


# Grins and groans

**THE ISSUE** | Grins and groans from the past week's headlines.  
**OUR OPINION** | Grins to the East High boys lacrosse team, the Relay For Life and the opening of a key stretch of the Catharine Valley Trail. A groan to dirty tricks in the race for Steuben County Sheriff.


## GRIN



To a fantastic run by the boys lacrosse program at Corning East. The Trojans rolled to a 17-1 win over Chenango Valley on Friday at Memorial Stadium in the Section IV, Class C title game. It was the program's 24th consecutive sectional title, a very impressive feat in any sport.


Good luck to the Trojans, who are headed into the state playoffs.

## GRIN



To the Relay For Life. Hundreds turned out for the eighth annual Corning-Painted Post Relay For Life over the weekend at West High, a benefit for the American Cancer Society. Teams of walkers circled the track from 7 p.m. until 7 a.m. Saturday. It was a festive occasion with some really touching moments. Kudos to all involved.

## GROAN



To a nasty turn in the heated race for Steuben County Sheriff. Unfounded

rumors have been surfacing, alleging that Jim Waight – one of three Republican candidates – is an abusive husband. There's been nothing to substantiate that claim, and Waight's wife – who should know – says it's absolutely ridiculous.

It seems like dirty tricks to us. And it's definitely not the first time mud has been slung in this race.

The other candidates, county Undersheriff David Cole and county Chief Deputy Joel Ordway, denied any involvement. All three candidates are calling for a clean, fair campaign. Let's hope those calls are heeded.

## GRIN



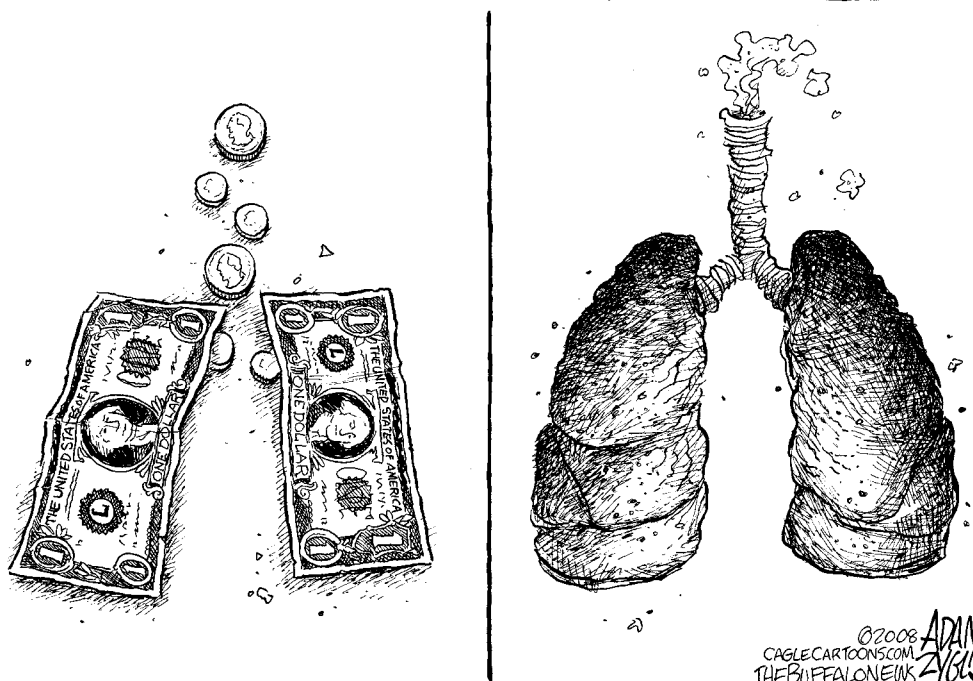
To the Catharine Valley Trail bridge. A pedestrian bridge that takes hikers, joggers and bicyclists on the Catharine Valley Trail over state Route 14 just south of Millport officially opened with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Saturday.

The bridge is a key link in the still-under-construction trail, and a big step in a huge project that has moved slowly but is finally entering the home stretch.

Soon, the trail will stretch 12 miles between Watkins Glen and Horseheads, and it will be a gem for outdoor recreation.

## ARTIST'S VIEW

WHICH HIGH TAX *should* MAKE SMOKERS QUIT?



GUEST EDIT | JOHN R. "RANDY" KUHL JR.

## Veterans' Mental Health Caucus

The headlines read, "Increasing mental illness among veterans" "Post-war trauma cases up," and "Combat veterans need help to survive." Since 2003 approximately 40,000 troops have been diagnosed with mental illnesses. The number of U.S. troops suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder jumped by 50 percent in 2007. The Army recently reported that there were 115 suicides in 2007, the highest number since it began keeping records. But veterans' mental health needs do not just affect those troops returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. It was reported that more than 58,000 soldiers lost in combat.

These statistics are staggering, and there has not been enough action to ensure that we take care of our nation's heroes. Veterans come from all walks of life to answer the call when their nation needs them most. These men and women represent the best America has to offer, and they serve their country with pride, with honor and with courage. But the tolls of war can affect each soldier differently and as such, some veterans return from combat with emotional or mental health needs. I believe it is imperative that we meet the needs of our veterans

and enhance the awareness and understanding of these important health issues. And that is why I recently formed the House Veterans' Mental Health Caucus.

The House Veterans' Mental Health Caucus will bring Republicans, Democrats, and Independents together to increase awareness of mental health care needs of returning veterans, including conditions such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury, treatment options for these and other conditions, job training and readjustment, suicide prevention, and funding needs. To accomplish this, the Caucus will hold briefings with leading experts in the fields of veterans' healthcare and mental health, circulate relevant articles and studies that bring new issues to light, and develop legislative proposals to address the increased importance of mental health care within our veterans' communities nationwide.

The 29th Congressional District is very fortunate to have the Canandaigua Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC) in Canandaigua, N.Y. Designated as a Mental Health Center for Excellence in 2005, the VAMC was charged with defining best practices for the treatment of PTSD and determining the best prac-

tics for rural outpatient treatment follow ups. The Canandaigua VAMC provides clinical and research innovation to explore and explain the science behind disease processes, establish best practices, and share that information with the clinical community and others. In 2007, the Canandaigua VAMC opened a National Suicide Prevention Hotline to provide continuous national assistance for veterans from mental health professionals at Canandaigua. The Canandaigua VAMC has a long history of providing exceptional psychiatric treatment to our nation's bravest heroes and the 24-hour hotline is an excellent addition to the medical center.

PTSD and other mental illnesses can have a devastating affect on soldiers, family members, and other loved ones. By forming the House Veterans' Mental Health Caucus, I am hopeful that we can better equip the Department of Veterans Affairs to treat mental health problems before they escalate to suicide. We must take action now to help our brave men and women who fought for this country's freedom.

■ John R. "Randy" Kuhl is a member of the United States Congress representing the 29th District.

## NATIONAL VIEW | ORLANDO SENTINEL

### NASA PR hurts program

When critics accused NASA of manipulating its science on global warming a couple of years ago, they were on to something. The space agency's in-house watchdog concluded in a report released Monday that political appointees had played down global-warming findings or barred access to scientists between 2004 and 2006.

It's a shameful episode for an agency with a proud heritage of scientific leadership.

The report from NASA's inspector general blamed the agency's headquarters press office. It didn't find evidence that agency leaders or other Bush administration officials were involved. Yet if the manipulation was indeed limited to NASA press officers, they were following the same political playbook as others in the administration –

starting with the president – who disputed or ignored evidence of global warming.

The inspector general's report gave Administrator Michael Griffin credit for quickly ordering changes in NASA's policies for releasing scientific information after the controversy broke in 2006. In a memo, he declared that public-affairs officers were not to "alter, filter or adjust engineering or scientific material produced by NASA's technical staff." It's sad they had to be told that science should be sacrosanct at their agency.

With the federal government facing a long-term budget squeeze, NASA will struggle to round up the dollars from Congress to maintain robust programs in science and space exploration. Withholding scientific information from the public that paid for it is no way to cultivate support.

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## NATIONAL VIEW | MIAMI HERALD

### Supreme Court swings good, bad

When it comes to protecting workers who complain about discrimination from retaliation by their bosses, the U.S. Supreme Court really gets it. However, with cases involving actual workplace discrimination, protection from this court's majority is, at best, a dicey proposition.

Here's why we say this: In two cases last week, the court issued opinions that protect employees from retaliation when they complain about discrimination. Last year, the court made a similar ruling – by a unanimous vote – saying that workers who file discrimination complaints are protected, even if the retaliation is a bad job recommendation after the worker has left the company. In case after case, the court validates this good doctrine.

Yet in a discrimination case almost exactly a year ago, the court ruled against a woman who was paid less than men who did similar work. The court said she

complained about the discrepancies too late, ignoring the practical fact that most people would be lucky to be even aware of pay bias, much less detect it in the first paycheck. Fortunately, Congress is considering a bill that would overturn this unfair ruling.

It would be easy to assign a bad motive or worse to the sharp differences in the court's judgment of discrimination and retaliation cases. But time – and more decisions – will be the best judge of that. It should be noted that proving that an employer has retaliated against an employee is generally easier than proving the employer is biased.

In one of the two cases decided last week, a clerk for the U.S. Postal Service in Puerto Rico complained that she had been denied a transfer because of her age. The woman said her supervisors retaliated with pressure and unfounded allegations against her.

In the 6-3 majority opinion, Justice Samuel Alito said it was clear that

Congress intended to protect workers against retaliation.

In the other case, a black manager at a Cracker Barrel restaurant was fired after he complained that a supervisor had made a racist remark and that a colleague had been dismissed because she was black. This time, a 7-2 court majority upheld the principle that workers are protected from retaliation, and in this case, they are protected even if they no longer work for the company.

The high court's clarity in protecting workers against retaliation is as admirable as its blind eye toward workplace discrimination is regrettable. Americans want a court that is fair and dependably even-handed. As Congress considers legislation to rectify the damage of the court's bias-case ruling, it should make clear that discriminating against workers is as harmful, if not worse, than retaliating against them.

## Real Estate tax cap a great idea

Gov. David Paterson has backed one of the best ideas to have been considered in

### THE INSIDER



Bob Rolfe

Albany in many years. He wants to cap all real estate tax increases at 4 percent per year.

For thousands of beleaguered New York taxpayers, that could mean the difference between being able to pay the tax man or seeing their house sold at public auction.

There is presently no curb on how much taxes can climb, except in the case of school budgets. There, the taxpayers must approve any budget before it can be imposed. There is, however, no similar protection from tax hikes in county, city, town or village spending plans.

No level of government can be happy with the governor's proposal, but it is the powerful education lobby which is guaranteed to fight it the hardest. And, in New York, what the education lobby wants, it generally gets.

Yet it is the school taxes that are usually the most onerous and tend to include the biggest increases.

Just look at what happened in the Canisto-Greenwood district in Steuben County this year. There, original proposals called for a tax increase of more than 70 percent. That was later trimmed to 40.

That district claims it was the victim of unusual circumstances, yet no district should ever believe its citizens would accept a tax hike of anything near either number.

Governments, particularly schools, hate to cut budgets. They claim services to the public would suffer and, in the case of schools, that "the children" would be the victims.

That argument, however, ignores the constant increases in administrative jobs. Thus a principal has an assistant, and that individual has a sub-assistant, and so on, down the line, it goes.

These worthies might be able to come up with better class schedules, or luncheon times but they don't teach a single child anything. Likewise, for many of the office jobs an expanding administration creates.

The Corning school district this year came up with a budget that called for a minimal tax hike for the first time in generations. That proves the use of a sharp budgeting pencil can work.

But if the numbers mean staff cuts are needed, then so be it. Let the layoffs begin.

The governor's proposal is an excellent one that is badly needed in our state. If you agree, contact your state senator and assemblyman and demand they line up with him.

Personally, I'd have preferred a 3 percent cap – and 2 would be even better. But 4 percent is a vast improvement over no control at all. David Paterson has come up with a plan that all of us should support.

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