

It's LPGA Classic time again, for the last time

THE ISSUE | This week's Corning Classic.
OUR OPINION | It's time to celebrate this great event one more time.

It's time to put out the welcome mat, the ladies are back in town.

Like they have for 31 years, the lady professional golfers return to the Crystal City to compete for top prize money and the Steuben Bowl at the Corning Country Club.

And, as has happened for more than three decades, the community will welcome them with the type of genuine, small-town charm that has made Corning a special stop on tour for many of the athletes.

Of course, this year will be different than the rest. This is the last year of the Corning Classic, the longest tenured tournament with a single sponsor on tour.

For a variety of reasons – most of which are attributable to the recession – hosting the LPGA beyond this last tournament became unfeasible. The decision to end the Classic made financial sense, but it was no less agonizing for those who had to come to that conclusion.

The reason is that the Corning Classic has always been more than just another golf tournament. Most importantly, it's been about helping hospitals and charities to the tune of \$5.4 million from the tournament proceeds.

It's also been a great source of community pride and involvement with the dedication of scores of volunteers, the accommodations of host families and the hospitality of local businesses.

The Classic has also provided great entertainment, both on and off the golf course, as the city's pulse beats a little faster when the LPGA makes its week-long visit.

With that in mind, it's time to celebrate the arrival of the LPGA one more time. Most of the big names on tour will be here and this year's field is the strongest ever for the Classic.

It's shaping up to be a great tournament, and a fitting send-off for this fantastic event.

GUEST EDIT | ERIC MASSA

Why I voted 'no' on \$97B war funds

In my 24 years in the United States military, I learned the value of doing the right thing, no matter what the cost. On Thursday, I had to make a very, very tough choice in the U.S. House of Representatives.

On that day, Congress voted on yet another "emergency" war supplemental bill to the tune of \$97 billion. Despite intense pressure from the leadership of both political parties, I refused to support the bill for four central reasons.

To begin with, this "emergency" supplemental contained several items that I think should have either been included or excluded in the budget, not inserted as a sweetener to the bill. For example, one of the largest line items in the supplemental was the purchase of eight new C-17 global transport aircrafts. While I support building those, they won't be built for another three years. I don't think that qualifies as an "emergency" purpose for a supplemental.

Second, while American families struggle with increasing costs and unemployment levels, I can't rationalize sending \$836 million to fund the United Nations. I also can't support giving \$109 million to train and equip Palestinian security forces. Additionally, I opposed a provision to make a promise to provide up to \$429.5 million in foreign aid to Pakistan. We need to strengthen and rebuild America, not the rest of the world. These foreign aid provisions demand a separate debate in the light of day.

Next, during my time campaigning for this office, I made a commitment to not fund the war in Iraq any further unless the administration provided a clear and precise exit strategy. I don't care who the president is or which political party is in the majority, I did not, and will not support any additional Iraq war funding without a way out. After almost a decade, it is time we tell the Iraqis that the future of Iraq is theirs, not ours.

Finally, while there were several good line items in the supplemental which I have supported now, and will support in the future, I will not have my vote held hostage by party bosses. What often happens in Washington is that they insert a few good items into bad bills so members can explain their votes. These sugar-coated spending provisions are there so that the people who have spent us into oblivion can justify these votes. That is why I voted against the bank bailout and others. We don't need sugar-coated spending bills. I'm sure I will continue to take criticism from both political parties about this stance, but again I will not have my vote held hostage.

The families of the 29th Congressional District sent me to Washington to do the right thing no matter what. Nobody will ever agree with 100 percent of my decisions, but I promise that you will always know where I stand.

■ U.S. Rep. Eric Massa, D-N.Y., represents the 29th Congressional District.

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ARTIST'S VIEW



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Honest education needed for kids

TO THE EDITOR |

Families and individuals are forced to tighten their belts during economic downturns, unlike government going wild on unprecedented spending sprees without course or conscience. The federal government is tripling the deficit this year and the national debt in 10 years. New York state ups the budget \$15 billion (10 percent) while the tax base is drastically shrinking. Paterson, like Schwarzenegger, grovels to extreme spending. Politicians practice their primary skills: frivolous and wasteful spending.

Federal bailouts aimed billions at education, promising improvement. Years of increased funding has nurtured an ailing public education system becoming progressively worse. Education unions and associations support and profit immensely from a corrupt, deteriorating public school and university system. They cry "more money" to carry on practiced and perfected education failure.

Frugality would be a valuable lesson taught to students which educators, like government, cannot teach. Continually letting out their belts another notch, the education industry epitomizes government gluttony and narcissism, becoming morbidly obese and lazy, the example they set.

Why fix education? This education model cheats the children of their futures! Borrowing behavior from unethical unions and politicians, integrity is defunct in education's character. NYS STAR program rebate checks discontinued, the entire program is in jeopardy, threatening 30 percent to a possible 500 percent increase or more in school tax payments for elderly property owners.

Both government and education failures facilitate expansion; more money and entrenched power. Frugality, discipline and ethics must return to education and government. Honest education for the children is critical to our republic.

Gerald J Furnkranz
 Horseheads

Be informed on school vote

TO THE EDITOR | Voters

will soon be electing new members to our local school boards and voting on the proposed budget. The PTA can not endorse school board candidates, but we can assist the community in making an informed judgment with regard to the budget and the election of members of one of the most important elective bodies in our society. With that in mind, PTA offers the following for consideration:

"Membership on the board of education should be broad and diverse, reflecting various points of view within the community. Only citizens deeply concerned with educational standards and school needs should be elected to school boards.

A school board member should:

- Be a supporter of public education.
- Have a broad background of knowledge and experience.
- Represent the interests of the community at large.
- Make the welfare of children and community the basis of decisions.
- Accept the will of the majority; be tolerant, free from prejudice.
- Be familiar with the schools in the district and with current educational issues.
- Understand the functions, policies, and responsibilities of board members and the administrators.
- Communicate effectively with professional staff, community groups and others.
- Listen for real consensus and not confuse a few noisy voices with a majority feeling."

The Executive Board of the Corning-Painted Post Area PTA Council supports the proposed budget. The proposed budget meets the 0 percent tax rate increase goal established by the board of education while maintaining staffing and resulting in minimal elimination of programs that benefit our students.

We hope you'll join us in supporting children and their schools on Tuesday.

Denise Reppert
 President
 Corning-Painted Post Area
 PTA Council

Vote 'yes' to budget and buses

TO THE EDITOR | The 2009-10 proposed Corning-Painted Post Area School District budget supports programs and policies that produce results for both students and tax-

payers. We strongly urge our community to vote yes on May 19 to the budget and bus proposition.

We each have children at the elementary, middle, and high-school levels and have been actively involved in the district for more than a decade. It's our belief that the board of education and administration have presented a budget that continues to strengthen results so that all students will achieve success. It will also provide the ability to continue challenging elementary, middle, and high school students with rigorous course work, continue working toward closing achievement gaps and preparing students for the real-life obstacles they will face once they graduate.

The investment we make as taxpayers in our local school system has a tremendous impact on the quality of life we seek in our community and for our children. Obviously, we all want the best education possible for our children at a reasonable cost.

When you think about everything our schools do each and every day ... such as transporting, caring for, and educating more than 5,600 of our community's children, it's amazing to see that the board and administration is proposing an estimated tax rate decrease. It's apparent we have leadership that is carefully taking into account the current economic challenges we all are facing, yet still able to provide an education that has value and impact for our students.

With an estimated tax rate decrease of .01 percent, the district has delivered a budget proposal that was built with the sincere recognition that our taxpayer's concerns have been heard. Clearly, our leadership has shown fiscal discipline.

The bottom line is that the student data speaks for itself ... C-PP is on the right track and improving each year. One recent example is the improved state testing results for third-through eighth-grades. We want this momentum to continue, and the best way to show we believe in the direction our board members, superintendent Mike Ginalski, administration, and staff are going is strong support at the polls May 19.

Kim Cates and
 Jodi Kohli
 Corning

Elections interesting all around

Since the Corning-Painted Post school board is holding the line on taxes, I don't see the proposed 2009-10 budget having much problem passing in Tuesday's annual vote.

But I'll be curious to see by how much it passes. Specifically, I'll be watching if the budget garners the support of 60 percent of the voters – a threshold that means nothing in this election but could be a telling sign for a future facilities referendum.

The decade-long search to find a solution to the district's aging facilities has so far been fruitless, but the effort continues. A special committee that has been working for months on the issue is expected to reveal its findings sometime soon.

It's likely that whatever building plan the committee suggests, the cost will exceed the district's debt limit set by the state. By law, any referendum that does that then has to be approved by 60 percent of the voters – something that's called a super majority. The way I figure it, if the district doesn't get 60 percent support on a budget that doesn't increase taxes on Tuesday, what are the chances it'll get a super majority for a facilities plan that will definitely raise taxes?

Somewhere between slim and none.

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Unless someone talks him out of it, look for Corning City Councilman Frank Muccini to force a Republican primary in September for the Steuben County Legislature's District 2 seat.

He'd face Phil Palmesano who declared his candidacy last week for the position being vacated by Legislator Fran Gehl, who is being forced out because of term limits.

I know Frank has had his eye on the county board for a while, and I've heard he's said privately that he wants to run. If nothing else, Frank would make it a colorful campaign.

As for the Democrats, city party chair Hilda Lando said they'll have a candidate for the county seat but aren't ready to announce who that will be. My guess is that it's either Hilda herself or a certain former Corning mayor who once said he's done with politics. Talk about colorful.

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U.S. Rep. Eric Massa last week explaining that he likely won't vote for a massive spending bill to fund wars in Iraq and Afghanistan because the Obama administration has failed to develop an exit strategy for troops in Iraq:

"Whether it's President Bush or President Obama, my position stands. It's time to bring our troops home."

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