

Postal Service must adapt to new age

THE ISSUE | The Postal Service may drop Saturday home delivery.

OUR OPINION | We support this money-saving proposal.

The U.S. Postal Service is not a business, but rather a service.

It is a vital service, but a failing one. With annual losses of nearly \$300 million, it can no longer sustain itself. Changes in the way it operates are needed. The Postal Service needs to be more business-like.

Cancellation of Saturday home delivery is one proposal that should be implemented. From a consumer point of view, five-day delivery will have little adverse impact.

Unfortunately, it could mean one out of every six postal workers might lose his or her job. We do not enjoy the prospect of anyone losing his or her job as the nation continues to struggle through these economic times, but neither can we support maintaining the status quo, considering the financial debt the service is amassing.

The Postal Service, like many organizations, has limited options available to it in terms of cutting costs. Rates will likely need to be increased in addition to the proposed reduction in services. Concessions also will be needed in terms of employee benefits.

Without those changes, it is hard to image how the Postal Service can continue to function.

Fewer individuals rely on the Postal Service as their primary source of mailing and bill payments. The widely popular use of electronic forms of communication continues to cut into the customer base, reducing mailings from 213 billion in 2006 to 177 billion last year.

Maintaining the status quo will not reverse that trend. Maintaining the service will require a new way of conducting business.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Before you vote, ask this ...

TO THE EDITOR | In deciding to vote on Alternative C in the school election next week, there are several questions we each must ask:

■ Do I want the money that is available now for our school system from the state (our tax money) to go someplace else?

■ Do I want to wait and do nothing while our school properties continue to deteriorate and construction costs increase?

■ Do I want the construction jobs that proposition C will produce to go elsewhere?

■ Do I want to pay 11.5 to 21.5 times as much as new construction for renovation of obsolete buildings?

■ Do I want to keep using functionally obsolete buildings that cost more to operate than classroom space designed for modern needs of safety and technology?

■ Do I want people recruited for positions in local industry to seek housing in other school districts because we can't get or act together? (Think for a moment the impact this will have on your future ability to sell your home.)

■ Do I want to make it more difficult for Corning-Painted Post School District to recruit new teachers because we cannot get our act together?

■ Do I want to continue to operate more buildings than we need in view of declining student census?

■ Do I want to keep our teaching staff from performing at their full potential because of obsolete facilities?

■ Do I want cafeteria and other common use spaces to continue to be so under-sized that they interfere with teaching schedules?

■ Do I want music, art and laboratory activities to continue to be conducted in closets, alcoves, on carts and in hallways?

■ Do I want to forgo over a million dollars a year of savings on operating expenses that can be achieved by having fewer buildings to maintain and more efficient facilities layouts in modernized buildings as proposed in Alternative C?

■ Do I want the Corning School District to continue to have only one pre-K class?

■ Do I want to perpetuate the perceived attitude that the voters of the Corning-Painted Post School District are short-sighted, don't really care about students or teachers, and won't listen to any attempts to improve teaching opportunities that might involve change or cost some money (even if, in the long run, the changes will save money)?

If you can say no to any one of the above questions, I urge you to vote "yes" for Alternative C on March 16.

John W. Sands
Corning

The deadline for Alternative C letters is 5 p.m. Monday.

E-mail your letter to:	Fax your letter to:	Mail your letter to:
jdunning@the-leader.com	Attn: Joe Dunning 936-9939	LETTERS PO BOX 1017 CORNING, NY 14830

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Don't believe 'twisted' facts

TO THE EDITOR | It's about time! Tom O'Brien has finally admitted he's been misleading us. His lecture to the school board of Feb. 24 accused the district of lying to taxpayers in its C-PP Reports publication on how state aid works. Conveniently, he made the accusation in a public comment period where district officials are not allowed to refute a commenter's claim.

Thankfully, two *Leader* staffers, including the managing editor, were in attendance and did their own checking with state officials about who was telling the truth. *The Leader's* headline and article proved Tom was wrong.

So he apologizes in a letter to the editor. We've been reading Tom's letters and hearing him and his save the building group's arguments for months now. A lot of his claims are based on what will happen after Alt. C is implemented. For example: the doomsday scenarios of decaying abandoned buildings, (does anyone really believe that Mr. O'Brien would ever allow his CFA to be abandoned, even to prove a point?) suddenly all our wonderful students will have lower grades and test scores, decreasing attendance and graduation rates, and student violence and disruptive behavior will increase. These are Tom's and his group's opinion of how the future will play out. Their uses of vocabulary like "wreak havoc," "loss of sportsmanship," "massive," "Columbine," "destroy," and "chaos" are not words of persuasion, but words designed to create fear. His recent flyer states "expert" opinions and current research to support the group's opinions. Yet, their Web site neither identifies these experts nor its own supporters.

But on this one about state aid, it was about facts – cold, hard facts. And he twisted them to mislead the public and got caught. How does that make you feel about his opinions? What other "facts" have been twisted or misleading? Doesn't give me a warm feeling that he's looking out for our kids' best interests, nor mine as a taxpayer.

Join me in voting "yes" on March 16 to side with our kids, teachers and the committed team that brought us this plan based on correct facts and analysis.

Colleen Coro
Painted Post

Taking good care of our own

TO THE EDITOR | "The greatness of a city may be determined by its treatment of the weakest citizen."

By this measure, the Greater Corning Area is living up to its name. Last year, you helped Corning Meals on Wheels deliver 48,000 fully-prepared meals, free of charge, to more than 235 of our city's hungry. That's an increase of nearly 7,000 meals from 2008. The demand for our service was great, but your response was greater still.

Thank you. Together we fill the bellies of firefighters, police officers, scientists, engineers, artists, teachers, war brides, veterans and volunteers age 60 to 104. Many of our clients have contributed to the history of our region. Many more of them

have contributed to the success of our city, the success of our children. Thank them.

Continue to feed their hunger. Continue to feed their souls. Your generous contributions enable us to provide nutritious meals and vital human contact each and every day. In doing so, we sustain and strengthen ourselves, our souls and our city.

Give what you can. Your gift will be felt throughout the Greater Corning Area. Because of you, more of our neighbors will remain independent, in their own homes. Because of you, their working and/or far-away family members and friends will have peace of mind. Because of you, our weakest citizens will hunger no more.

Richard Sivers
President, Board of Directors

Joseph M. Detrick
Executive director
Corning Meals on Wheels

Get informed, then vote yes

TO THE EDITOR | I am a concerned parent of two young children, and I fully support Alternative C. Why? Because if this March 16 vote fails to receive a super majority, then we as a community have failed our future. Take a look at some of what will happen if this does not pass:

■ Academic intervention services will be minimal at best due to lack of proper accommodations and budget restraints, thereby creating a greater gap in educational achievement for all students, a very serious concern when soon all students must graduate with a regents diploma.

■ Current second- and third-graders across the district will attend NBS and CFA in their existing conditions as no plan will come before the voters or pass before these children reach middle school.

■ As the years pass, the district's maintenance budget will continue to decrease while at the same time the need for maintenance on all existing buildings will continue to increase.

These snippets of what will happen greatly affects our future ... our children. I am asking every voter to get informed and vote to save our future.

Kristina Belanger
Painted Post

Make our voices heard

TO THE EDITOR | It is a sad time for America when we have the "three stooges" running our country – Obama, Pelosi, and Reed. Hope and change has turned into hopelessness and pain!

For the first time since 1975, the elderly and persons with disabilities will not be receiving cost of living allowances who are receiving Social Security benefits.

I believe it is such disrespect to the families of 9/11 to have the terrorists of 9/11 trial be held in New York City. This was an act of war on our country and the trial belongs in a military courtroom not a civil courtroom!

Unemployment is near 10 percent and no signs of improving. Pelosi has called the American people rednecks and un-American because the Tea Party Movement is advocating for their con-

stitutional rights to remain intact.

Obama keeps blaming the Bush administration for America's recession, and yet, the Democrats have been in control of Congress since 2006. A strong leader takes on the issues head on and doesn't pass blame.

The majority of Americans are not in favor of national health care, and yet, Obama wants national health care. If national health care is the answer to millions of Americans not having healthcare, then why do Canadians come to the U.S. to get treatment? If this health care plan Obama wants to push through is so darn good for the American people, why hasn't Obama and the entire government signed up for national health care to include their families? Look no further than Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security, and the U.S. Postal Service to show you the management skills of our government.

Thomas Jefferson stated, "When the people fear the government, its tyranny, when the government fears the people, its liberty!"

November 2010 and 2012 couldn't come soon enough for our country. America, speak up before it is too late!

Bonita A. Dobson
Corning

Green Party fights the power

TO THE EDITOR | As seen in the health care debate and the recent Supreme Court decision that states that corporations have the right to donate to campaigns, the power of corporations is immense in our daily life. In the United States, a nation that began as a revolution against the first corporation of the British East India Company, we have slowly become accustomed to the idea that corporations have legal rights equivalent to human beings. But because corporations are centralized organizations created by a few that can gather much more resources than any citizen, they can perpetuate an inequality of power that can go against the will of the people in government and the economy.

Those who work within corporations do not even have a voice since corporations, by their nature, are anti-democratic structures internally. Corporations internalize benefits through efficiency but externalize costs into communities, and are able to avoid public responsibility through corporate personhood.

The Green Party has been the most consistent and constant critic of the undemocratic nature of corporate power, offering a real alternative of community economics through cooperatives, the self-employed, and local ownership of sustainable businesses. In a time where our state is facing massive budget problems that exacerbate local budget problems, the Green Party's candidates for statewide office understand that the economy must be rebuilt community by community in a democratic and just manner. This year, a vote for a Green for governor is for something beyond business as usual in order to create a better New York and a better America.

Darin Robbins
Corning

Massa broke the mold

At 5 p.m. tomorrow, Eric Massa will no longer be a member of the House of Representatives.

He'll be unemployed, forced out after just 14 months in office by a combination of a re-occurrence of cancer and an allegation of misconduct filed with the House Ethics Committee.

The latter reportedly involves a male staff member who claims Massa made him feel uncom-

fortable during an exchange that involved sexual overtones.

Sitting in his Corning home Friday, minutes before he informed his staff of his resignation, Massa said he had no specific details of the claims made against him. He didn't know who made the allegation, when the incident occurred or exactly what it involved, Massa told me. Those specifics are kept secret until the committee begins its investigation, which now will never happen.

The truth is those types of details really don't matter, Massa said. Worn out, Massa admitted Friday that this penchant for profanities may have offended those around him. His use of offensive language may have come from a combination of an intense work schedule, frustration with Washington and 24 years in the Navy where "salty" language is a way of communicating.

A sudden awareness of this bad habit prompted Massa to apologize to his staff after the New Year, he said. He was going to clean it up as best he could, he told me.

Maybe it was too late. The damage may have already been done.

Either way, Massa owned up to his faults Friday, swallowed his pride and resigned with apologies.

"I so revere the U.S. Congress that leaving in this manner is abhorrent to me," he said with deep emotion. "I love my government. I think it's the best government in the world."

I can't defend what Massa did, or may have done, because I simply don't know the facts. But I will say I'll miss him, as will many in the district that he served.

Massa was not your typical congressman in many ways. He was a lunch-pail type, not a blue-blood or a career politician. Many found him to be refreshing, a common guy who was not aloof or self-absorbed.

I remember Massa calling me from House Chambers one day when Democrats and Republicans were arguing hard and heavy over health care.

"Joe, I wish you were down here with me with a six-pack of beer to see this. It's just crazy," he said, sounding like he was watching a good football game and wanted to share it.

Accessibility with the public and the press was his strong suit. Massa held about 130 town hall meetings throughout the district with each lasting hours, not minutes. He'd answer questions on all

SEE DUNNING | 5A

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