

# Grins and groans

THE ISSUE | Grins and groans.

OUR OPINION | Groans to the folding of Corning's only pro sports team. Grins to a nice tribute to a longtime volunteer in the Corning area, to progress on the Painted Post interchange project, and to the arrival of ski season.

## GRIN

To the Painted Post Lions Club and the Corning-Painted Post Historical Society for honoring the late Mary Kosty for many years of volunteer work in the community.

A flagpole was recently installed at the Painted Post-Erwin Museum at The Depot, and a plaque honoring Kosty, a longtime Corning area resident, was mounted on its base. The tribute was unveiled during a ceremony Sunday afternoon.

Kosty was a tireless worker who was involved with many charitable causes. It's a well-deserved tribute.

## GROAN

To the folding of the Corning Bulldogs, an American Basketball Association (ABA) expansion franchise that played its home games at the Corning Community College gymnasium. The team ceased operations just six games into the season.

The team's owner and coach, James Shutz, cited poor attendance as a primary reason the team folded.

The Bulldogs played an exciting brand of basketball, with a roster full of former college standouts. Maybe Corning just isn't big enough to support a professional sports team, but it's a shame the Bulldogs never really had a chance to develop a fan base.

## GRIN

To the slow but steady progress on the I-86/Route 15 interchange project in Painted Post. The link between downtown Corning/Riverside and I-86 is almost done, and it looks like the heaviest phase of the construction work is behind us.

Yes, traffic has been bad in Painted Post. But we should be patient, because it's a monumental project and it promises to be quite luxurious to drive on when it's finally done. Not to mention the potential for economic growth that will come with being at the intersection of two major interstate highways.

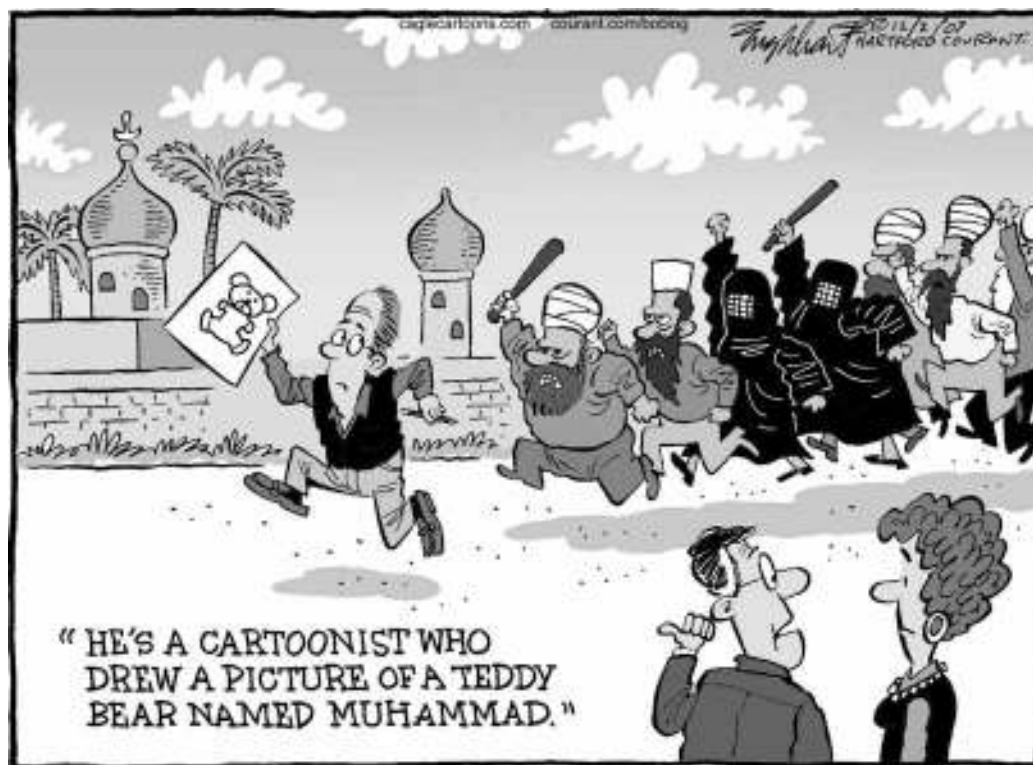
## GRIN

To cold temperatures and snow in the forecast for the next week or so. Berger's Ski and Snowboard Shop in Corning presented a screening of Warren Miller's "Playground" - a high-energy, big-mountain ski film - last week at the Corning Museum of Glass, getting everybody fired up for ski season.

Included in the price of admission was a bounty of lift ticket deals at area resorts. Bristol and Greek Peak are already open.

The last few winters have been rather tame. Here's hoping for a lot more of the white stuff. Winter is a lot more fun when there's snow to play in.

## ARTIST'S VIEW



## COMMENTARY | CARL LEUBSDORF

# Congress, Bush deadlocked

Heading into the final month of the 2007 congressional session, political gamesmanship between President Bush and Democratic leaders continues to block action on the measures that fund federal activities from Baghdad to Dallas.

They'll try again next week, but as long as the two sides seem as willing to compromise as Iraq's Shiites and Sunnis, the deadlock still could force the government shutdown both sides say they want to avoid.

It may take next year's election to resolve the stalemate.

The basic issues are simple: Democrats want to spend more on domestic programs than Bush and speed Iraq troop withdrawals. They're trying to do what the American people voted for when they gave the Democrats majorities in the House and Senate.

Recent votes show that a majority of both houses favors that. But that's not enough; it takes 60 votes to pass bills in the Senate and two-thirds in both houses to override a presidential veto.

With a Democratic Congress and Republican president, that's a prescription for stalemate, unless the two can compromise. So far, that's been impossible. Judging from a recent exchange between Capitol Hill and the White House, it remains unlikely.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid wrote Bush, urging "a dialogue" to resolve their continuing differences on funding levels.

But they couldn't resist a partisan jab: "Key to this dialogue, however, is some willingness on your part to actually find common ground. Thus far, we have seen only a hard line drawn and a demand that we send only legislation that reflects your cuts to

critical priorities of the American people."

The White House compounded the ill feeling. Instead of a letter from the president, press secretary Dana Perino issued a statement condemning Congress for failing to pass the bill with most Veterans Administration funds.

"Rather than sending legislation to the president to fund our nation's veterans before Veterans Day, Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader Reid today instead sent a letter to explain their failure to meet this goal," she said.

Ignoring the request for a dialogue, she urged Congress to pass the remaining funding bills "with the reasonable spending limits recommended by the president," rather than "wasting dwindling legislative days on political statements and legislation that will never become law."

Clearly, each side thinks it holds the political high ground.

But Scott Lilly, a longtime congressional budget staffer now with the Liberal Center for American Progress, notes that, in such fights, "you always have the potential of one or the other side misjudging their standing politically."

Bush, believing the public backs his efforts to hold down spending despite a less-than-convincing record, has found it easy to take a no-compromise stance because enough House Republicans will vote to uphold his vetoes. That strategy prevailed again when the House failed by two votes to override his veto of a \$606 billion bill funding the Departments of Labor and Health and Human Services.

Republicans also hope that stressing congressional failures will benefit them politically next November.

The Democrats, meanwhile, think the public sup-

ports adding \$22 billion for such popular programs as education, cancer research, job training and aid for returning Iraq veterans.

Curiously, they shied away from a strategy of sending a parade of bills to the White House and forcing Bush to veto them while he seeks more funds for the Iraq war. Still, there's no sign yet that public disapproval of Congress will hurt them next year.

Beyond differences in domestic priorities and political strategy, congressional Democrats have exacerbated the partisan divide by trying to withhold new funds for Iraq until the administration agrees to cut troop numbers.

Next week, Democratic leaders will try to force a decision by wrapping all of the un-passed money bills into a single package that lowers additional domestic spending to half of the initial \$22 billion and omits the extra Iraq funds. But that might merely provoke another veto — and another unsuccessful override attempt.

Democrats might have to settle for a package that drops all of the \$22 billion or a stopgap measure to fund the government at last year's levels, something many conservatives favor since it would kill extra funds Congress approved this year.

Whatever happens, one thing is clear: This deadlock and the accompanying gamesmanship will persist until voters give a stronger hand to one party or the other.

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**Carl P. Leubsdorf is Washington bureau chief of the Dallas Morning News. Readers may write to him at the Dallas Morning News Washington bureau, 1325 G Street NW, Suite 250, Washington, D.C. 20005, or via e-mail at: cleubsdorf@dallasnews.com.**

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Policy should be changed

**TO THE EDITOR** | Your publishing policy is not always followed? Your letters policy clearly states that "letters must be kept to a maximum of 250 words. Letters longer than that will not be considered."

In your Nov. 28 issue, page 4A, you have a letter authored by Eric Massa that consists of more than 480 words. Yet, you published it. Is he an exception to the rule or is it because you are so dedicated to the Republican Party that you overlooked it? Possibly you should change your policy to read "... normally limited to 250 words, however,

longer letters will be considered when appropriate."

Randy Kuhl helped me get my passport so I could travel to Italy last June and conduct an Institute there at the request of the Italian government. I received it less than 48 hours before I had to leave. Without his help, I never would have been able to make the trip.

**Herbery L. MacDonell**  
Corning

### Still waiting for STAR rebate check

**TO THE EDITOR** | What's up with the New York state STAR Rebate Program? We applied online for our rebate three

months ago and we're still waiting for our check. I've either telephoned or e-mailed a senator, a congressman, an assemblyman and a governor, not to mention multiple calls to the NYS Tax Helpline. Nobody seems to be able to tell me why it's still "in process." Of course, I'm still wondering why they tell you to call the "Helpline" if you haven't received your check, as each time I call they tell me there's nothing they can tell me. It's not looking good for our elected officials come re-election time. And don't even get me started on the gas prices!

**Debbie Brant**  
Corning

## Trip was a much needed 'vacation'

I certainly hope Randy Kuhl enjoyed his trip to Brazil.

At this time of the year, when icy winds start to whistle down the collars of we poor dwellers in the Northeast, a trip to the southern hemisphere would be just what the doctor

## THE INSIDER



Bob Rolfe

ordered. Especially if Uncle Whiskers is paying the tab.

Our esteemed congressman has enjoyed junkets in the past, but

he's only been able to score trips to undesirable locations — like Iraq.

Now Randy was never in any real jeopardy in Iraq; the government doesn't allow members of Congress to be in any real danger when the military is trying to impress the people with the power to pay its bills.

But Brazil — there's a different story.

The climate is opposite to our own; the country is stable and even the economy is in decent shape.

(Besides, Brazil has a lengthy history of exporting excellent race drivers, and this kid has a soft spot for the country even without considering its excellent use of ethanol fuels.)

But above all, Brazil has a reputation as a top-notch vacation spot, and so we can rest assured our representative in Washington had the opportunity to unwind after the perils of helping George Bush prop up a failed government by blocking every proposal of the opposition party.

That can get stressful and we wouldn't want to see Randy stretched too tight. So this trip was definitely warranted — especially with the taxpayers picking up the tab.

I can't wait to see what revolutionary ways to improve our living conditions he'll propose when he has time to prepare a proper report.

He'll have the expenses covered; make no mistake about that. Randy's a professional office-holder and those people know their business.

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Checking the mailbox: May I assure reader Jim Scouten he misinterpreted a recent item concerning lawyers. I'm not advocating their private client lists shouldn't be considered. I was referring to a specific situation brought up by another reader. So relax.

And there's another reader who defends George Bush's theft of the 2000 election by claiming that Al Gore's failure to carry his home state, Tennessee, was the thing that really tipped the scales.

OK, you may be right, but Florida was the actual trigger, followed by a Supreme Court that was bought and paid for by the Republican Party. And so a whole country changed hands.

The Lord must favor the highest bidder.

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**Bob Rolfe, a retired Leader reporter/ editor (1965-2002), can be reached at theinsider1@aol.com or write c/o The Leader, P.O. Box 1017, Corning, N.Y., 14840. He is also periodic co-host of the "Coleman & Co." public affairs TV program, which airs at 10 a.m. and 10 p.m. Sundays on WETM.2.**

## Blog Talk

4A

## Saturday

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## NATIONAL VIEW | CHICAGO TRIBUNE

# The principled Henry Hyde

Henry Hyde is being remembered in the obituaries as the man who led the fight against abortion and for the impeachment of President Bill Clinton. When you take strong, principled stands on such things, half the country is going to love you and half is going to hate you. You would be hard-pressed, though, to find someone who knew Henry Hyde well and had anything but respect for him.

Democrats who supported abortion rights knew they had a formidable opponent in the eloquent, patient, erudite Hyde. But many also knew they had a friend. Listen to Abner Mikva, the former congressman who is as much a lion of the left as Hyde was of the right: "He was a very good man. I always defended him to my liberal friends, that there was more to him than they saw."

Mikva knew that Hyde valued loyalty and friendship. When Mikva, a champion of abortion rights, was nominated to the U.S. Court of Appeals, Hyde was there to defend him. "He kept the right-to-lifers off my back," Mikva said. "He told them I was more trouble in Congress than I would be on the court." Yes, Hyde had a sense of humor too.

The Republican Party had no better spokesman for its traditional views on life and

liberty and fiscal discipline. Yet Hyde made some Republicans sputter when he broke ranks with the party to support gun control measures and to support the Family and Medical Leave Act.

Hyde's reasoning: He did everything in his power to protect unborn children. He would do everything in his power to protect them after they came into this world.

Hyde's national legacy will be colored by his role in the Clinton impeachment. More than a few people found the scent of hypocrisy when it was revealed that Hyde, chairman of the House committee that approved Clinton's impeachment, had had an extramarital affair.

We don't need to defend Hyde on that count. He defended himself quite adequately in these pages in 1999.

"The members of the House who voted to impeach a president for actions many members of his own party concede were felonious have nothing to apologize for. We did our duty," he wrote. "If you choose to define this debate as just a squabble over 'lying about sex,' then I would agree, impeachment might be overkill. But we understood this to be about lying under oath to a federal grand jury and obstructing justice by one bound to faithfully execute the laws. ..."

Henry Hyde was not perfect. He was principled. Illinois has lost one of its great leaders.