

## Letters to the editor for Tuesday, March 15, 2011

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### 'Conspiracy' revealed

I hesitate to use the word conspiracy because it has been so discredited by those in high places who don't like us looking behind the veil, but when Gov. Walker of Wisconsin got caught colluding over the phone by a gonzo reporter, he revealed the outline of a "conspiracy" between government officials and corporate oligarchs determined to destroy the middle class, and the union movement that created it.

Our media only create the illusion of informing us. For example, did you know that the fortune the Koch brothers inherited from their father (a founding member of the John Birch Society) was amassed by building the oil industry infrastructure in the former Soviet Union?

These are the same people who bankrolled the tea party to disrupt town hall meetings by calling the president a socialist. They would love to lower our standards of living so we can compete with slave labor in China.

Wake up, America. Your democracy is being replaced by a klepto-plutocracy that hated the way FDR handled the first Great Depression.

Dr. Edward P. Fisher

Pine Bush

### SUNY budget cut a concern

On behalf of Anthony Adamo, SUNY New Paltz chapter president of the Civil Service Employees Association, Richard Kelder, SUNY New Paltz chapter president of the United University Professions, and myself as interim president, I write to express serious concern about Gov. Cuomo's proposed 10 percent budget cut to SUNY.

Each of us has a different leadership role at SUNY New Paltz, but we all worry about the harm such cuts, if enacted, will bring to our public educational mission and our role as a major economic engine in the region. Without other revenue, we anticipate fewer courses that may make timely graduation difficult, larger class sizes, a hiring freeze, and consolidation or elimination of jobs, programs and support services.

In the absence of restored state funding, a five-year rational tuition plan is the clearest path to provide campuses like New Paltz with revenue to maintain courses, programs and jobs. SUNY tuition is among the lowest in the nation.

The SUNY Student Assembly supports a tuition increase, and we encourage everyone who cares about SUNY and the future of public higher education in New York to write to state leaders encouraging them to support such a plan.

Donald Christian

Interim president, SUNY New Paltz

## **Life skills most important**

Very few high school athletes will play college ball, and fewer will make it to the big leagues. Most, however, will be husbands, fathers, employees and employers.

Some athletic programs look the other way when athletes use drugs and alcohol or skip class. Some coaches lose their temper and spew four-letter words when things don't go well. These programs generally do a poor job teaching valuable life skills. In contrast, athletic programs and coaches who demand that kids put their all into both their education as well as their sport help both current and future students. Younger kids see what it takes to be a successful team member and start preparing themselves before they ever make the team.

While it is critical to a team's success to teach children to pass, run and catch, the really important lessons are hard work, learning to press on when you have made a mistake or all hope seems gone, discipline, sacrifice, teamwork, responsibility and respect. Those are skills that will help kids be successful in life. If those skills aren't learned, the program is a failure no matter what the team's record is.

Debbie Gerber

West Point