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Letters To The Editor

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Beer stains city's parades and festivals

Although I missed viewing the St. Patrick's Day Parade this year, I did have some interesting experiences on East Avenue the afternoon of March 13. I parked on Matthews Street around 3:15 and headed up East Avenue to the Little Theatre to enjoy a matinee.

Happily, I encountered a young mother with her two preschoolers. One child was grinning from ear to ear, expressing her joy about having a souvenir from the parade. Her forehead nearly disappeared

below her plastic green hat. I continued on, noting the usually colorful scraps that are left behind after a parade.

Unfortunately, I also encountered beer bottles and broken glass on the sidewalk. I could hear behind me the conversation between a couple arguing about their plans for the rest of the day. The man had decided that his companion was "too drunk to reason with." He said that perhaps he should just leave her there.

Need I ask which of these two encounters paints an inviting picture of a wholesome family event in downtown Rochester?

I have lived in the Rochester area for more than 50 years. I have had many wonderful times downtown since childhood. Why in recent years has there been such an emphasis on beer tents and drinking parties? Wouldn't it be just as easy to promote downtown as a place for family fun? Or isn't there as much money in that?

CAROL DESPOS

HILTON

Beware of media's impact on democracy

The Democrat and Chronicle coverage of my March 8 forum on media consolidation was misleading. About 500 people attended, demonstrating the importance of this issue for our community. Unfortunately, those who read about it the next day would never know what actually happened because of the strange reporting.

Despite the misleading headline, "Seminar zeroes in on big media," the discussion actually dealt with issues of real concern, including the lack of home-produced news and the dangers that growing consolidation poses to the quality of information citizens need to make informed decisions.

Your story makes the silly characterization that I am "opposed to 'big media.'" I am not just concerned about media consolidation here; I worry about its impact on our entire nation and democracy. What happens when only three corporations control what the nation hears and reads?

Bill Moyers makes the point best: "A free and responsible government by popular consent just can't exist without an informed public. If free and independent journalism committed to telling the truth without fear or favor is suffocated, the oxygen goes out of democracy."

A report of this event as it happened would have been an excellent way to get the oxygen flowing again.

LOUISE SLAUGHTER

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Slaughter, D-Fairport, represents the 28th District in the House of Representatives.

Make any sacrifice for elders' well-being

Regarding the March 11 letter "Withhold lifesaving care for people over 75": What's next? Do we

withhold lifesaving medical attention from people in a car accident just because they may have debilitating injuries that society could be burdened with? What about the babies born who keep parents worrying about the costs of specialists and therapy? My concerns are more selfish. I have a mother who I pray to God reaches 100 someday, and in good health or not, I would give mine and yours whatever is needed at any age, as they have done for us. Health care can never be broken down to a dollars-and-cents issue; that's where the "care" comes in.

CLIFFORD L. HAGUE

ROCHESTER

Need more nurses as well as doctors

On March 3, Gov. Pataki announced \$33 million in funding to support resident training programs for future physicians in 96 teaching hospitals. In the greater Rochester region, the governor's initiative would provide \$1.83million to five hospitals.

The governor's current budget proposal includes no funding for nursing education and does not address the alarming shortage of registered nurses. In 2000, the demand for registered nurses in New York exceeded supply by 16,725 positions. In our region, 20.8 percent of nurses plan to leave the profession within five years, according to the state Education Department.

Staffing by registered nurses determines how patients will fare in hospitals and nursing homes. Understaffing endangers patients' lives and leads to nurse burnout, causing more registered nurses to leave the profession.

Gov. Pataki must address this unprecedeted shortfall by backing the New York State Nurses Association's proposed scholarship programs and incentives designed to attract more students to the nursing profession and more nurses into faculty positions.

CHRISTINE W. SALTZBERG

PITTSFORD

Saltzberg is a registered nurse.

Following the lead of San Francisco

I would like to thank the mayor of San Francisco for his fascinating and progressive approach to governing. He has decided that gay marriage is legal because in his personal interpretation of the law, it should be. Of course, there is a written statute in California law against it, and only the courts have the legal right to interpret the law, but such things are a minor concern when you are a progressive liberal.

Think of all the wonderful new opportunities his action has afforded us. Let's go blockade an abortion clinic because (using the same equal rights clause the mayor is using for his current actions) the rights of fetuses are being violated. There is a law against this, but we can certainly find a sympathetic government official to interpret the law to suit our case.

How about legalizing all gun ownership without restriction? It can't be too hard to find an understanding mayor who will creatively interpret the law to allow this. The possibilities are endless, and creating your own laws is certainly faster than going through the bothersome process of following

the rules of government.

BOB LANN

SPENCERPORT

Best performance in a local commercial

I find it hard to believe that I recently saw a good local commercial on television.

The attractive and talented lady doing the cable commercial should get an award for her performance.

No, she is not my girlfriend, but I can dream, can't I?

CHARLES H. STRONG

HILTON

Local 'toon

A local cartoonist's view

JIM BRANDETSAS

PENFIELD

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