

# OPINION

COMMENTARY | STATE SEN. TOM O'MARA, R-BIG FLATS

## First things first, what's your opinion?

What's your opinion? Governor Andrew Cuomo has delivered his third Inaugural Address and his ninth annual State of the State message to the Legislature, and he's even unveiled his proposed 2019-2020 state budget that, in my view, raises some troubling questions for the future of communities and taxpayers across the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions.

And so we get right to work. Numerous advocacy groups are busy setting the stage for this new year in state government by staking out public policy positions, advancing legislative priorities, and even recommending specific legislation. From agriculture to workforce development, there's an advocacy agenda for nearly every issue confronting the Legislature. For example, Unshackle Upstate recently put forth the group's annual blueprint. In releasing the "2019 Advocacy Agenda," Unshackle Upstate Executive Director Michael Kracker said, "A new year presents new opportunities for our leaders in Albany to help struggling taxpayers and strengthen the Upstate economy. Our 2019 agenda includes pro-growth reforms that will vastly improve our state's business climate and

allow Upstate to reach our full economic potential." "No new taxes?" will be one prominent question that needs to be answered this session, in my view. What about regulatory reform? Mandate relief? Nevertheless, special interest groups should not be the only ones weighing in, which is exactly why I encourage the residents of the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions to share your opinions, concerns, and suggestions for New York State government in 2019.

Every year I hear from thousands of constituents who take the time through an e-mail, a letter, a phone call, a community meeting, on the street, or in some other way to share their ideas and their views on the issues of the day. As you can imagine, we don't always see eye to eye – and that's as it should be. The input – negative or positive, constructive or not – is what matters. It helps provide the insight and understanding every legislator must have to represent his or her legislative district effectively.

As I have done annually since joining the Senate, an online "2019 Community and Legislative Survey" will be posted later this week on my Senate website, [www.omara.nysenate.gov](http://www.omara.nysenate.gov). The goal is to encourage local input on a range of specific challenges facing

the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes regions, such as private-sector job creation, government reform, education, mandate relief, public safety, health care, and transportation, among others.

For example, as I noted above, one of the overriding decisions in 2019 will be how to best address short- and long-term state budget priorities and possible deficits. Lower government spending? If so, less spending on what programs and services? What about rebuilding local roads and bridges? Expanding broadband access to underserved or unserved regions, especially in rural, Upstate New York? The need for job growth and workforce development? The need for less government regulation? Mandate relief? Education? Health care?

It's a long, long list, as well as a list with no quick-fix solutions. Consequently, it remains important to have a full public airing of what we are facing now, in the foreseeable future, and potentially even years from now – and this is one way to encourage it.

I have been offering these online surveys since beginning my tenure in the Senate in 2011. They are not scientific polls, but they do offer meaningful and useful snapshots of what's on the

See O'MARA, A5

## ANOTHER VIEW



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### I'm saying no to plastic bags

To the Editor, Frank Anastasio hit the nail directly on its head.

At seventy plus years old I do not want to belong to the one use plastic generation that is contaminating our planet.

It is ludicrous that we seem to need a plastic bag to carry even one or two items, which are already in a plastic bag or container, out of the store.

I have found that even at my age I am capable of carrying one, two or even three items without a plastic bag. The stores even let me do it.

Thank you Frank for this New Year reminder.  
Rich Hinkley, Caton

### Praise goes out to Cuomo

To the Editor, Governor Cuomo's inclusion of tobacco prevention measures in the 2019 proposed budget protects our youth from the ill effects of tobacco use.

As a volunteer with the American Heart Association, I'm proud that we – and other health organizations – have long advocated for anti-tobacco measures. We are glad to see included:

- raising the minimum legal sales age for tobacco products to 21.
- banning tobacco sales in pharmacies.
- banning the sales of flavored e-cigarettes, including mint and

menthol. These measures could spare youth the potentially deadly effects of a lifelong smoking habit. While the tobacco industry has done a good job marketing these products to youth through candy flavors and the false idea that they don't contain nicotine, the truth is, most contain the same amount of nicotine as a pack of cigarettes.

A 2015 study from the Institute of Medicine shows passing a Tobacco 21 law can stop young adults from picking up their first cigarette. It also makes it harder for high school students to purchase tobacco and pass it on to younger friends.

See LETTERS, A5

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Sun. 1/20	3:15, 6:15
Mon. 1/21	6:15
Tues. 1/22	*CLOSED
Wed. & Thurs.	6:15

**SPIDERMAN: INTO THE SPIDER-VERSE**  
(Shameik Moore, Jake Johnson, Hailee Steinfeld) PG (1 Hr 57 Min)

Fri. 1/18	6:30
Sat. 1/19	3:30, 9:00
Sun. 1/20	6:30
Mon. 1/21	6:30
Tues. 1/22	*CLOSED

**THE MULE**  
(Clint Eastwood, Bradley Cooper, Taisa Farniga) R (1 Hr 56 Min)

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# In Memoriam

## 2018 Tributes

### A Special supplement to THE LEADER

*This section will publish February 3rd and be featured in our subscriber copies only. Copies will be available for purchase starting February 4th and after. To get yours, please visit The Leader office at 34 W Pulteney St., Corning, NY.*

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## OBITUARIES

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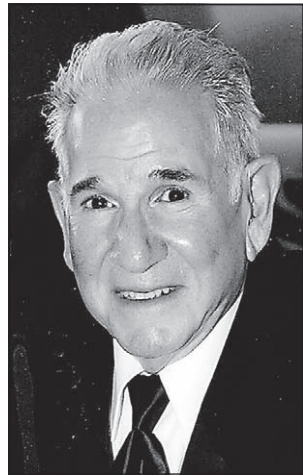


**Rev. M. Duane Burdick**

Rev. M. Duane BURDICK, 71, of Harrison Valley, PA, died Thursday, January 17, 2019 in Robert Packer Hospital, Sayre, PA. Born January 19, 1947, in Potter Brook, he was the son of Merrill H. and Louise E. Knight Burdick. On September 13, 1969, in Potter Brook, he married the former Fern Houghtaling, who survives. A 1964 graduate of Cowanesque Valley High School and a 1968 graduate of Houghton College, he was ordained as a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He served as pastor of Potter Brook People's Church and the Valley Mission Church in Westfield. He served as social worker and assistant superintendent of the Northern Tier Children's Home for many years and as human resources director for Adelphi Village at Northern Tier, retiring in 2009. He was a member of Gospel Tabernacle in Coudersport and a life member of the Harrison Township Volunteer Fire Company and active in several other local fire service organizations. Surviving besides wife, Fern, are: a son, Mark (Kristin) Burdick of Westfield; two grandchildren, Connor Burdick and Markenna Burdick; a sister, Dorothy (Russell) Outman of Westfield; three brothers, Kelly (Mitzi) Burdick of Sabinsville, Kent (Tammy) Burdick of Knoxville, and Kevin (Gina) Burdick of Westfield; an aunt, Phyllis Hancock of Coudersport; nieces and

nephews. He was predeceased by his parents.

Friends may call Tuesday, January 22, 2019 from 2:00 - 4:00 and 7:00 - 9:00 PM at the Olney Funeral Home & Cremation Service, Ulysses, PA. Funeral Services will be held 1:00 PM, Wednesday in the Gospel Tabernacle, Coudersport, PA. The Rev. John Minor will officiate. Burial will be in Riverview Cemetery, Potter Brook. Memorials may be made to the Gospel Tabernacle, 420 Rte. 6 West, Coudersport, PA 16915, Harrison Township Volunteer Fire Co., 112 E. Tannery St., Harrison Valley, PA, or the Northern Tier Children's Home, 4309 SR 49, Harrison Valley, PA 16927. Online condolences may be expressed at [www.olney-funeralhome.com](http://www.olney-funeralhome.com).



**Salvatore M. "Sam" LaLomia**

Big Flats - Salvatore M. "Sam" LaLomia, 83, of Big Flats, NY passed away on Wednesday, January 16, 2019 at home with his family by his side. Born in North Collins, New York on June 10, 1935, he was the son of the late August and the late Salvatrice (Baglia) LaLomia. Sam served in the United States Air Force from 1954 to 1958. He was married to Mary Ann Rome on June 6, 1964 in North Collins, NY. After earning his bachelor's degree from Bradley University, Sam worked as a Mechanical

Engineering manager for Corning, Inc., retiring in 1994 with 32 years of service.

He is survived by his wife; Mary Ann, sons; Kurt (Jan), Mark (Margaret), Brian (Carolee) and Barry (Lindsay), grandchildren; Francis, Felicia, Eric, Madeline, Grace, Brody, Cooper, Ashley and Sarah, and siblings; Joe and Carmella.

Sam loved to spend time working in his garden and restoring his antique cars. He was a member of three different antique car clubs in the area. Sam spent much of his time visiting with his family and enjoying good food and wine from around the world. You could often find him behind the camera, taking pictures of his relatives and the many trips he took with his wife over the years. Both Sam and Mary Ann were active members in the Mount Savior Monastery, and Sam recently started volunteering his time candle-making there.

Family and friends are invited to visitation on Tuesday, January 22, 2019 from 2:00 to 4:00 and 6:00 to 8:00 pm at Carpenter's Funeral Home, 14 E. Pulteney St., Corning, NY. A memorial service will be held at Mount Saviour Monastery, 231 Monastery Road, Pine City, NY on Wednesday, January 23, 2019 at 9:00 am. Burial with full military honors will be held at Bath National Cemetery, Bath, NY at 1:00 pm.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Sam's name may be made to Mount Saviour Monastery, 231 Monastery Rd., Pine City, NY 14871.

Kind words and memories may be shared at: [www.CarpentersFuneralHome.com](http://www.CarpentersFuneralHome.com).



### DEATH NOTICES

#### Ronald A. King

Ronald A. King, 59, of Bath, died Thursday, Jan. 17, 2019 at the Arnot Ogden Medical Center. Burial will be in Bath National Cemetery. Arrangements are

with Bond-Davis Funeral Home, Bath.

#### Theodore A. Chapman

Theodore A. Chapman, 85, of Horseheads, died Thursday, Jan. 17, 2019. Calling hours are 6-8

p.m. Wednesday at Lynch Funeral Home, 318 W. Broad St., Horseheads.

Services will be held there at 11 a.m. Thursday. Burial will be in Maple Grove Cemetery.

## LETTERS

From Page A4

Smoking remains a leading risk factor for heart disease and is the leading cause of preventable death. Tobacco control measures that reduce smoking rates save lives. **Dr. Joseph Scopelliti**  
Guthrie President and CEO

#### Devotion

To the Editor,  
After retiring from Corning Inc. I still needed to keep busy.

As a prolific author of scientific papers, I decided to try my hand at writing fiction. Very quickly I realized that I needed to learn a different set of skills to be successful, so I joined the Adult Writers Group at the Corning Library.

I would recommend this course of action for any writer.

Some of the members were poets, before those

meetings I had never thought much about poetry. But after listening to some of their poems I realized that this might be the purest form of written communication. These people described the world as they saw it, in a way that expressed their deepest emotions.

My wife is in hospice care and is dying of cancer. The sonnets I heard inspired me to try to gather my thoughts about marital bonds, and to try to write a poem as a tribute to her.

Real wealth is not a measure Of temporary riches one can attain

The love of a woman is the only treasure That will always remain Passion is wasted on youth

Coupling of the flesh isn't an intimate edge But melding of the mind is in truth

The only everlasting pledge

The hardest thing I've ever done

Is to watch her slowly die

To comfort her as best I can And by her bedside silently cry

The days are lonely and long Without her there is no dawning

The sunshine she brought is gone When I reach for her each morning That's when I know she's really left

Forever When our lives are over Our memories will not fade

The joys and sorrows we have shared We will take to the grave

As I wrote this, I finally began to understand the passion that poets felt about the satisfaction of putting their feelings into words. I hope that reading this will comfort others, suffering under similar circumstances, to replace the inevitable with the remembrances of a loving relationship.

**Paul Tick, Corning**

## AP Fact Check: Trump's twists on Russia, shutdown, vets

By Hope Yen and Calvin Woodward  
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — It was a week of half-truths, changed stories and outright fabrications in President Donald Trump's Washington.

Trump assaulted Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., for playing on the beach in Puerto Rico, though she never went. His vice president echoed Trump's declaration of victory against the Islamic State group despite a deadly suicide bombing for which the militants claimed responsibility. Trump overstated what he's done for veterans.

A look at some of the rhetoric from Trump and his team as the president faced intensifying pressure over the partial government shutdown and scrutiny from Democrats over his dealings with Russia:

### THE SHUTDOWN

TRUMP: "Nancy Pelosi's in Hawaii over the holidays, now she's in Puerto Rico with a bunch of Democrats and lobbyists, you know, enjoying the sun and partying down there." — Fox News interview on Jan. 12.

TRUMP: "I'd rather see the Democrats come back from their vacation and act... I'm in the White House, and most of them are in different locations. They're watching a certain musical in a very nice location." — Fox News interview.

TRUMP: "A lot of the Democrats were in Puerto Rico celebrating something. I don't know, maybe they're

celebrating the shutdown." — comments Monday.

THE FACTS: Far from "enjoying the sun" in Puerto Rico, Pelosi stayed in Washington, which got a big snowfall. She spent that weekend working at the Capitol, said Drew Hammill, her deputy chief of staff.

Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer did not go to Puerto Rico, either. The senator from New York spent that weekend in New York, said spokesman Justin Goodman.

Most Democratic lawmakers were somewhere other than Puerto Rico. Most who went are members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus. They attended the annual winter retreat of the caucus's political and fundraising arm.

Some attended "Hamilton" as the musical opened a two-week run in Puerto Rico expected to raise millions of dollars for artists and cultural groups struggling in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria. Referring to Democrats at the fundraising performance in his Fox News interview, Trump called it "frankly, ridiculous."

During the trip, lawmakers indeed met political contributors but also made several visits to local and federal institutions, said Marieli Padro, spokeswoman for Puerto Rico Resident Commissioner Jennifer Gonzalez. Last Saturday, a small group visited the veterans' hospital to learn about its needs post-hurricane, while another group met U.S. Coast Guard officials.

Trump is correct that Pelosi visited Hawaii over

the Christmas holiday.

KEVIN HASSETT, Trump economic adviser: "You know as soon as it's resolved, then people get their paychecks and the government will go back to acting normal and the economy will go back to the 3 percent growth that President Trump's policies have delivered." — interview Tuesday with Fox Business Network.

THE FACTS: It's true the economy probably will get a boost once the shutdown ends, but few independent economists think that boost will be sustained. The economy is facing other headwinds that make it unlikely growth will return to 2018's pace. Before the shutdown, most independent economists already were forecasting that growth would slow this year as the impact of President Trump's tax credit fades and trade tensions and slowing global growth take a toll.

Even if the government shutdown ends up being a wash in economic terms, with strong growth in the second quarter offsetting weakness in the first, the economy is likely to be weaker this year than last. Scott Anderson, an economist at Bank of the West, expects last year's stock market drop will cause many wealthier households to pull back on spending, a drag on growth this year.

He's not alone. A group of 15 economists at major U.S. banks earlier this month projected that growth would slow to just a 2.1 percent pace in 2019, down from roughly 3 percent in 2018.

## Governors: Let states give unemployment to federal workers

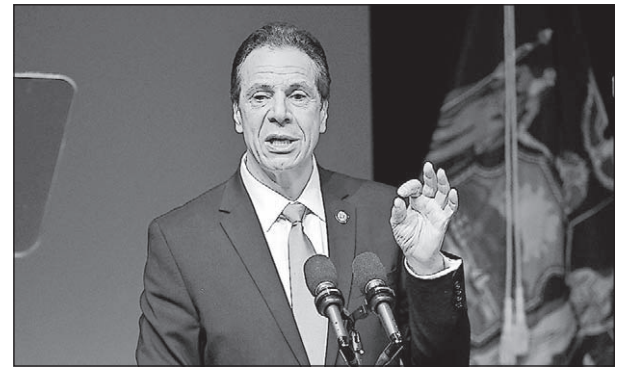
By David Eggert  
The Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. — The Democratic governors of Michigan, New York and Washington on Friday asked the Trump administration to let states offer unemployment benefits to federal employees who are working without pay during the partial government shutdown that began nearly a month ago.

Governors Gretchen Whitmer, Andrew Cuomo and Jay Inslee said in a joint statement that their states are providing the benefits to furloughed workers. But federal regulations prevent those who are on the job without pay from eligibility.

The governors called on the U.S. Labor Department to immediately provide "clear, unambiguous" guidance on whether states have flexibility to waive the rules to help those working without pay — Transportation Security Administration officers, air traffic controllers, Coast Guard members and others. If the flexibility does not exist, they said, the department should work with congressional leaders to change the law.

"Simply put, there is no rational justification to deny these employees the same short-term relief being offered to furloughed federal employees across the country," the



In a Jan. 15 file photo, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo delivers his State of the State address in Albany. (HANS PENNING/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS)

governors said. They said they are "profoundly distressed" by the 28-day shutdown, which is "badly hurting" federal employees in their states and across the country.

Thousands of federal employees and their families are applying for unemployment to get by as the longest government shutdown in U.S. history drags on with no end in sight to the standoff over the Republican president's demand for money to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border.

The Labor Department says federal employees not working during the shutdown can collect unemployment, while those who are on the job without pay cannot. California Gov. Gavin Newsom, also a Democrat, said Thursday that his state will give benefits to people still on the job despite the guidance prohibiting it.

The Labor Department reports that the number of furloughed federal employees seeking unemployment jumped to more than 10,000 during the week that ended Jan. 5. About 400 of them live in Michigan, said Whitmer spokeswoman Tiffany Brown. She said about 6,900 federal employees in Michigan are impacted by the partial shutdown, "many of whom are working without pay and could be considered if there were a change to the guidance/rule."

About 3,000 federal workers in New York have applied for unemployment benefits, according to Cuomo's office. More than 2,000 have done so in Washington state.

Whitmer separately wrote a letter to Labor Secretary Alex Acosta asking for a waiver to the unemployment insurance eligibility rules.

## O'MARA

From Page A4

minds of area residents paying attention to New York State government and willing to give some

thought to the choices being debated in Albany.

In addition to answering a series of detailed questions, most respondents also take the chance to share more extensive, detailed comments. Again, I cannot

say enough about the value of this local input as the Legislature begins working in earnest toward solutions in 2019. It's timely, it's informative, and I truly appreciate the participation.

What's your opinion?