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Grins and groans

Grin

In today's economy we're all having to do without – the Steuben County Sheriff's Dept. is no exception. A canine officer would be a great help in taking a bite out of crime, but there isn't enough money in Sheriff Joel Ordway's budget to pay for a police dog.



However, a generous donation from the Bath Revitalization Group has brought Ordway closer to getting his wish. The group recently presented Ordway with a check of more than \$5,000.

With the donation, Ordway is optimistic he will be able to have a canine on staff by spring. The sheriff has a lot of thank-you notes to write: The Steuben County Veterans Memorial Inc., Bath Kiwanis, Hornell IOOF Lodge, the Knights of Columbus and the Steuben Trust Company of Hornell were some of the groups donating to the canine cause, as did a young girl who chipped in her Christmas money.

It's great to see the community play an important part in keeping us all safe.

If you're looking for fun and excitement this winter, you won't have to travel far.

Like to go to the theater? Check out the touring Broadway shows on the Clemens Center schedule. "In the Heights," "South Pacific," and 'Young Frankenstein" are all set to take the

The Elmira Little Theatre is busy too, with "Romeo and Juliet" and "Golden Age of Radio" ust a few of its planned productions for 2012. If sports are more your game, the Jackals,

Harlem Globetrotters and X-Treme Ice Racing highlight First Arena's schedule.

If you need a laugh, Howie Mandel will be in Elmira in February. There's plenty of music, too, thanks to the Corning-Painted Post Civic

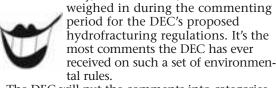
Music Association, the Orchestra of the Southern Finger Lakes and the Valley Folk Concert Series.

The Corning Museum of Glass will heat things up at its popular 2300 Degrees event.

And, of course, the ice rink at the Nasser Civic Center is a great place for families to get moving for an hour or two.

As we settle into a long winter, it's great to know there's plenty of local events to get us up off the couch. Stay tuned for previews of all of these events and more in The Leader.

When it comes to drilling in the Marcellus Shale region, New Yorkers aren't shy about speaking their minds on the controversial issu As of Thursday, more than 18,000 have



The DEC will put the comments into categories and then issue a response to each category. That means your comments are actually being read by those in control of hydrofracturing in the state.

The rules, which the DEC said will be the most stringent in the country, will likely pave the way for the state allowing drilling permits to be issued.

It's easy to believe your opinions have little sway over what goes on in Albany, but for once, they are asking what you think. If you haven't done so, let them know. Do it soon, because the deadline to comment is Wednesday.

Visit www.dec.ny.gov.

Groan

We welcome comments to stories we post on www.the-leader.com. However, fighting amongst



yourselves, personal attacks and offtopic posts are forcing us to review our policy on allowing responses. We will make our decision soon and let you know.

The LEADER

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ON THE FRONT PAGE

Corning clocktower by artist Larry Barone

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Elmer Kuehner | Circulation director

EDITORIAL

Stella DuPree | Managing editor sdupree@the-leader.com

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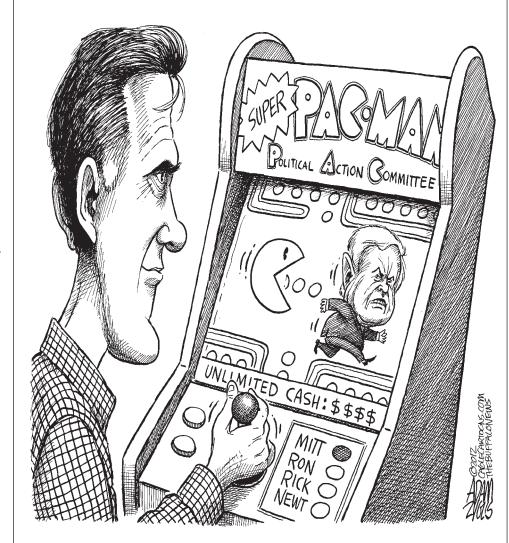
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ARTIST'S VIEW



POLITICS | SEN. TOM O'MARA

What do you think?

hen New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo offered up his second State of the State message in Albany's Convention Center last week and officially kicked off the Legislature's 235th annual session, the staging immediately delivered the unmistakable spirit of the day and the title of this year's address, "Building a New NY...with you."

Last week's reaffirmation of one of our government's key traditions marked only the second time throughout most of the past century that the speech wasn't delivered in the State Assembly Chamber, a move this governor first made last year to allow for greater public attendance. Agree or disagree (and there are always critics), it's symbolic yet again of what's clearly been the driving hope behind this chief executive's style of leadership so far, which he expressed this year this way in continuing to call up a new era in New York government, "We put the politics aside and put the people first. And it worked. And we worked. We delivered for the people – and we made this state a better state and I was honored be a part of it with you."

With these words in mind, t hen, let's first recall some of 2011's hallmarks: A rare, as far as recent history goes, ontime state budget, as well as a budget that contained no new or increased state taxes or fees. A middleclass tax cut at the end of the year. The first year-to-

year state spending decrease in more than a decade. Property tax cap. Ethics reform.

A new Spending and Government Efficiency (SAGE) Commission that remains at work on the first major overhaul of the state bureaucracy since the 1920s.

All of the above actions, and many others, were collectively welcomed by a variety of the people's representatives good government, business, environmental and other advocacy groups and government watchdogs, to name just a few as one of the most meaningful and productive legislative sessions in long, long time. In other words, many people believed we dug into more than a few of the right places last year and then stood firm in our determination to produce some

long-overdue successes. None of this is to say, however, that it's time sit and rest in the shade of past achievements. Far from it. In fact we've more than got our work cut out for us to match last year's accomplishments. But it helps to make the point that "standing firm" might be as good a guidepost as any other for the legislative session that's now underway. Will we stand firm on taxes, on controlling state spending, on the need for even more aggressive economic development, on more efficient, effective and cooperative government? I hope so. Put it this way: the crowning achievepinpoint the right places to place ou priorities this

So where, exactly, do we go from here? There are more than a few ideas already on the table. For example, mandate relief remains crucial to the successful implementation of the property tax cap. Governor Cuomo jus spelled out a comprehensive legislative blueprint for the Empire State in this new year (which, for anyone interested, can watched and read on www.governor.ny.gov).

But at the outset I'd also like to encourage all of you to share your own thoughts. One way to do this is through a new Legislative Questionnaire that I've recently sent out and will post online at www.omara.nysenate.gov. This 2012 Questionnaire includes questions on th continuing and deep-rooted economic and fiscal challenges facing the state as a whole, as well as on some of the other key concerns facing the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions - including mandate relief, ongoing Medicaid reform, job creation, infrastructure development, and the future of the Marcellus Shale natural gas industry. Obviously a short questionnaire can't possibly address every single issue, but your voices should be heard on these and other challenges. That's the very best

way to begin a new legislative year.

■ Tom O'Mara is a state ments of 2011 continue to senator from Big Flats.

Contact your representatives



O'Mara, R-Big Flats 105 E. Steuben St., Bath, N.Y. 14810 Phone: (607) 776-3201

Fax: (607) 776-5185



Assemblyman Phil Palmesano, **R-Corning** 105 E. Steuben St., Bath, N.Y. 14810

Phone: 607-776-9691

Fax: (607) 776-5185



Assemblyman Chris Friend, **R-Big Flats** 476 Maple St. P.O. Box 441 Big Flats, N.Y. 14814

(607) 562-3602

Obama biggest winner

owa is not the deciding factor. But it probably should have thinned the ranks of Republicans wanting to become president far more than it did.

THE INSIDER



Bob Rolfe

The only initial dropout was Texas Governor Rick Perry and he didn't really fold his tent. Perry said he was

suspending his campaign and going back to Texas to reconsider the future of his candidacy. Unfortunately, the next day, he changed his mind and came back.

The one who should have dropped out on the spot was Michele Bachman. Instead she waited one day and finally ran up the white flag. Her last-place finish Tuesday should have come as no surprise to anyone since she never really was a serious contender.

The next one who should go is Jon Huntsman, based on the Iowa results and the fact that his campaign never seems to have caught fire. But for the moment, he's still there and seems guaranteed to record last-place finishes as long as he stays in the race.

The results at the top of the list show an entirely different picture, however. Mitt Romney was the alleged winner, topping Rick Santorum by eight votes.

That result even in little Iowa is so close as to actually constitute a tie. Both men took 25 percent of the vote total, leaving next place to Texas Congressman Ron Paul.

Paul should be the candidate happiest at the Iowa results because his hard work paid off in a very big show of support, especially among young voters.

Paul is not a regular Republican in any sense of the word. He is an avowed Libertarian and makes no bones about his philosophical position.

In a race in which Conservative Republican orthodoxy seemed to be the most sought-after virtue, Paul's finish was extraordinary.

His vote total was far more impressive than the tally of either Romney or the former Pennsylvania senator, given the vast difference between his position and theirs.

So who was anointed Top Dog now that it's over? Romney considered from day one to be the favorite only received one quarter of the total vote. The same goes for Santorum.

Those aren't the numbers to scare off President Barack Obama.

He must be the only one whose smile exceeds that of Ron Paul.

A book about which I had no advance knowledge came my way at Christmas and I recommend it to any history

"Destiny of the Republic" is the title of the book. It is subtitled "A Tale of Madness, Medicine, and the Murder of a President." Author Candice Millard tells of the death of America's shortest serving president, James A. Garfield, and the medical mistakes that led to his death.

Charles Guiteau pulled the trigger but it was medical ignorance that killed the president.

The well-told tale is fascinating.

■ Bob Rolfe, a retired *Leader* reporter/editor, can be reached by writing The Leader, PO Box 1017, Corning, NY 14830 or theinsider1@aol.com.