



## Letters for June 01, 2009

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Nothing reverend in writer's letters

My dictionary defines reverend as, "deserving to be treated with respect." Reading his opinions, I've seen nothing reverend in (The Rev.) Mitch Wright. Condescension, yes. Sarcasm, yes. Intolerance, yes. Reverence, no.

Mitch compares waterboarding to other torture techniques such as "burning body parts, mutilation (e.g., cutting out an adversary's tongue), beatings by whips and cattle prods." and finds it wanting. Indeed, he calls waterboarding "nonviolent." Mitch equates being waterboarded with listening to Obama speak.

I recommend Mitch volunteer to be waterboarded, as did Erich "Mancow" Muller, a conservative Chicago radio personality. "I wanted to prove it wasn't torture," Erich said. "They cut off our heads; we put water on their face. I really thought, I'm going to laugh this off." The TV cameras were there in the studio as he did this stunt live, on-the-air. A paramedic from the Chicago Fire Department stood by. Administering the technique was Marine Sergeant Clay South. The cloth was put over his nose. The water was poured on his face. He lasted six seconds before he sat bolt upright and declared, "It's way worse than I thought it would be. It was instantaneous and I don't want to say this, absolute torture."

Keep in mind that he was able to stop whenever he chose to, whereas a detainee in custody is not only powerless to stop it, but doesn't know when or if it will stop. You are drowning and are powerless to stop it.

Nonviolent, Mitch? The May 10, 2005, Bradbury memo notes that CIA doctors present during waterboarding stood by with necessary equipment to perform a tracheotomy if necessary. But the point is not whether waterboarding is as bad as some other form of torture. The point is, it's torture.

That's not American or Christian. Definitely not reverend.

Michael Perry

Davenport

Town slow to act on railroad bridge

I thank you for this opportunity to vent about the continued closure of the Pony Farm Railroad Bridge. Since I-88 was built, the railroad bridge and Otego Creek bridge to the industrial park have been the only means of access for us and emergency vehicles to our small community. In June 2006, floods washed out the creek bridge and the RR bridge was the only access for several months. We made a request to the town board that the decaying railroad bridge be repaired or replaced. In September 2006, it was announced that the bridge would be replaced in 2008.

In November 2006, a letter was sent to DOT concerning poor sightlines at Pony Farm Road and state Route 7

intersection. No response has been received from DOT. Requests to the town to contact DOT on our behalf have also been fruitless.

On Jan. 25, 2008, sadly our fear was realized, the railroad bridge was closed. We learned that the funds approved by the state in 2006 were tied to an equal amount to be paid by CP Rail and, in 18 months, no progress had been made to reach an agreement with CP Rail. Finally on April 25, 2008, an agreement was reached and the bridge was to reopen by spring 2009. But, the failure of our town officials to act with a sense of urgency means this date will be missed and progress seems glacial.

Not only is this bridge important to those of us directly affected, but it also stands as the gateway to Oneonta for those entering on Route 7. The closed bridge is an eyesore and evidence of a community in decline. Now is an excellent chance to have this entrance to our town be a source of pride rather than shame, and vibrancy rather than decay.

Bill Castine

Oneonta

Better alternatives than gas drilling

I was heartened to read in the Memorial Day weekend edition of The Daily Star that an Otsego County board committee is taking a stand regarding gas drilling in the county to protect residents from potentially harmful effects of the fracking process. From what I've heard, the list of chemicals injected into wells is pretty much all carcinogens.

One of the biggest problems in this leasing situation is that lessors may not only pollute their own land and water, but likely that of their neighbors and eventually entire communities. There is no promise of vast wealth or even reasonable royalties, especially if the gas company doesn't find much gas, then packs up and vacates, leaving the land owner with a poisoned, worthless piece of property. This could happen after enduring months or years of round-the-clock noise from drills and tanker trucks.

Yes, it is true we must satisfy our need for energy, but why aren't we utilizing our historically famous ingenuity and developing viable alternatives to fossil fuel? We've only been talking about it for 40-plus years.

I read an article in the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute's alumni magazine that describes a successful solar cell research project. They've developed a coating material for solar panels that increases the absorption of harvestable solar energy from the current 67.4 percent to 96.21 percent and made it efficient from all angles. Imagine if these were mass-produced and affordable.

Renny Mietzfeld

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