

**OBITUARY****Henry I. Havert**

Henry I. Havert, age 94, of Painted Post, passed away on Thursday, April 16, 2015 at Steuben Center. He was born on October 13, 1920 in Sodus, NY, the son of Isaac and Mary (Kotvis) Havert. He married Thelma Featherly on June 3, 1944 in Rochester.

Henry was a veteran of the U.S. Army Air Corps serving from 1942 to 1945. During his time in the service, Henry was a B-29 Instructor Pilot. He was a member of Painted Post United Methodist Church, the Corning Elks, the Corning Masonic Lodge, the Corning Moose, and the Mechanics Club of Montour Falls. Henry retired from NY Telephone in March of 1982 following over 36 years of service. He was an avid hunter, fisherman, and racquetball player - especially playing

racquetball against his sons, who could never beat him.

He is survived by his wife of 70 years, Thelma; daughter, Sandra Davis of Lindley; sons and daughters-in-law, Gary and Janet Havert of Wyoming and John and Gayle Havert of Ohio; nine grandchildren, seven great-grandchildren, and several nieces and nephews. Henry was predeceased by his sisters, Sarah Schoonhagen, Castelle Kouwe, and Magdelena Haak; son, Roger Havert; and granddaughter, Tracy Davis.

There will be no calling hours. Family and friends are invited to attend a graveside service with military honors at Fairview Cemetery in Painted Post on Tuesday, April 21, 2015 at 2:00 pm.

Those wishing may make donations to the Humane Society, 2435 State Route 352, Elmira, NY 14903 or Tanner's Paws, 4140 College Avenue, Corning, NY 14830.

To share a memory or leave kind words, go to [www.carpentersfuneral-home.com](http://www.carpentersfuneral-home.com)

**DEATH NOTICES****Raymond M. Sabol**

Raymond M. Sabol, 84, of Nelson, Pa., died Saturday, April 18, 2015.

There will be no services. Arrangements are by Buckheit Funeral Chapel in Mansfield, Pa.

**BOX OFFICE****'Furious 7' speeds ahead of the competition**

By **Lindsey Bahr**  
The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES | Even in its debut weekend, Kevin James's "Paul Blart" sequel couldn't outpace "Furious 7."

The reigning box office champion might have slowed from its blockbuster debut, but "Furious 7" maintained first place for the third weekend in a row with an estimated \$29.1 million, according to box office tracker Rentrak on Sunday.

This brings the high-octane action movie's domestic total to a staggering \$294 million, well above the \$202.8 million that "Fast & Furious 6" had earned at the same point in the cycle in 2013. The film crossed the \$1 billion mark Friday.

"Paul Blart: Mall Cop 2" came in a close second with an estimated \$24 million. While the PG-rated comedy didn't perform as well as the first film's \$31.8 million opening in 2009, it did surpass Sony's modest expectations. Also, it only cost \$30 million to produce.

**Top 10**

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Rentrak. Final domestic figures will be released today.

1. "Furious 7," \$29.1 million.
2. "Paul Blart: Mall Cop 2," \$24 million.
3. "Unfriended," \$16 million.
4. "Home," \$10.3 million.
5. "The Longest Ride," \$6.9 million.
6. "Get Hard," \$4.8 million.
7. "Monkey Kingdom," \$4.7 million.
8. "Woman In Gold," \$4.6 million.
9. "The Divergent Series: Insurgent," \$4.2 million.
10. "Cinderella," \$3.9 million.

**CALIFORNIA DROUGHT****Almonds get roasted in debate**

By **Ellen Knickmeyer**  
The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO | California almonds are becoming one of the world's favorite snacks and creating a multibillion-dollar bonanza for agricultural investors. But the crop extracts a staggering price from the land, consuming more water than all the showering, dish-washing and other indoor household water use of California's 39 million people.

As California enters its fourth year of drought and imposes the first mandatory statewide water cutbacks on cities and towns, the

\$6.5 billion almond crop is helping drive a sharp debate about water use, agricultural interests and how both affect the state's giant economy.

Almonds have claimed the spotlight as "the poster child of all things bad in water," almond grower Bob Weimer said.

People around the world are eating over 1,000 percent more California almonds than they did just a decade ago, and last year almonds became the top export crop in the nation's top agriculture state. China's booming middle class is driving much of the demand.

**WEEKLY COLUMN | SEN. TOM O'MARA****Work completed, work left undone**

Local mayors were right to recently question why the new state budget didn't do more for their localities.

Of course that's a criticism raised by many groups about every state budget. But the criticism hits home a little harder this time. With the state benefitting from an unanticipated, \$5-billion-plus surplus - which produced so much speculation about spreading additional state aid around like fertilizer on a spring-time lawn - it's the obvious question for the mayors to raise.

The state Conference of Mayors highlighted the significantly increased state aid this budget delivers to local school districts while "leaving our cities and villages to 'go it alone.'" Or as Elmira Mayor Sue Skidmore said more pointedly, "School districts get more and more funding every year, but we don't get anything."

Legitimate points, although I'll note that this year's budget isn't devoid of local assistance. In fact, it initiates a few efforts that could prove vital to reworking the state-local partnership for the long term.

But I'll stop here and stress a key factor: Since 2010, when the onerous Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA) was imposed on local school districts by a Democratically controlled Legislature and then-Governor David Paterson, the No. 1 budget priority of the Senate Republican conference has been to keep working to reduce it. In the new budget, while

**TOM O'MARA**

state spending growth overall is kept below 2%, state school aid is increased by \$1.4 billion or 6.6%. Of this increase, \$604 million goes toward reducing the GEA and nearly eliminates it for many local districts.

It's my hope that once the GEA is completely eliminated next year, which we're firmly committed to, the state will be in a stronger position, within the context of an overall budget that continues to restrain spending growth, to better address unrestricted aid to municipalities and the elimination of unfunded state mandates.

But then again, this governor has taken a less-than-enthusiastic stance on this partnership. In recent months, he's even seemed to relish references to localities needing to "fix your own pipes." I've repeatedly pointed out how that conveniently overlooks the lack of mandate relief under the state-imposed property tax cap that makes it virtually impossible. The failure to dramatically begin undoing a decades-long state habit of passing the buck to localities has been a genuine shortcoming.

Many of us have argued - and will keep arguing - that the most effective way to get local property taxpayers out from under

America's heaviest tax burden is through mandate relief.

It's a move in the right direction that we've boosted state support for local roads and bridges by \$125 million over the past three years, including additional "winter recovery" funds for the past two years. Assemblyman Phil Palmesano and I have championed this issue with strong bipartisan support in the Legislature, and together with local highway superintendents and other leaders.

But this year's budget missed an opportunity to do more. And the day's fast arriving when we'll be forced to do more. The state comptroller has estimated \$89 billion in unmet local infrastructure needs over the next 20 years.

So, yes, the budget came up short in some instances. But now we keep building on the moves that were made in the right direction. In addition to local roads and bridges, the new budget also:

- Establishes a new "Water Quality Infrastructure Improvement" fund, which the Senate fought hard for as a priority, that I believe will prove successful in helping localities undertake critical projects, including sewer and pipeline repairs. I'm hopeful that it can represent a long-term model for how the state-local partnership can be strengthened for the good of local environments, local economies and local property taxpayers.

- Extends the state's Brownfield Cleanup

Program for 10 years and, importantly, refocuses it on polluted properties Upstate.

- Advances a "universal broadband" initiative with the ambitious goal of having the entire state wired for high-speed Internet service by 2018. Upstate New York can't get left behind as this initiative goes along.

Highly successful, locally based efforts, like the Southern Tier Network, have expanded regional access. Significant new state investment, if done right, could help accelerate badly needed expansions. But we need to stay on top of the implementation. One recent news report found details on the program still unclear. The same report hinted that it remains uncertain if the program will even attract service providers to tackle those costly "last mile" connections to especially remote, sparsely populated or hard-to-reach areas which have so far proven so difficult to accomplish, particularly in many rural, Upstate regions.

So the budget offers a bold new step on broadband. High-speed Internet has become fundamental to economic and educational success. But the warning's already being sounded: oversight on the implementation of this universal broadband initiative will be critical to fulfilling its promise.

*State Sen. Tom O'Mara represents New York's 53rd Senate District, which includes Steuben, Chemung, Schuyler and Yates counties, and a portion of Tompkins County.*

**GULF OIL SPILL**

In this April 21, 2010 photo, the Deepwater Horizon oil rig burns in the Gulf of Mexico. GERALD HERBERT/ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE PHOTO

**Risky depths****5 years after BP spill, drillers push deeper**

By **Cain Burdeau**  
The Associated Press

ON THE GULF OF MEXICO | Five years after the nation's worst offshore oil spill, the industry is working on drilling even further into the risky depths beneath the Gulf of Mexico to tap massive deposits once thought unreachable. Opening this new frontier, miles below the bottom of the Gulf, requires engineering feats far beyond those used at BP's much shallower Macondo well.

But critics say energy companies haven't developed the corresponding

safety measures to prevent another disaster or contain one if it happens - a sign, environmentalists say, that the lessons of BP's spill were short-lived.

These new depths and larger reservoirs could exacerbate a blowout like what happened at the Macondo well. Hundreds of thousands of barrels of oil could spill each day, and the response would be slowed as the equipment to deal with it - skimmers, boom, submarines, containment stacks - is shipped 100 miles or more from shore.

Since the Macondo

**By the numbers**

**48** Number of deep-water drilling rigs in the Gulf area up from 35, the total 5 years ago when the BP spill happened.

disaster, which sent at least 134 million gallons spewing into the Gulf five years ago today, federal agencies have approved about two dozen next-generation, ultra-deep wells.

The number of deep-water drilling rigs has increased, too, from 35 at the time of the Macondo blowout to 48 last month, according to data from IHS

Energy, a Houston company that collects industry statistics.

Department of Interior officials overseeing offshore drilling did not provide data on these wells and accompanying exploration and drilling plans, information that The Associated Press requested last month.

But a review of offshore well data by the AP shows the average ocean depth of all wells started since 2010 has increased to 1,757 feet, 40 percent deeper than the average well drilled in the five years before that.

And that's just the depth of the water.