

EDITORIAL

After a heated race for Congress, region needs to focus on its common concerns



U.S. Rep. Tom Reed, R-Corning, left, is given a tour in July of CAF USA facilities in Elmira Heights.

With a hot and bitter congressional campaign fading into the rear view mirror, a big pothole in the road is just around the next curve for the Southern Tier.

For the 11 counties comprising the 23rd Congressional District, voters in 10 counties on Tuesday gave nearly two to one victory margins to Republican Tom Reed of Corning over Democrat Martha Robertson of Dryden.

Then, there was Tompkins County. Its vote tally in the race stood out like a thumb on a mitten.

In the district's most eastern county, two of three Tompkins voters favored Robertson over incumbent Reed. The political gap between Tompkins County and every other county is striking. Therein, lies the pothole in the road ahead.

The overwhelming re-election support Reed received in 10 of the district's counties suggests the interests of Tompkins County voters can now stand at the end of the line in the 23rd congressional district.

For Reed, who faced Tompkins County Democratic opponents in both 2014 and 2012 and a two-to-one rejection by its Tompkins voters in those elections, the Ithaca area must seem like a hostile place.

For many Tompkins County voters who chafed at Reed's campaign ads that mocked opponent Robertson as just another out-of-touch, Ithaca liberal, the hostility was returned.

And, judging from the pro-con Ithaca catcalls at the Reed-Robertson debates in October, more than a few district voters embraced the hostility for the residents of the southern shores of Cayuga Lake.

That kind of simmering hostility will be bad for us all.

Tompkins County can't afford to marginalize its neighbors or its re-elected congressman any more than Reed and 10 counties can brush off Tompkins. We are stuck with each other. That's why in the next few months we must figure out how to work with each other.

To close the political divide opened in the campaign, we will need to find the common interests that link all our communities. There are many.

Jobs and economic growth are significant common interests. Cornell University and Corning Inc. are major partners with Binghamton University in developing high-tech starts up in the Southern Tier. Reed's efforts to encourage small manu-

facturing are part of that common ground in building a better future for our region.

Cornell plays a role in every Southern Tier county from improving agriculture to research into science and technology that create new businesses and jobs. Reed's efforts to fund federal research programs at Cornell bring benefits across his district.

Our region's system of highways and airports are vital links for our communities and part of our shared interests. Reed efforts to steer federal funds to regional transportation projects benefit us all.

Millions of federal dollars support important flood control projects that protect our communities, rebuild our cities and fund public safety agencies, schools and hospitals. Our region will be more effective in gaining those federal dollars by working collaboratively.

The diversity of the people and counties of New York's 23rd assures it will often split along political fault lines. Embracing those divisions assures us a dimmer future than what we can achieve by embracing our common interests.

We Be People

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

— The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution

WRITE TO US

We welcome letters no longer than 200 words. Please include your name, address and a daytime telephone number. We edit for brevity, accuracy, clarity and grammar. Edited letters should address a single idea. We reject anonymous letters, poetry, Internet pass-alongs and form letters. Writers are limited to one letter within 30 days. Letters and articles may be published in print, electronic media or other forms. We regret we cannot return or acknowledge unpublished letters.

E-mail:
sgletters@gannett.com

What do you think?
Comment on today's letters:
stargazette.com/viewpoints



U.S. Rep. Tom Reed, left, R-Corning, and Assemblyman Phil Palmesano, R-Corning, present the Congressional Award to Sophie Kartzman for her school's work with the American Red Cross' Holiday Mail for Heroes.

Dream big, Sophie Kartzman

We have a leading candidate for president in 24 years or so right here in the Twin Tiers; her name is Sophie Kartzman.

Sophie is 11 years old and a student at Horseheads Intermediate School. She's the girl that Star-Gazette staff writer Jennifer Kingsley introduced us to last week when she told of Sophie's goal to gather 1,000 holiday cards to send to troops serving overseas and in VA hospitals in the U.S.

Sophie topped her goal a few days after the story ran.

So, what did Sophie do? She didn't stop collecting cards. She just raised the goal to 2,000.

This is where you come in. Yes, I would love it if each person who reads this column writes just one note of thanks to a soldier they don't know and drops it off at either the Star-Gazette, 201 Baldwin St., Elmira, or Corning Chiropractic Associates, 75 W. Pulteney St. in Corning or Corning Country Club in East Corning.

But this is really the reason you need to help Sophie: We need to encourage young

females like her to consider a career in politics.

A survey done in September by Girl Scouts of the USA found most teen and tween girls are interested in politics (67 percent), and most are engaged in political, civic or leadership activities (93 percent), but only 37 percent are interested in pursuing a career in politics.

"Girls today want to make a difference in the world," said Anna Maria Chavez, CEO of Girl Scouts of the USA. "They are just looking for the best path to do it. We know girls want to be leaders and to make a positive impact on the world, which makes them excellent candidates for future politicians making decisions to benefit society. If girls aren't seeing a political career as an option, then it's time to look at the messages we are sending them — and to change those messages."

Amen. According to the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University, at least 20 women — one runoff election will be held in December — will serve in the Senate when the new term begins. There will be new record number of women, at least 81 — some races are

still too close to call — in the House. There could be up to 105 women in Congress come January.

Think about that number: 105. Out of total of 535.

We have a problem somewhere.

Girls surveyed by the Girl Scouts believe men are more likely than women to be encouraged to pursue politics and be taken seriously as politicians. These same girls said the media depicts female politicians poorly, showing them as emotional and less competent than males. Of the girls surveyed, 74 percent said they would have to work harder to be taken seriously than a man if they went into politics.

We need our Congress to represent the demographics of the country. And, we need the collaborative leadership style that women offer.

The Center for American Women and Politics is working on a solution too, with a "Teach a Girl to Lead."

You can help. Encourage the girls in your life to lead and support them. Do your part by supporting Sophie's holiday card drive.

Dream big, Sophie.

Lois Wilson is senior editor of the Star-Gazette. Reach her at lwilson@stargazette.com or (607) 271-8284.



Lois Wilson
Editor's Corner

TODAY IN HISTORY

Today is Sunday, Nov. 9, 2014. On this date:

» In 1872, fire destroyed nearly a thousand buildings in Boston.

» In 1918, Germany's Kaiser Wilhelm II announced that he would abdicate. He then fled to the Netherlands.

» In 1935, United Mine Workers president John L. Lewis and other labor leaders formed the Committee for Industrial Organization.

» In 1938, Nazis looted and burned synagogues as well as Jewish-owned stores and houses in Germany and Austria in what became known as Kristallnacht.

» In 1953, the Supreme

Court upheld a 1922 ruling that major league baseball did not come within the scope of federal antitrust laws.

» In 1963, twin disasters struck Japan as some 450 miners were killed in a coal-dust explosion, and 160 people died in a train crash.

» In 1965, the great Northeast blackout occurred, as several states and parts of Canada were hit by a series of power failures lasting up to 13½ hours.

» In 1967, a Saturn 5 rocket carrying an unmanned Apollo spacecraft blasted off from Cape Kennedy on a successful test flight.

» In 1987, Senate Minority

Leader Bob Dole formally announced a bid for the Republican presidential nomination during a visit to his hometown of Russell, Kan.

» In 1989, communist East Germany threw open its borders, allowing citizens to travel freely to the West. Joyous Germans danced atop the Berlin Wall.

» In 1992, visiting London, Russian President Boris Yeltsin appealed for help in re-scheduling his country's debt, and urged British businesses to invest.

» In 1996, Evander Holyfield upset Mike Tyson to win the WBA heavyweight title in Las Vegas.

DOONESBURY

