

THE OPINION PAGE

MARK LUKAS
Publisher

MICHAEL J. CUTILLO
Executive Editor

CHUCK SCHADING
Managing Editor

MARY K. SCHOONOVER
Chief Copy Editor

PAUL M. BARRETT / President & Publisher Emeritus

"The First Amendment ensures that all points of view may be heard; it does not ensure that all points of view are equally likely to prevail."

— Michael McConnell, U.S. appellate judge, 2006

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Geneva town residents can save money, reduce footprint

To the Editor:

The Town of Geneva is offering area residents a way to save money on their electricity bills, reduce our carbon footprint, earn the town \$25,000 for sustainability initiatives, and have input into how that money is spent. The opportunity to participate is open to all NYSEG customers residing in or near the Town of Geneva.

By enrolling in our new community solar project, Geneva Community Power, you're guaranteed to save about 10% on your electricity bills for up to 20 years because NY State is incentivizing the production of clean energy with energy credits that are applied to your electricity bill.

If you wait to sign-up, you run the risk of losing your enrollment opportunity because enrollment will close once all generated capacity is subscribed for. Once enrolled, you can opt-out at any time with no fees or penalties.

After 400 enroll, the solar farm gets built, the Town gets \$25,000 towards a sustainability initiative, and subscribers get the electric discount. An online poll gives you the opportunity to let us know which of four projects is most important to you: (1) community solar/renewables, (2) home energy efficiency upgrades, (3) solid waste reduction, or (4) storm water control.

As an additional incentive, the first 400 people who sign up can receive additional discounts by referring friends who enroll—and the person with the most referral points wins a \$500 gift card!

To learn more or enroll, go to <https://www.genevacommunitypower.com/>

MARK VENUTI
Supervisor, Town of Geneva

Coming this Friday ...

... and every Friday, look for the latest takes from local columnist and author Michael J. Fitzgerald in his weekly "Write On" column.

His latest novel, "The Devil's Pipeline," is available at the Finger Lakes Times for \$16.95.

There is grace to winter

I read somewhere along the line about wintering strategies for some tribes in Northern Michigan, back when life was good and European invaders few and far between. This was up in Michilimackinac, a region surrounding Mackinaw Island in the straights that knife between Lakes Huron and Michigan. Some of those tribes did their primary hunting and trapping in winter.

Winter, it seems, offered a huge advantage: If you don't have wheels, snow and ice are much easier to transport on. Tons of deer, moose, elk, bear, and beaver could be killed and processed and their pelts transported on sleds while the meat was preserved by the cold until treated. Also, the more physically active the human body, the warmer it remains. So, in many ways, winter was just the opposite for them as it is for us.

This full-bodied engagement with winter was on display daily where I lived for a few years in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont. The northern three counties bordering Quebec are known as "the kingdom" and are home to rugged, unspoiled wildness. Not many people live up there, and those that do are either huddled in small towns and villages or scattered in rural isolation. But there are a fair number of resettled flatlanders from the foreign territories of New Jersey, Massachusetts, and New York; people who love winter and retire there. There is unrestrained exhilaration across the generations when an October snow opens the trails of Jay Peak for skiing and snowboarding, or a May snow allows one more day of runs. Cross-country skiers and snowshoers are as ubiquitous as runners and bikers in the summer. There are so many holes in the lake ice from fishermen, that every morning coyotes can be seen in the hazy steam making their rounds from one hole

to the next, looking for entrails and scraps from cleaned carcasses.

Fifteen and 20 below zero at night are not shocking numbers up there, and people know what to wear to stay warm. They know when to play and when to stay inside, but they play in the cold much more than anywhere else I have ever lived.

I was reminded of what I had learned up in the kingdom on the Sunday of MLK weekend, as I trudged to open church for whoever else would walk there through the snowstorm. Eight hearty souls, as it turned out. Then later, with two of those who had cross-country skied to church, I went to Kashong Conservation Area to snowshoe in the frigid cold air and pristine, wonderfully quiet woods.

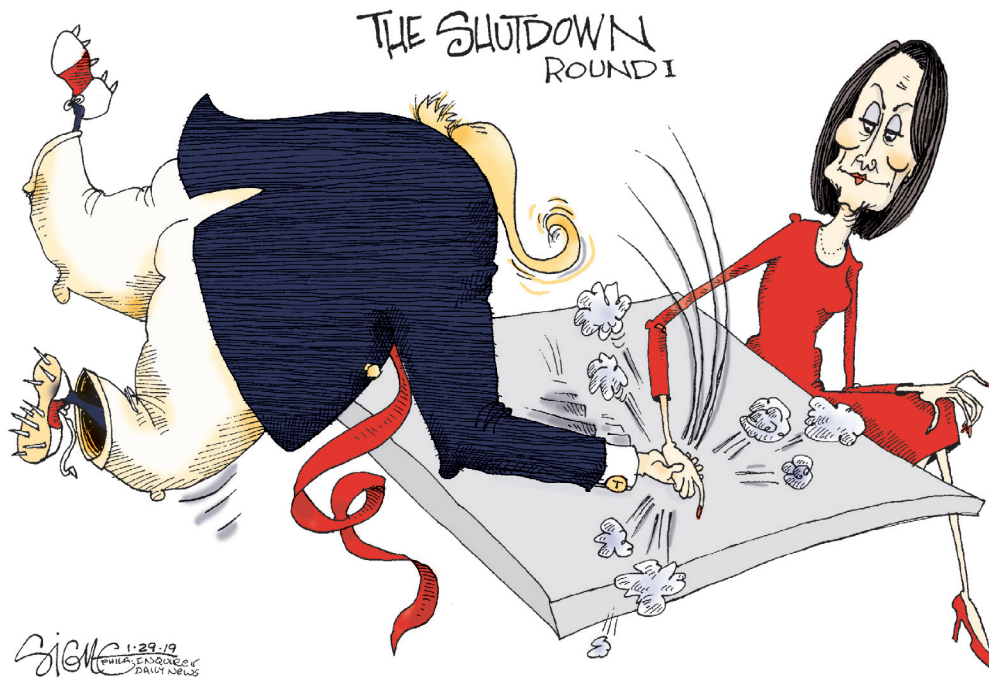
Hot breath steaming through my lips, sweat moistening my chest and back beneath puffy and miraculously warm layers, stopping to slow my breathing and lean on the poles that prodded my old knees back to balance, I thought about those tribes of the Michilimackinac. Winter as a season to be endured is miserable, relentless, and everlasting. But vigorously embraced, whether a rumination about chickadees and jays while sipping tea by the fire or watching your breath curl away into nothingness while joining the silence of a snowy woodland, winter is a time of grace.

Denim Spirit does not refer to blue jeans, rather, the ordinary and sometimes casual expressions of human spirituality in everyday life. Cameron Miller is the author of two novels, "The Steam Room Diaries" and "Thoughtwall Café: Espresso in the Third Season of Life," available through Amazon, and the blogger at www.subversive-preacher.org.



Denim Spirit

By Cameron Miller



Some early questions about 2020 Dem candidates

Sen. Elizabeth Warren. Rep. Tulsi Gabbard. Former HUD Secretary Julian Castro. Sen. Kamala Harris. Every day, it seems, another candidate enters the Democratic race. Every week, there's a new poll, most showing former Vice President Joe Biden as the party's early presidential leader.

The highly respected Cook Political Report even put out its first estimate of the 2020 electoral map, showing the Democrats with 232, the Republicans with 220 and the remaining 86 as tossups.

But with all due deference to my old friend Charlie Cook, stop already! There is no way to have any real idea at this early date who will be the Democratic nominee, let alone how the electoral votes will likely end up. (Well, not totally true, the Democrats will win DC's 3, the GOP Wyoming's 3, and a few others are predictable!) But not even President Donald Trump's re-nomination is certain now, given the plethora of investigations and the potentiality of impeachment.

So let's look at 2020 by raising some questions that will be answered over the next two years.

WHO ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT DEMOCRATIC PLAYERS?

Former Vice President Joe Biden, because he starts with the most support. Whether he can keep it — or add to it — will be one of the campaign's major questions, assuming he runs.

Sens. Kirsten Gillibrand, Amy Klobuchar, Warren and Harris. Democratic primaries in 2018 showed a strong bias for female candidates; at least one is likely to emerge as a major player.

Sens. Harris and Cory Booker, and former HUD Secretary Julian Castro. One problem Hillary Clinton encountered in the general election was insufficient enthusiasm from minority voters, especially African-Americans. Expect strong pressure for at least one non-white candidate on the 2020 Democratic ticket.

Former Texas Rep. Beto O'Rourke. He displayed strong initial support without

By CARL P. LEUBSDORF

Tribune News Service



lifting a finger because he fits the desire of many Democrats for a new face. If he runs, a big question will be: can he meet what have already become out-sized expectations?

Sen. Bernie Sanders. He was the runner-up in 2016, and many analysts believe the 77-year-old Vermont independent's day has passed. But latent Sanders strength could diminish progressive support for Warren.

A potential wild-card. Democrats love shiny new objects. South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg? Washington Gov. Jay Inslee? California Rep. Eric Swalwell? Former New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu? Name your choice! Could an O'Rourke candidacy prevent some other wild card from emerging?

WHAT WILL BE THE DEFINING EVENTS?

The first debates. Given the big field, any candidates the media acclaims as winners will likely get a boost in money and the polls. One challenge: Sustaining the enthusiasm in future debates. No candidate will likely dominate the debates like Donald Trump did for the GOP in 2016.

The money primary. The compacted primary calendar requires a substantial bankroll, and candidates who raise the most will inevitably be acclaimed as major players. But former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush's 2016 collapse shows that fundraising prowess has limits as a predictor.

National polls. Not now, but at the end of 2019. In many past cases, the candidate who led his party's national polls on the brink of the election year proved to be its ultimate nominee.

The Iowa caucuses and the New Hamp-

shire primary. Sorry, California, but with a big field, those first two tests will almost certainly winnow the pack, as in the past. Strong Iowa showings could be vital, especially with New Englanders Warren and Sanders the early New Hampshire favorites. But beware of early state polling: Iowa has a history of big changes in the final pre-caucus weeks.

A factoid to remember: Iowa caucus winners (Al Gore, John Kerry, Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton) have won the last four contested Democratic primaries.

WHEN MIGHT THE RACE CLARIFY?

Surely after the March 3 Super Tuesday primaries in nine states, including California, Texas, Massachusetts and Virginia, and maybe sooner. Any candidate who isn't in the top two or three after Super Tuesday is likely out of the running.

And if one candidate wins two or three of the first four tests — Iowa, New Hampshire, Nevada and South Carolina — the remaining primaries may ratify the choice.

WHAT ABOUT TRUMP'S SECOND TERM PROSPECTS?

Questionable, at this stage. Trump won the narrowest possible electoral vote victory in 2016, despite polling 3 million fewer popular votes. Since then, he has made no effort to broaden his support, and his job approval has never approached 50 percent, hovering mainly between the upper 30s and low 40s.

While no predictor, the Democrats' 2018 congressional victory was unusually large, and support for Republicans closely mirrored Trump's approval numbers. Of course, Democrats could again nominate an unacceptable candidate. And an independent like former Starbucks Chief Executive Howard Schultz could drain off enough anti-Trump moderates to help re-elect the president.

Carl P. Leubsdorf is the former Washington bureau chief of the Dallas Morning News. Readers may write to him via email at: carl.p.leubsdorf@gmail.com. Visit The Dallas Morning News at www.dallasnews.com. Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

Let us know what's on your mind

Mail: Letters to the Editor, Finger Lakes Times, P.O. Box 393, Geneva 14456

E-mail to: opinion@fltimes.com or go to the letters link at www.fltimes.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/FingerLakesTimes

Fax: 789-4077

Guidelines: Include your full name, address and daytime telephone number. Submissions should not exceed 400 words. We edit for length and clarity.

Make yourself heard

Here are the local addresses, phone numbers and websites of federal and state representatives who serve the Times' readership area. The best way to contact representatives is by going to their individual websites and clicking on Contact for further directions.

President

Donald J. Trump

Republican
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20500
Phone: (202) 456-1111
Fax: (202) 456-2461
www.whitehouse.gov/contact

Governor

Andrew Cuomo

Democrat
State Capitol, Albany NY 12224
Phone: (518) 474-8390
www.governor.ny.gov/content/governor-contact-form

U.S. Senate

Charles E. Schumer

Democrat
100 State St., Room 3040
Rochester, NY 14614
Phone: (585) 263-5866
Fax: (585) 263-3173
www.schumer.senate.gov

322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington D.C. 20510
Phone: (202) 224-6542
Fax: (202) 228-3027

Kirsten Gillibrand

Democrat
Kenneth B. Keating Federal Office Building, 100 State Street
Room 4195, Rochester, NY 14614
Phone: (585) 263-6250
Fax: (585) 263-6247
www.gillibrand.senate.gov

478 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
Phone: (202) 224-4451
Fax: (202) 228-0282

House of Representatives

Tom Reed

23rd Congressional District
Republican
433 Exchange St., Geneva NY 14456
Phone: (315) 759-5229
Fax: (315) 325-4045
1504 Longworth HOB
Washington DC 20515
Phone: (202) 225-3161
Fax: (202) 226-6599
Includes all of Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Chemung, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Tompkins and Yates counties; parts of Ontario and Tioga counties

John Katko

24th Congressional District
Republican
Wayne Co. Public Safety Building
7376 Route 31, Lyons NY 14489
www.katko.house.gov/contact/
email
1123 Longworth HOB
Washington DC 20515
Phone: (202) 225-3701
Fax: (203) 225-4042
Includes all of Cayuga, Onondaga and Wayne counties and western Oswego County.

State Senate

Tom O'Mara

58th State Senate District
Republican
105 E. Steuben St., Bath, NY 14810
Phone: (607) 776-3201
Fax: (607) 776-5185
omara@nysenate.gov
Includes Yates, Steuben, Schuyler and Chemung counties, plus part of Tompkins County.

Pamela A. Helming

54th State Senate District
Republican
425 Exchange St.
Geneva, NY 14456
Phone: (315) 568-9816
Helming@nysenate.gov
Includes all of Seneca and Wayne counties, plus parts of Ontario, Cayuga and Tompkins counties.

State Assembly

Brian Manktelow

130th Assembly District
Republican
10 Leach Road, Lyons, NY 14489
Phone: (315) 946-5166
manktelowb@nyassembly.gov
Includes all of Wayne County and parts of Cayuga and Oswego counties.

Brian M. Kolb

131st Assembly District
Republican
70 Elizabeth Blackwell St.
Geneva, NY 14456
Phone: (315) 781-2030
kolbb@nyassembly.gov
Includes Ontario County and Seneca County north of Varick

Philip Palmesano

132nd Assembly District
Republican
105 E. Steuben St., Bath, NY 14810
Phone: (607) 776-9691
palmesano@assembly.state.ny.us
Includes Yates and Schuyler counties, Romulus and south in Seneca County and parts of Steuben and Chemung counties.