

COMMENTARY | STATE SEN. TOM O'MARA

Acting on American heroism

Nowhere does the phrase "actions speak louder than words" ring truer than in remembering the sacrifices and service of our nation's veterans. If there is any single group of men and women who live, sacrifice and serve by that code, it has to be American servicemen and servicewomen.

And so as citizens, but especially as a government, we have a responsibility to repay veterans in fundamental ways.

The ideal of leadership and service takes front and center stage every February when the nation celebrates George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. In each case, our Presidents' Day remembrances are defined by the leadership of these greatest of Americans and particularly by their service as commanders in chief during the American Revolution, in the case of Washington, and, for Lincoln, the American Civil War.

Every Presidents' Day we're reminded about the

place of the American soldier throughout history. On this note Washington once said, "The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional to how they perceive veterans of early wars were treated and appreciated by our nation."

That timeless advice reminds us to this very day that while our expressions of appreciation to veterans — the many ceremonial ways in which we honor their heroism — are vital, it's equally critical for government to keep taking practical steps that respond to the challenges that have confronted our veterans throughout the generations, and that they're still facing today. In other words, to remember that our actions can and should speak even louder than our words. Data released several weeks ago by the New York State Department of Labor highlights two of these key challenges: unemployment, and homelessness.

According to Labor



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Department statistics reported in early December and first highlighted in a November 2014 newsletter that you can access online (<http://www.labor.ny.gov/stats/PDFs/enys1114.pdf>), the rate of veteran unemployment statewide last September was 7.6 percent compared to 6.5 percent for non-veterans. The opposite was true nationally, where the unemployment rate for veterans was 4.5 percent compared to 5.5 percent for non-veterans. Interestingly, the Labor Department reports a "disproportionate" number of veterans live in the 52-county Upstate region. Upstate has an estimated 36% of New York's total population, according to federal statistics, but 57% of veterans reside

throughout Upstate.

The Labor Department highlights two key challenges:

1.) that of New York State's 921,400 veterans, approximately 12 percent, or more than 108,000 of these veterans have a disability related to their service; and

2.) that veteran homelessness remains a critical concern. According to the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, there were nearly 50,000 homeless veterans on a single night last January.

With these numbers in mind, it's worthwhile to note two new state initiatives. First, as the result of "Hire-A-Vet" tax credit legislation first enacted into law in 2013, businesses who have hired and employed a qualified veteran for one year will be eligible in 2015, for the first time, to begin claiming a state tax credit equal to 10 percent of the total amount of wages paid to the qualified veteran during the first full year of employment. If the veteran is disabled, the

credit amount increases to 15 percent. The credit is capped at \$5,000 per veteran or \$15,000 per disabled veteran. Any unused credit may be carried forward. It will remain available until 2017.

Secondly, another new law took effect this January (Chapter 428) and establishes a fund that will be dedicated to assisting homeless veterans with housing and housing-related expenses. Specifically, the law creates a tax check-off enabling New Yorkers to make a contribution to this worthy cause when filing their personal income taxes.

I was proud to help co-sponsor and strongly support these actions as well as last year's enactment of the "Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business Act" (Chapter 22) to facilitate the awarding of state contracts to disabled veterans by creating a six-percent state contract set-aside for service-connected disabled-veteran owned small businesses. New York, which is currently working to fully

orchestrate this new veteran set-aside, joins the federal government and 40 other states offering a similar contract incentive. One in seven veterans is self-employed or a small business owner. Our state has the fourth-highest number of veteran-owned businesses — trailing only California, Texas and Florida.

These actions mark critical investments in the future of New York State's veterans. They serve, we hope, to help honor their service and sacrifice in concrete ways.

Recalling again the words of Washington — of how the next generation will judge the worthiness of service by how a nation treats its veterans — we're hopeful that these actions, and others like them, will help our state better pass this worthiest of tests.

— *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.*

CARNIVAL ACCIDENT

Float mishap at Haiti parade kills at least 16

By **Evens Sanon**
The Associated Press

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti | At least 16 people were killed early Tuesday in the Haitian capital after a man on top of a musical group's Carnival float was shocked by high-voltage wires above the street, setting off a panic in which dozens of people were trampled, officials said.

The accident occurred as thousands of people filled the streets of downtown Port-au-Prince for the raucous annual celebration.

Video from the scene showed sparks coursing from the wire after a singer from the Haitian hip-hop group Barikad Crew was jolted by the overhead power line as the float passed beneath it. The cable appeared to have shocked several others as well.

Prime Minister Evans Paul said 16 people were confirmed dead and 78 were injured. His statement conflicted with earlier reports on the number of casualties. Nadia Lochard, a coordinator for the Department of Civil

Protection, had said at least 20 people were killed.

Paul declared three official days of mourning for the impoverished Caribbean country. Haitian officials canceled Tuesday's third and final day of Carnival events and announced a state funeral and vigil on Saturday for the victims.

The singer who was hit by the power cable, a man known by the stage name Fantom, was expected to survive, according to a doctor who spoke to radio station Zenith-FM. The information could not be

verified immediately.

Dr. Joel Desire, a doctor at General Hospital, said most of those killed appeared to have been trampled to death as the crowd surged away from the Carnival float, one of 16 in the downtown parade.

Witnesses said panic ensued when people jumped off the float to avoid being electrocuted.

"I saw the wire falling and sparks and I started running for my life," said Natacha Saint Fleur, a 22-year-old who was near the float at the time.

SEVERE WINTER WEATHER

Snow spreads from Nashville to Nantucket after the latest storm

By **Jonathan Drew**
and **Meredith Somers**
The Associated Press

DURHAM, N.C. — A powerful winter storm dumped snow from Nashville to Nantucket, and arctic-like temperatures gripped much of the U.S. and hundreds of thousands of people lost power in the South.

While some shivered, others bundled up and tried to make the best of a frustrating situation. Here's a look at how people were handling the land of ice, snow and subzero temperatures.

Ice baby

Some things just won't wait, as Jerry Nuesell can attest.

With his wife 33 weeks pregnant, the couple was headed to the doctor's office when Lisa's contractions led them to UNC Hospitals for the arrival of their first born, a boy.

"Turned out the little fellow was ready to make an appearance much sooner than we planned," Nuesell said Tuesday.

He watched his son be born, then drove 30 miles back to Cary, North Carolina, to take care of their dachshund, Schnitzel. Ice covered most of his windshield and the drive wasn't easy.

"I had probably a good 6-inch-by-6-inch square that I had to peer through to get the best vision," he said. "On multiple occasions, I thought this might not be the best idea."

Surrender to the snow

The tourism office of Ithaca, New York, is waving the white flag, advising visitors on its website to check out the Florida Keys instead.

VisitIthaca.com's home page displays sunny photos from Florida and provides links to Florida Keys information.

The top of the page reads: "That's it. We surrender. Winter, you win. Key West anyone?"

Ithaca and the rest of upstate New York have been in the grips of a snowy

and brutally cold winter.

Roof worries

Two New Hampshire school districts remain closed a day after schools were evacuated over concerns of snow buildup on roofs. A teacher noticed the ceiling sagging in a classroom at Sanborn Middle School in Newton on Monday and cracks were seen around the doorways of some classrooms in Epping. On Tuesday, Moharimet Elementary School in Madbury was evacuated after cracks were seen on the walls, believed to be caused by the heavy snow on the roof.

Icy roads

Roads were icy and slushy, making driving difficult in many places and causing at least seven traffic deaths. There were three deaths in Tennessee, including a mother and son in Williamson County who stopped to help people in a sport utility vehicle that overturned in front of them when they were struck by a tractor-trailer. Two people were killed in Virginia as nearly a foot of snow fell in some places. In North Carolina, a woman died in a two-car crash in the northeastern part of the state. A woman was also killed Monday evening while driving across the Thomas Johnson Bridge in Calvert County, Maryland.

Sports car in the snow?

"I'll just back up and fly out," is the strategy Brent Seney had for freeing his black convertible Mazda Miata from the snow in the nation's capital Tuesday.

Despite the thick blanket of snow along his street, Seney, 60, was confident his sporty ride could handle the roads. In fact, he planned to drive to his boat harbored at James Creek Marina in southwest Washington.

"I'll shovel the snow off, make sure it's not frozen too much because the harbor is all frozen in," Seney said.

OBITUARIES

Betty K. Quattrini



Corning | Betty K. Quattrini left this earth on February 15, 2015. I guess here is where we are suppose to say, quietly...surrounded by her loving family. For anyone who knew Betty they would know this, was a lie. Because she left this life the way she lived it, fighting and clawing, and mincing no words. The same person that 5 generations of grandchildren and dozens of family members had come to love and most importantly respect.

Betty was born in Hornby, July 30, 1924, to James and Delia Kniffin.

Graduated from Northside High School in 1941 to become part of the WWII industrial war effort. She married Clayton Barber and had two children Clayton and Patti. Though she soon came to love and marry, widower, Carl LeBarron and his son, Carl Jr. Then had in succession, 4 of their own children, Darrell, Carol, Jeff and Mike LeBarron. Tragically, Carl would die in Nov. 1960, leaving Betty a single parent with several children, but Betty being Betty, wasn't much to complain. She supported her family as a waitress, Bartender and Beverage coordinator at the old Barron Steuben and Corning Hilton. In 1992, Betty married James Quattrini, there by becoming part of another family, the John and Linda Quattrini Spencer family.

Betty Q is survived by her Sons, Skip Darrell and Mike LeBarron; Daughters, Carol Sowersby, Patricia Robertson and Linda Spencer, as well as, her big red loving Doberman, RIO and her special

friend, Betty Ann.

She is predeceased by Husbands, Carl LeBarron and Jim Quattrini and longtime friend, Frank Bloom; Sons, Clay Barber and Jeff LeBarron; Brothers, Stan and Doug Kniffin, as well as, Mother and Father, Delia and James Kniffin.

A Memorial service will be held at Acly-Stover Funeral Home on Monday, February 23, 2015, at 2:00 p.m. Burial will be held at the convenience of the family. Donations may be made to CareFirst.

Yngvar R. "Bing" Joelson

Osceola | Yngvar R. "Bing" Joelson, 88, of Campbrook Road, Osceola, Pa., passed away at the Green Home in Wellsboro, Pa on Saturday, February 14, 2015. Bing was born in Corning, NY on December 23, 1929, the son of the late, Joel Randolph and E. Christina (Thompson) Joelson.

On November 25, 1967, Bing married the former Ruth E. Trumbull at the Osceola United Methodist

Church; Ruth survives. He and Ruth were both members of the Valley View Assembly of God Church in Knoxville, Pa. Bing retired from Westinghouse Electric Corp. in Horseheads, NY.

Bing's step son, Larry Trumbull, preceded him in death.

Surviving is his wife, Ruth Joelson of The Green Home, Wellsboro; his son and daughter in law, David and Donna Joelson of Columbia, Pa.; his daughter and son in law, Susan and Robert Pierson of Painted Post, NY; 4 grandchildren; and his sister, Eleanor (Cliff) Zimdahl of Indiana.

Friends may call on Wednesday, February 18 from noon to 2 PM at the H.P. Smith & Son Inc. Funeral Home, 1607 Main St. Woodhull, NY. Funeral services will follow at 2 PM with Pastor Jonathan Hardt officiating. Burial will be in Fairview Cemetery, Osceola, Pa. On line memories and condolences may be shared at www.hpsmithandsonfuneralhome.com.

DEATH NOTICES

Linna Jean Bossie

Linna Jean Bossie, 53, died Monday, Feb. 16, 2015 at home.

Calling hours are noon-2 p.m. Saturday at Avoca Funeral Home, 22 N. Main St.

A memorial services will be held at 2 p.m. Saturday at the Avoca Fire Hall.

Burial will be in Valley View Cemetery, Avoca.

Harry D. Gray

Harry Daniel Gray, 92, of Painted Post, died Thursday, Feb. 12, 2015 at Robert Packer Hospital, Sayre, Pa.

Services will be held at the convenience of the family.

Arrangements are with Acly-Stover Funeral Home, Corning.

Florence R. Perry

Florence R. Perry, 93, formerly of Wellsboro, Pa., died Monday, Feb. 16, 2015.

Calling hours are 3-6 p.m. Saturday at Tussey-Mosher Funeral Home, 139 Main St., Wellsboro.

Services will be held there at the conclusion of calling hours at 6 p.m. Saturday.

Neil J. Sliter

Neil J. Sliter, 77, of Arkport, died Monday, Feb. 9, 2015 at home.

There are no calling hours.

Services will be held at 11 a.m. Saturday at Arkport Presbyterian Church.

Arrangements are with Bishop and Johnson Funeral Home, Hornell.