

Campus Climate

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Staff Writer

Voltaire once wrote, “Opinion has caused more trouble on this little earth than plagues or earthquakes.” Recent reactions to articles published in *Enquiry* certainly support Voltaire’s assertion. Two articles, one on the relationship between violence and radical Islam, and another on radical feminism, provoked a slew of YikYaks and an all-campus email challenging the writers of this publication to hold an all-campus meeting to explain themselves. Then, several dozen students came to *Enquiry*’s weekly staff meeting, where many did not say anything, just observed the proceedings and later bombarded my editors with questions. Finally, last week’s issues of *Enquiry* disappeared from campus, presumably thrown away (hopefully recycled) in an organized, methodical fashion.

These events can be interpreted as attempts to shame and intimidate those who might have different opinions into silence. The close-minded environment on this campus cheapens our overall educational experience and minimizes the opportunities for students to articulate, express, challenge, and refine their own thoughts and opinions.

The damage done to our

educational community is best demonstrated by an editorial published in the *Spectator* on January 31. In this editorial, the unnamed “Editorial Staff” writes, “Opinions definitely open the door for offense more—if the reader disagrees with the writer, then the two face a certain impasse.”

I respectfully disagree with this assertion. The notion that a difference of opinion creates an impasse between two parties—whether the parties are author and reader, participants in a conversation, friends, or family—increases the stakes of holding opinions and discourages people from expressing opinions. As a result, students miss a rich opportunity to engage with one another and refine their view of the world. I’ve found that some of my biggest moments of personal growth on this campus came from engaging not with like-minded people, but with those who hold vastly different opinions than I do. For a particularly extraverted person like myself, internal reflection is not as useful as vocalizing my opinions. I’ve only realized the error in some of my thoughts or actions when engaging with others and listening to what they have to say. Through these conversations, others exposed me to new ways of thinking and interpreting information that were entirely foreign to me. Yet, in an environment where a difference of opinion is thought to create an

impasse in a relationship, reaching out to others, expressing my opinion, and learning from theirs becomes an increasingly difficult task.

So where does that leave us? As a student body, we must refuse to accept this damage to our educational environment. Hamilton College promises that by the time you graduate you will “Know Thyself.” In the words of English Professor Nathaniel Strout, “An important goal of education is to learn how to gather, evaluate, and present different kinds of evidence fairly—and to be willing to change your mind in accordance with the evidence.” Without exploring our personal opinions and the thoughts of others, the goal of “Know Thyself” becomes distant and unattainable and we lose a vital component of our education.

Instead of attacking others through anonymous social media, students should attempt to engage and persuade one another. Instead of allowing differences in opinion to create an impasse, students should discuss and collaborate. As a student body, we need to hold one another to a higher standard and view challenging conversations as means of growth, not methods of personal attacks. By creating an environment where differences in opinion can be accepted and celebrated, the overall quality of a Hamilton education will improve.

Cuomo’s Corrupt Capital

Alex Klosner | Staff Writer

The great state of New York has a rich history of scandal, sleazy back-room deals, and a culture of political corruption orchestrated by degenerate career politicians. Late last month, Manhattan Democrat Sheldon Silver resigned as speaker of the New York State Assembly after federal officials launched an investigation into a series of potential corruption cases.

According to the *New York Times*, Silver illegally received millions in legal fees from his law firm, Weitz & Luxenberg. A Manhattan oncologist agreed to refer his asbestos-related cancer patients to the law firm. In return, Silver awarded the oncologist over \$500,000 in taxpayer-funded research grants.

In addition to his \$121,000 government salary, Silver receives around \$650,000 annually from his law firm. The 70-year old crook is also charged with failing to report income from a real estate firm. Silver allegedly pocketed millions of dollars and spread his assets over six different

bank accounts. Federal courts have seized approximately \$3.8 million of Silver’s assets.

Manhattan U.S. attorney Preet Bharara stated, “As alleged, Speaker Silver never did any actual legal work. He simply sat back and collected millions of dollars by cashing in on his public office and political influence.” According to the *New York Post*, Silver faces five felony charges pertaining to fraud, extortion, and conspiracy. On January 22, the top Democrat surrendered himself at the FBI headquarters in lower Manhattan.

Sheldon Silver’s political plummet from power comes after Democratic Governor Cuomo controversially discontinued the Moreland Commission last year. In 2013, Cuomo established the Moreland Commission to combat corruption in Albany. While searching for violations of campaign finance laws, the commission issued a subpoena for “Buying Time,” an advertisement management firm. “Buying Time” manages advertisements for the campaigns of a number of prominent New York State Democrats, including Mr. Cuomo. The Moreland Commission did not realize

Cuomo was a top client until his top aide contacted a member of the commission demanding the immediate withdrawal of the subpoena.

Although Cuomo intended the commission to be an independent body free of external influences, later investigations revealed that the Cuomo administration interfered when it investigated groups with close ties to the governor. Cuomo later arrogantly said, "It's my commission, I can't 'interfere' with it, because it is mine. It is controlled by me." It's apparent that the governor has either violated campaign finance laws or did something blatantly unethical and politically unpopular.

Analyzing the objectionable activity of the two most powerful politicians in the New York State government

only scrapes the surface of the many corruption cases in recent New York history. The self-interested, nefarious politicians and the outright incompetence of the Albany elite have subjected New Yorkers to decades of bureaucratic nonsense and fiscal mismanagement. Every year, 100,000 people leave the state of New York. Political subjugation to New York City and its suburbs has resulted in deteriorating upstate cities, crumbling infrastructure, underfunded rural schools, and an exodus of businesses seeking refuge in the South.

In order to restore prosperity to New York, Albany must reverse its despicable habits of hostility towards business, eliminate fierce partisanship and ideological drivel, and drain the swamp of Albany corruption.

Common Ground on Climate

Phil Parkes | *Staff Writer*

Conservatives like myself have little reason to ignore the environmental effects of carbon emissions. Similarly, climate activists should not completely dismiss potential job creation in the energy sector, or job loss resulting from costly environmental restrictions.

Contrary to popular opinion, harm from carbon emissions does not come exclusively from the conservative disposition to be skeptical of "widely held statistics" or shy away from climate activism for fear of the negative economic effects. Rather, the greater, and perhaps more preventable harm occurs when climate activists abandon common ground with more moderate Americans to maintain the purity of their ideological views. Sadly, activists unwilling to reach across the aisle inevitably resort to government coercion for change, when cooperation between private citizens might accomplish much more.

The intellectual disconnect between passionate climate activists and market-based climate solutions begins at a troubling double standard: intolerance of opposing views. Many climate activists refuse to acknowledge conservatives who "deny," "doubt," or even express skepticism about the current climate science consensus, while simultaneously protecting all views to the contrary from criticism. My point is not that the current scientific consensus errs, although such a consensus merits discussion when so much hangs in the balance. Rather, my point is that climate change skeptics, particularly ones who control significant carbon emissions, can play an important role in reducing carbon emissions, and that labeling these skeptics as

socially or environmentally unclean simply undermines their ability to honorably play that role.

The scientific elite, however well-armed with statistics, will never win the public over entirely with their findings solely by compulsion or coercion. For the best possible carbon emissions reform to occur, business leaders must be convinced, not forced, to implement more responsible business practices

One vivid memory of compromise originated at a roundtable discussion on climate change held just before the People's Climate March last September. What was designed to elicit a critical self-reflection from students on their motives for marching quickly lapsed into a feel-good celebratory send-off. Students made vague remarks about "corporate treasure chests" and "wanting change" without expressing any clear plan. Most in the room disagreed when I began to express concerns about the March and climate science in general.

Looking back, I should have anticipated that some participants would have trouble accepting my views, which have since become more accepting, but still very critical, of human activity as a cause of climate change. Thankfully, some tolerated what had amounted to my nervous mumbling. By the end of the discussion, we had agreed that limiting the use of combative language among activists would help bring climate activists and carbon-emitting corporations together to seek reform.

I think that conservatives will step forward to address climate concerns when sensible, free-market solutions emerge. Conservative lawmakers and think tanks have recently expressed interest in climate engineering as a more practical solution to concerns about climate change. Support for climate engineering,

while itself a hubristic and perhaps unrealistic enterprise, indicates that conservatives do not lack the ability or desire to engage responsibly with the environment. They simply care too much about the welfare of their respective businesses, employees, and endowments to capitulate under the current body of evidence, and under state or international legal coercion.

For compromise to occur, well-represented discussion must flow freely. A right-of-center Dartmouth College newspaper recently joined a progressive environmental club and the college's Environmental Studies Department to discuss market-based solutions to climate change. Why can't Hamilton host such an event? Hamilton's Economics and Environmental Studies Departments, respectively, would pair well with a diverse array of business scholars recruited with support from the Alexander Hamilton Institute. Many will disagree about what matters most when it comes to jobs and the environment. But we need to preserve both. By creating a forum that nurtures open and productive discussions on climate change, Hamilton College can take a concrete step towards providing real solutions.

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