Breast Cancer Coalition of Rochester (BCCR):

■ Nearly 3 million women in our country are now living in the aftermath of a breast cancer diagnosis.
 ■ Excluding skin cancer, breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer among women in the United States.
 ■ A woman in the United States has a 1 in 8 chance of developing breast cancer during her lifetime.

■ The overwhelming majority (approximately 85%) of women diagnosed with breast cancer have no relatives with the disease.
 ■ True prevention means stopping breast cancer before it develops.

■ When it comes to breast cancer, help lower your risk by making responsible health choices.
 ■ If you are diagnosed with breast cancer, ask questions.

The BCCR has compiled a "31 Truths About Breast Cancer" fact sheet (one truth for each day of October) that you can find on my Senate website,

www.omara.nysenate.gov. Just click on the "October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month" icon on the home page.

And I'll make my larger point by including this truth: No one needs to go through breast cancer alone. That's the driving force behind Breast Cancer Awareness Month: to highlight the widespread importance of awareness, for everyone, and to let patients and their families know that there are local organizations, hard at work every day, offering the information and support that's needed for effective education, prevention, early detection, diagnosis, treatment and, ultimately, survival.

Organizations like the Susan G. Komen Twin Tiers Region (www.komen-twintiers.org), the Cancer Resource Center of the Finger Lakes (www.crcfl.net), and the Breast Cancer Coalition of Rochester (www.bccr.org) are doing just that throughout the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions.

We're incredibly grateful for their efforts to raise awareness, find a cure and, all along the way, help survivors and their families carry on.

In fact, on Oct. 14 at the

Dormann Library in Bath, I'm grateful to be hosting the Breast Cancer Coalition of Rochester for "A Round Table Discussion for Breast Cancer Survivors." The evening discussion will run from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Coalition representatives will lead the evening's discussion. Area breast cancer survivors and family members are invited to attend to listen and to share their own stories. The Breast Cancer Coalition of Rochester is already an active and welcome source of support for breast cancer survivors and their families across our region. This local input will help the Coalition improve and strengthen their vital services for patients and families in the future.

According to the Coalition, "We would like to invite breast cancer survivors and family members to a community round table to learn about their experiences following diagnosis. What happened when you were diagnosed with breast cancer? What resources were you and your family given? What resources did you find in the community? What resources did you access? What do you wish you would have had access to at any point following your diagnosis?"

For anyone planning to attend, we're strongly encouraging pre-registration, which you can do by calling my district office in Elmira at 607-735-9671 or by sending an email to omara@nysenate.gov.

I'll stress again this "truth" about breast cancer:

No one needs to go through breast cancer alone.

There are so many inspirational stories and organizations surrounding this battle. Maybe the guiding force behind Breast Cancer Awareness Month can be captured by one of them. It's the motto of the Kay Yow Cancer Fund, which since 2007 has raised more than \$5 million for women's cancer research.

Sandra Kay Yow was a legendary Division I women's basketball coach at North Carolina State University, a founding member of the Women's Basketball Coaches Association, and -- one of the ultimate honors of all in basketball -- a member of the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, Massachusetts.

She was diagnosed with breast cancer in 1987. She passed away, after her third bout with the disease, in 2009. During those 22 years, her accomplishments and her will to live and to help other survivors were truly amazing, truly inspirational and truly difference making.

The women's cancer research fund founded through her vision remains guided by the words Sandra Kay Yow once spoke, "When life kicks you, let it kick you forward."

— 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.

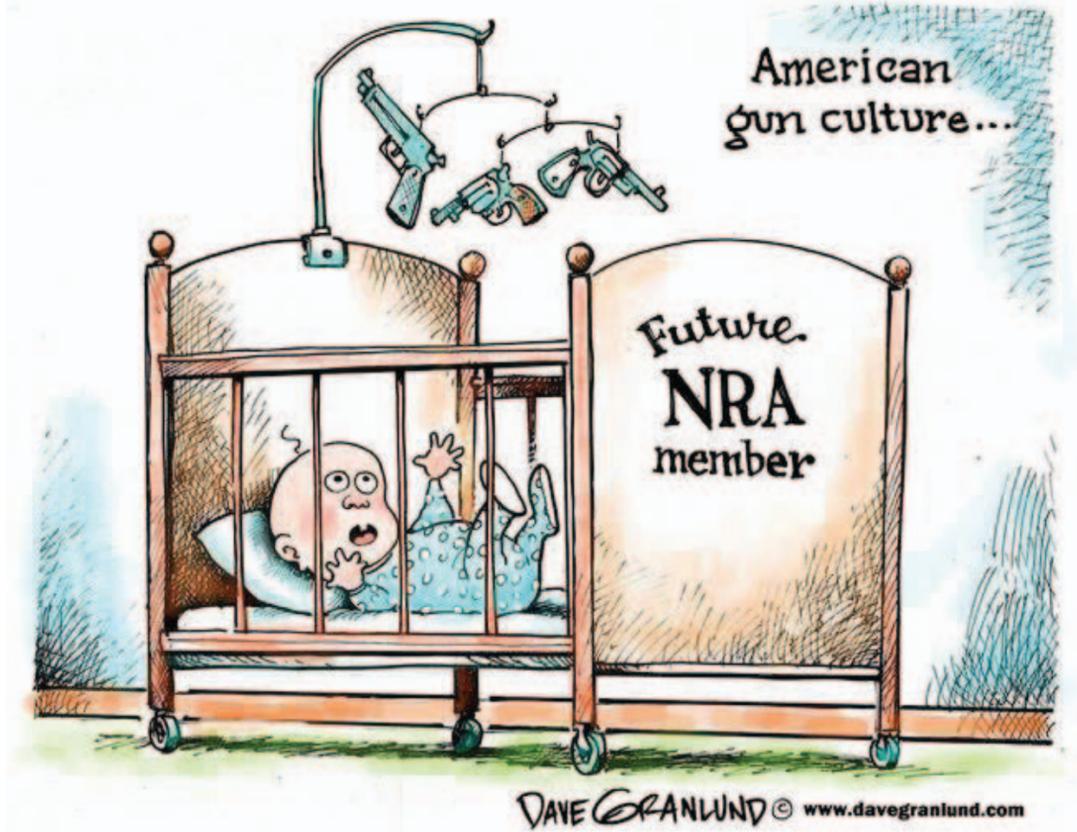
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Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

ANOTHER VIEW



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

All aliens eligible for free benefits

TO THE EDITOR | NASA scientists say that Mars may contain salt water which could be conducive to life on the red planet.

Democrats are very excited. Should the Martians land on earth they'll be able to register them as voters and sign them up for free food stamps and health care. **Thomas Greven** Corning

Progress in spite of Republican efforts

TO THE EDITOR | Mr. Reed: I read your comments in the column

titled "Boehner Calls it Quits" (9/26) and I found them very patronizing and hypocritical, because, for all intents and purposes, he was pushed under the bus. It would have been better if you had not commented at all.

You cite Mr. Boehner for his leadership and vigilance and then go on to say the "party" can "now fight back"; but under the current administration, no thanks to the Republican Party, new jobs have been created, we've pulled out of the recession we were in when President Obama took office, the unemployment level is lower, we have stayed out of an Iranian War, we have

protected the rights of gay, lesbian and transgender citizens, and now we are trying to protect women!

You personally have literally fought against all of these. Yet you insist we need to come together? How does that happen, Mr. Reed, when Republicans will not come to the table but insist on their own agenda? And now you're voting against Planned Parenthood. What world do you live in?

In another article in the same issue, "McCarthy a realist with conservative appeal", the author writes that "conservatives are frustrated with Boehner's willingness to strike deals with Democrats..." Wow!

Isn't that what Congress is supposed to do? Sit down together and find solutions to our problems? How and when does that happen Mr. Reed? Neither party ever gets 100 percent of what they want. I see the Republicans as children having a temper tantrum because they can't get what they want regardless of what the country wants and needs as witnessed during the two recent debates. In spite of the Republican majority in Congress, we have seen progress whether or not you want to admit it or not.

Flo Fender Pine Valley

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