

FINGER LAKES TIMES

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"The First Amendment ensures that all points of view may be heard; it does not ensure that all points of view are equally likely to prevail."

— **Michael McConnell, U.S. appellate judge, 2006**
Community Media Group

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Inergy protesters deserve a very large thank you

To the Editor:
We owe a huge thank you to the people who protested Inergy company's use of abandoned salt mines to store gas. We should all be speaking out against this activity.

According to Inergy's own website (www.inergy.com/downloads/NRG-M-2012AR.pdf) the risks involved in gas drilling and gas storage are numerous.

Every phase of this operation, from beginning to end, poses huge numbers of risks and hazards.

To mention only a few:

1) Developing new caverns can cause subsidence of the natural geological structures;

2) Many natural disasters such as floods, tornadoes and earth tremors can affect the safety of storage facilities, and can cause the collapse of caverns;

3) Leaks of natural gas through operator error, unforeseeable natural events, and equipment/material failure can likely occur, putting our water sources at risk.

All this has been admitted to by the company itself. We wonder what other disasters might await us.

JOAN and EDWARD ORMON-DROYD and MARY CASSETTI
Trumansburg

Defeated firearms bill more restrictive than anticipated

To the Editor:
I have read with interest the several letters critical of the defeat of the Federal Background Bill. Most of the bill was not covered by the media. If it was a bill for just background checks on persons purchasing a firearm out of a newspaper or over the Internet I believe that most, if not all, gun owners would approve.

The bill sounded good at the onset but is much more restrictive than anyone anticipated and would have

had significant consequences. Common activates that taken for granted would have become federal crimes. Example: I loaned my grandson my 1100 shotgun to take to college in South Carolina to shoot skeet and trap with friends on weekends (he lives off campus). That would be a federal offense under the "back-ground law." Conviction would result in the confiscation of all my firearms plus I would not be able to own or possess one in the future, same for my grandson.

The real dandy is that it would be illegal to loan a friend any of your firearms for hunting, unless he had already purchased a hunting license. The season could not close before his return of said firearm, and he could not pass through a county where the season is not yet open. Any offense which involve two guns of any type is considered weapons trafficking. You could be prosecuted under the same federal laws as a terrorist arms dealer!

I could go on with several other examples of the frivolous sections of this legislation. You can read it for yourself at: <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c113:s.649>.

There are many boring parts to said bill, pay particular attention to Sec. 122 "Firearms Transfers." Also buried in the bill is \$100 million to fund the enforcement.

As you may have figured out by now, I'm a firearms owner and shooter, have been for over 60 years. My son, grandchildren and my late father, all firearm owners and shooters. My father, 32 years a state trooper; my son, 27 years an Ontario County deputy; and I, 32 years a state conservation officer. With this gun bill it is very possible that one of us would stub our toe and become a convicted felon as this bill is written.

Lastly, when people are killed and maimed with a bomb they blame the person that perpetrates the terrible crime; when people are killed and maimed with a firearm they blame ... the firearm?

LT. JUDSON PECK (Ret.)
Penn Yan



Being prepared

As unusual as it would be for a hurricane to blow through our area — and as much as that could present unknown scenarios — we think the mock disaster drill dubbed "FLurricane 2013," held at Clifton Springs Hospital earlier this week to go over at least some of the possibilities, was well worth the effort.



Watered down

As the spotlight continues to shine on the Benghazi incident, the White House released internal emails Wednesday showing that the first draft of CIA talking points watered down direct references to al-Qaeda links to the attacks.

The business of government

The largest business entity in the world is not Exxon, Apple or Wal-Mart. It is the federal government of the United States. Ninety-nine percent of its function is administrative, not political. Its career employees are charged with running our country's military, financial, health care, public works and pension, among many other functions, on a day-to-day basis and without political motivation. It is well-recognized that the coercive powers of the government are easily misused, which is one of the compelling, if futile, arguments of small-government conservatives.

The CEO of this operation is the President of the United States, and this is one reason people tout the business experience of some candidates. But running a butcher shop, or even the Olympics, is not in the same league. The big-government CEO in this country is New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who has declared himself free from political party affiliation and has achieved considerable success during three terms in the wake of 9/11. Many of his policies are controversial, leading to charges of "nanny government," but crime is down, revenues are up and NYC is notably more livable. Whether or not you agree with him, you cannot reasonably argue that Bloomberg has lacked forceful leadership in running the second biggest government bureaucracy in the country.

American presidents are notoriously not CEOs. The path to the presidency requires too much politics, too much pandering. Mitt Romney's organization was an investment bank, not an operator. Bain Capital would take over a company and install its own executives, who would report back periodically; then it would go after a new target. Ross Perot was a true CEO who led the presidential polls as an independent in 1992, until a series of bizarre missteps facilitated the election of Bill Clinton. George W. Bush owned a baseball team and was a governor but never established himself as a dynamic leader, mismanaging so-called subordinates at every turn.

Barack Obama had no executive experience leading into his first term and apparently has not learned enough in the interim to prevent organizational problems from getting out of control. The hysterical polemics comparing Benghazi to Watergate are way out of line, but there is no question that the crisis was badly handled from day two. What was essentially a judgment call by military and diplomatic people on the ground — and maybe a bad one, but that was hard to tell with rioting all over the Middle East — has evolved into a nasty witch hunt precisely because it was handled inarticulately and inaccurately after

RICH REIBEN

Slightly Irregular



the fact. There never was anything to cover up. In comparison to the warnings given the Bush administration well prior to 9/11, there was little if any time to anticipate the Benghazi nightmare and little if anything that could have been done to save the four American lives lost. "Whistle-blowers" notwithstanding, American fighter jets were out of reach and four soldiers without a game plan were not going to prevail against an overwhelming force.

So what Ambassador Susan Rice — or better, the President himself — needed to say that Sunday morning was, simply:

"We screwed up. This appears to be an opportunistic terrorist attack carried out under cover of riots in other cities, and we did not have adequate forces in the area prepared to deal with it. We are working on our processes to deal with future threats."

Now the IRS Cincinnati office is accused of targeting conservative 501(c)(4) organizations using the names "tea party" and "patriot," among others, for allegedly unauthorized political activities. The national office is accused of feigning ignorance of this improper and biased investigation in a couple of announcements last year.

The IRS wields a cudgel that must be used apolitically and carefully. Its power is more insidious than the FBI and the military put together because it can ruin anyone's life and finances forever ... without guns and without courts. Agency heads need to roll, in Cincinnati and in Washington, for IRS integrity to be restored.

That's the CEO's job. At his Monday press conference, President Obama said that, if proven, the conduct was "outrageous." That's a good start. This time, show us what you're made of, boss.

Reiben has been a practicing attorney in New York state since 1975 with emphasis on corporate, tax, real estate and mergers and acquisitions. He has been involved in non-profit work since 1998. He lives in the town of Geneva. He can be reached at rhreihenFLT@gmail.com.



Every Friday ...

Local columnist Michael J. Fitzgerald checks in with his "Write On"

ROUND OF APPLAUSE

Thanks to sponsors, businesses for Reading Week success

To the Editor:
The Reading Week Committee at Frank Knight School in Seneca Falls would like to thank the following individuals and organizations for making our 30th annual Reading Week a success:

Seneca Falls Historical Society, for sponsoring our author visit; Seneca Meadows, Seneca Falls Rotary, Waterloo Container, SMS Auxiliary, Generations Bank, Seneca Falls Elks Lodge No. 992, Dr. Rodney Littlejohn, Dr. and Mrs. Phillip Wirth and Frank Knight Parent's Team for purchasing a hardcover copy of Ann Burg's book "E is for Empire" for each student at our school.

We would also like to thank the following businesses for donating food and drinks made in New York state for the students to enjoy: Byrnie Dairy, Chobani, Heluva Good Cheese, Polly-O, Welch's and Sauders.

Last, but not least, we appreciate all of the community members who came in and read to a class and the support of our faculty, staff and parents.

TONI FLESZAR, PAULA COFFEY and Reading Week Committee 2013

Make yourself heard

Here are the local addresses, phone numbers and websites of federal and state representatives who serve the Times' readership area. The best way to contact representatives is by going to their individual websites and clicking on Contact for further directions.

President

Barack Obama
Democrat
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20500
Phone: (202) 456-1111
Fax: (202) 456-2461
Website: www.whitehouse.gov/contact

U.S. Senate

Charles E. Schumer
Democrat
Website: <http://schumer.senate.gov>
100 State St., Room 3040
Rochester, NY 14614
Phone: (585) 263-5866
Fax: (585) 263-3173

Kirsten Gillibrand
Democrat
Website: www.gillibrand.senate.gov
100 State St., Room 4195
Rochester, NY 14614
Phone: (585) 263-6250
Fax: (585) 263-6247

Governor

Andrew Cuomo
Democrat
State Capitol
Albany NY 12244
Phone: (518) 474-8390
Website: www.state.ny.us/governor

House of Representatives

Tom Reed
23rd Congressional District
Republican
433 Exchange St. Geneva, NY 14456
Phone: 759-5229
Fax: 325-4045
1504 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: (202) 225-3161
Fax: (202) 226-6599
Website: reed.house.gov
Includes Yates County, Seneca County, eastern Ontario County (including

Geneva) and much of the Southern Tier.

Dan Maffei
24th Congressional District
Democrat
24 State St. Auburn, NY 13021
Phone: 253-4176
422 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: (202) 225-3701
Website: maffei.house.gov
Includes all of Wayne County and the Syracuse area.

State Senate

Tom O'Mara
58th State Senate District
Republican
105 E. Steuben St.
Bath, NY 14810
Phone: (607) 776-3201
Fax: (607) 776-5185
Website: www.nyssenate.gov/senator/thomas-f-omara
Includes Yates, Steuben, Schuyler and Chemung counties, plus part of Tompkins County.

Michael F. Nozzolio
54th State Senate District
Republican
119 Fall St.
Seneca Falls, NY 13148
Phone: (888) 568-9816
Fax: 568-2090
Website: www.senatornozzolio.com
Includes all of Seneca and Wayne counties, part of Ontario County (including Geneva and Canandaigua) and part of Cayuga County.

State Assembly

Robert C. Oaks
130th Assembly District
Republican
10 Leach Road
Lyons, NY 14489
Phone: 946-5166
E-mail: oaksr@assem.bly.state.ny.us
Includes all of Wayne County and part of Cayuga County.

Philip Palmesano
132nd Assembly District
Republican
105 E. Steuben St.
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E-mail: palmesano@assembly.state.ny.us
Includes Yates and Schuyler counties, Seneca County south of Romulus and parts of Steuben and Chemung counties.

Brian M. Kolb
131st Assembly District
Republican
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E-mail your letters!

Letters to the Editor and other opinion page content should be sent to opinion@fltimes.com.