

SEEKING CHANGE



ERIC WENSEL | THE LEADER

Protesters of the war in Iraq picket Thursday on the end of Centerway Bridge.

Protesters call for end of war

BY SARAH GROSSMAN
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CORNING | Three local war veterans requested a change in the Iraq war policy during a rally Thursday near Centerway Bridge.

The veterans, also registered Republicans, addressed U.S. Rep. John R. "Randy" Kuhl Jr., R-Hammondsport, in their speeches. They said they felt the best way to support the troops is to bring them home from a war that has done more harm than good by creating enemies where none previously existed.

"It is now clear to me that a political and diplomatic solu-

tion in Iraq cannot be achieved by continuing our current strategy," said Graham D. Wightman, a Korean War veteran.

"The Bush Administration's arrogance in the prosecution of this illegal war has squandered our resources, created enemies where none existed, and stretched our military thin ...," said Wayne Wells, a Vietnam veteran.

About 40 people participated in the rally held by the Americans Against Escalation in Iraq, although their audience was far smaller. Members of the area's Peaceful Gatherings helped coordinate the rally.

Cyril Mychalejko, of

the Americans Against Escalation, said more rallies were being planned throughout the summer until Kuhl gets the message that his constituents want him to vote for a troop withdrawal.

"Kuhl said previously, that like everyone, he wanted the war to end," Mychalejko said. But then he "flip-flopped" and didn't vote Wednesday on recent legislation that would have set a deadline for bringing the troops home, he said.

Kuhl said from his office in Washington Thursday that he will wait until a report on the status of the war is given in September by Gen. David Petraeus and Iraq

Ambassador Ryan Crocker before deciding if a change in strategy is warranted.

Among the few who came to listen to the protesters was a family from Pittsburgh, Pa. who were visiting the area for the first time.

"I thought that it was really neat that a smaller town was having a protest for ending the war," said Marina Miller. "There have not been many protests in Pittsburgh."

"My favorite phrase was when one protester said 'we have become the enemy we are trying to beat,'" said Fred Miller. "I admire the people who were there (at the rally)."

Alleged child killer doesn't take stand

BY JOHN ZICK
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ELMIRA | The evidence phase of the Avery Baker Jr. murder trial ended Thursday evening without the accused child killer taking the witness stand.

The case will go to the jury this morning after closing arguments and instructions from the judge.

Baker is accused of killing 20-month-old Jordan Steiner by shaking him and throwing him to the floor Sept. 15, 2006, at a Harriet Street apartment in the city.

The 22-year-old Elmira man is charged with second-degree murder, first-and second-degree manslaughter and two misdemeanors. He faces up to 25 years to life in prison if convicted.

The prosecution rested its case Thursday afternoon after calling more than 15 witnesses. The defense called just one, pathologist Peter Ostrow, a decorated doctor from the State University of New York at Buffalo.

After Assistant District Attorney Damian Sonsire called Dr. Paul Gosink, who performed Steiner's autopsy, defense attorney Dave Rynders called Ostrow in an attempt to refute some medical evidence.

Gosink said Steiner died as the result of "blunt force injuries of the head" as the result of being thrown to the floor. He said the trauma caused a subarachnoid hemorrhage in which blood spread across Steiner's brain. The doctor said a normal bump on the head would not cause such an injury.

Ostrow defined the death as hypoxia, a lack of oxygen to the brain, adding a small bump to the head could cause a hemorrhage similar to the one Steiner suffered.

But during cross examination, Ostrow said hypoxia and bleeding of the brain can parallel each other.

Also Thursday, Sonsire read a statement, taken after the death by Inv. Richard Weed, in which Baker admitted to shaking Steiner and throwing him to the ground because he was angry with the child for drawing on the television with a crayon.

The trial will resume at 8:30 a.m. today.



BAKER JR.

Arrest made in H'heads bar blaze

THE LEADER STAFF

HORSEHEADS | An arrest has been made in connection with a fire that caused extensive damage to Sonny's Bar in Horseheads, state police announced Thursday.

James D. Savye, 23, of Level Acres Drive, Horseheads, has been charged with fourth-degree arson, a class E felony. He's accused of starting a blaze early Monday morning

at Sonny's, located on Level Acres Drive off Old Ithaca Road.

The fire was not intentionally set, according to state police.

An investigation revealed Savye discarded a burning item in a reckless manner, causing the blaze, police report.

Savye is scheduled to appear in Horseheads Town Court at 7 p.m. Aug. 9.

Tioga County, Nichols get gaming dividends

BY AMANDA BAIRD
Savre Morning Times

NICHOLS | The Town of Nichols and Tioga County were the recipients of a combined windfall of over \$550,000 Wednesday afternoon as the gaming facility at Tioga Downs paid out a major dividend on the eve of its one-year anniversary.

On hand for the awarding of the money were Nichols Town Supervisor James Branston, Tioga County Legislature Chairman Dale Weston, and New York State Sen. Tom Libous, R-Binghamton.

Libous presented two checks on behalf of the state and Tioga Downs - one in the amount of \$243,905 to the

Town of Nichols and one for \$327,719 to Tioga County.

The funding was the result of an agreement made last year between Tioga Downs and the state Legislature designed to "make it work for the community," according to Libous.

The senator further reported that "a majority of the gaming revenues received by the state this year have gone to education."

Libous went on to praise the racino and its staff, calling Tioga Downs "one of the finest facilities in the Northeast."

Weston said the county will likely use the money to reduce property taxes this fall and "try to take some of the burden off the taxpayers' shoulders."

Family Service Society to participate

CORNING | Family Service Society Inc. will participate in the Summer Food Service Program through Aug. 31. Meals will be provided to all children age 18 and under at no charge at the following site:

■ Corning Area Youth Center, 79 Flint Ave., Corning | breakfast from 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. and supper from 5-5:30 p.m. For more information, call Michele at 936-3507 or Tricia at 936-4116.

Auditions set for 'The Full Monty'

HORSEHEADS | Elmira Little Theatre will hold auditions for its upcoming production of the musical comedy "The Full Monty" at 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. Sunday at Dancer's Alley, 94B Old Ithaca Road, Horseheads. There are both singing and speaking roles available. Copies of the script are available at the Southeast Steuben County Library in Corning and the Steele Memorial Library in Elmira. Rehearsals begin in August, and the shows begin in late September. For more details, call 846-0692 or go to

www.elmiralittletheatre.com

Regatta, boat show set for Sun.

HAMMONDSPORT | The 25th annual Boat Show and Regatta will be held today through Sunday on Keuka Lake. The event will feature boats from the 1930s and a regatta for power and non-power boats. There will also be a narrated cruise and lunch on Keuka Lake, wine tasting reception, a parade, chicken barbecue and food vendors. The event is sponsored by Wine Country Classic Boats, a chapter of the Antique and Classic Boat Society.

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