

Time for the saga to end

THE ISSUE | Former U.S. Rep. Eric Massa goes nationwide.

OUR OPINION | Massa should "go away" as promised to manage his health and his life.

At the end of two appearances on national cable news networks Tuesday, former U.S. Rep. Eric Massa looked in to the camera and promised to "go away."

We hope he keeps his word.

It's not that we want Massa to leave town or that he deserves some public pillory – he doesn't. We hope Massa and his family remain Corning residents and he finds gainful employment locally.

But enough of "Massagate." This sad and tragic story needs to end.

And it will only happen if Eric Massa – who served the district well and enthusiastically in the 14 months he was in office – keeps a very low profile.

Now that Massa's got the national attention he wanted by appearing on Fox's Glenn Beck and CNN's Larry King Live, it's time for him to begin to fade into the woodwork.

We think three reasons for resigning from office – any office – is plenty. And revealing them over the course of a week is theatrical overkill.

To repeat: first there was the cancer scare, then an Ethics Committee investigation and finally his railroading by the Democratic leadership because he opposed the health care bill.

If there are more reasons, we're really not interested, especially if they are of the tickling, wrestling, groping and using dirty language variety.

Is there another shoe to drop?

Massa told Beck that something would likely come out involving text messages to staffers and later told *The Daily News* that they were "inappropriate."

What a surprise. More undignified behavior.

Through it all Massa has been able to save some face by owning up to his failings and admitting that what he did was unacceptable. It's been painful to watch someone who was held in high regard fall so far and we can only imagine how miserable it's been for Massa and his family.

The fact that much of it was self-inflicted makes it that much worse.

We wish Massa a full recovery from his cancer and welcome him to remain a part of our community. It's time to forgive and forget.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Alt. C would help boost economy

TO THE EDITOR | As a property manager and New York State licensed real estate broker our company deals in luxury townhouses and single family homes. In the last year, over 50 percent of the families with school-age children who contacted us requested housing within the Horseheads School District. I speak with these folks directly, and the word is out that our district (Corning-Painted Post) is inferior.

We're losing the opportunity to be the desired place to live because of our schools. Since half of the families request residing within the Horseheads School District, there are fewer interested buyers in available homes within the Corning-Painted Post School District. The result of fewer potential buyers is property values are lower, and there are fewer taxpayers to help spread the property tax burden.

As a state certified residential real estate appraiser, I know that if the Corning-Painted Post School District were the desired location to live, the potential for multiple offers on a house increase, thus increasing property values and increasing our tax base, strengthening the local economy in addition to providing better facilities for our kids. Please join me in voting "yes" on March 16.

Thomas B. Creath

President

EDC Management, Inc.

President

Equity Appraisals, LLC

Corning

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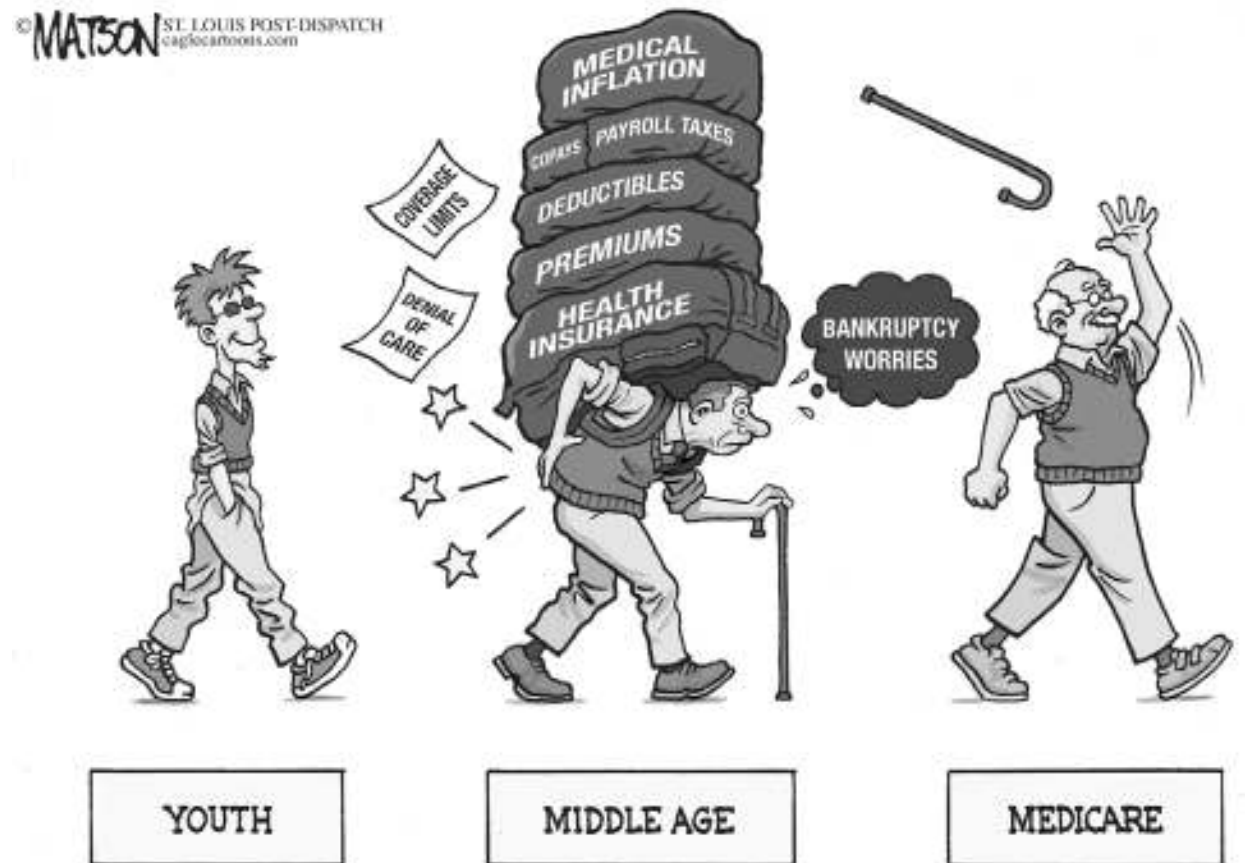
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ARTIST'S VIEW



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Alt. C is not the solution

TO THE EDITOR | Speaking as West High students, we understand the state of the middle schools. Something has to be done, but Alternative C is not the solution.

A school with 1,800 kids is a ridiculous solution for our community. We both love going to school because we have that feeling of belonging and it feels like a community. We know that if we didn't come to school one day people would notice; students, teachers, and coaches. In a school this big, that feeling will happen less. The addition onto East is not as big as West is already, therefore the already crowded schools are destined to become more over crowded. West High students will be walking into East High doors.

What happens to the kids who don't excel, but do sports to be a part of a team? Being a part of a team ties students to their school. Our town would lose the historic across town rivalry that brings our community together even on opposing sides. We both know from experience that there is nothing like the feeling before the biggest game of the season, East/West. As far as winning, how much better will our team be competing at the AA level? Sports should be about the bonds and memories that are created within a team, not winning a championship.

Where do all the kids go that sat the bench? What about the kids that weren't the best player in the band? Being included makes students feel like they belong at school. We want a different alternative. We were never asked. It's our future, not yours. We have to live with the decisions that you make.

Kendra Thomas and Colleen Guilfoyle
Painted Post

Need upgrades for students

TO THE EDITOR | We are just a few of the parents of special needs children who attend school in the Corning-Painted Post school district and we are asking you to open your hearts and vote "yes" for Alternative C on March 16. There are over 800 students within the school district who receive special education services. Many of these students have some form

of learning disability which can include autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, dyslexia, auditory processing delays and reading delays.

Many people aren't aware that most children with learning disabilities have either average or above average IQ's. If given the appropriate interventions, they can become valued, contributing members of our society.

Before 1975, the outlook for children with disabilities was grim – many were consigned to asylums where their basic needs were only minimally met. In 1975, our society made the decision to no longer warehouse students of special needs by requiring that states provide "a free appropriate public education to all children with disabilities." The law evolved into the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in the 1990s.

We provide this short history lesson to underscore that our current schools, the youngest of which was built in 1963, were constructed before the advent of special education. Our schools were not designed with the needs of special education students in mind. They don't include space for special education services like resource room support, self contained classrooms, physical therapy (PT), occupational therapy (OT) and speech therapy (ST).

So what does this mean for children with disabilities in our district? Due to the lack of room, our children are forced to receive their related services in unsuitable spaces including renovated closets, locker rooms and in hallways under the gaze of anyone to see. Due to the lack of space, contained classrooms have been shuffled from one building to another. In the C-PP school district, students with autism currently attend Severn from K-2nd grade and must move to Lindley-Presho for 3rd-5th grade. This instability impairs the ability of our disabled children to form friendships and causes loss of precious educational progress.

Alternative C includes the updates our schools need to adequately address the needs of our special education students. It includes dedicated space for OT, ST and PT services. It includes designated homes for self contained classrooms and allows children with severe autism to remain at one school for their

entire elementary education. Without passage of Alt. C, our special education students will continue to be treated like second class citizens.

We believe that most people in our community support the rights of all children with disabilities to an appropriate public education. Unfortunately there is a silent majority who did not vote on Dec. 15. For the sake of our most vulnerable children, please vote yes on March 16!

**Rebecca Burt
Robin and Ken Drury
Ann Nordman
Jim and Kris West**
Corning

Alt. C keeps all students in mind

TO THE EDITOR | I am a special education teacher in the Corning-Painted Post school district and I support the Alt. C Facilities plan. My classroom is currently at Lindley – Presho Elementary, but we have moved three times in the past six years. The students in my classroom have high needs and have difficulty adjusting to new places.

Each time my classroom is moved, the children must adapt to the change. Continuity and consistency is critical to all special needs children. It literally takes months to get them acclimated to the physical layout of a new school, not to mention the new people, processes, traditions and celebrations!

As a special education teacher, I see the very best that our schools have to offer, but I also see the very worst. I see dedicated occupational, physical and speech therapists doing their very best to teach in hallways, closets and storage areas. I see my students forced to start fresh again and again rather than benefiting from long-term relationships with their peers and therapists in a designated school.

I believe the Alt. C Facilities Plan has been developed with all students in mind. I look forward to working with our district administrators to realize a future when each special needs student has a dedicated classroom in the same building year after year. These most fragile students must be ensured the consistency they crave and deserve. Please vote "yes" on Tuesday.

Laurie Knaus DiFrancesco
Special Educator

Let teachers know we care

TO THE EDITOR | There have been several comments made in recent letters that claim our school buildings have little to do with good education, it's the quality of teachers that matter the most. I agree that a good education has everything to do with qualified teachers and we are very fortunate to have many in this district. However, have you wondered how long these great teachers will remain in our district considering the conditions they have to work in every day? Imagine your own job.

Imagine you had to work out of a closet or a converted shower room, or you had to keep the window open in winter because you couldn't control the heat or you had to duct tape it closed because it wouldn't stay shut on its own. Imagine if you didn't have dedicated office space and instead had to work from a cart and move it to wherever there happened to be room available at a given time. Imagine if you had to teach some new employees a skill that required concentration and all that stood between you and a noisy lunch room was a curtain. Imagine if you asked your boss to remedy these issues so that you could be more productive but he couldn't, even though you are a highly motivated employee, contribute greatly to your company and show up on time every day without complaining. Would you feel valued? Probably not. And how long would you stay and work in those conditions when you know there's a company right down the street with a great environment and a growing business?

What will happen if this community in which our teachers live and work continually tells them that we don't care? We will start losing these qualified teachers to communities and districts that do care. And then what are we left with? Substandard teachers AND substandard buildings. This will equate to no new families moving into the district, a decrease in the tax base, and an INCREASE in our taxes. Your choice. Please let our teachers know that we value them. Vote Yes on March 16th.

Kim Cates
Corning