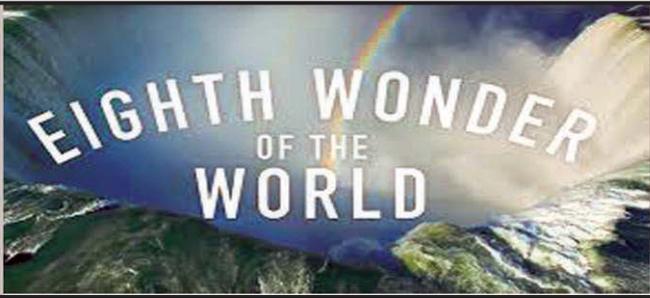


**ALBANY TAKING CARE OF US ....**

Robert Moses, an award winning, epitome of an Albany official (shown with hat) explains to happy and intelligent Niagara Falls residents how Albany's controlling the hydro power generated from the Niagara River will be a great benefit to them.



Albany official shown managing Niagara Falls' affairs.

# NIAGARA FALLS REPORTER

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FREE      DEC 22, 2016 - JAN 04, 2017      VOL. 17, NO. 51      FREE

## Our next Judge? Alan Roscetti to run for City Court



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## Alan Roscetti Highly Regarded as He Launches Bid for City Court

### Tony Farina

"The citizens of Niagara Falls would be hard-pressed to find a better candidate for a seat on the City Court bench than Alan Roscetti," says longtime pharmacist Robert Kendzia when asked about the young man's plans to run for an expected open seat next year on City Court.

We caught up with Kendzia and several other folks at the Bowl-O-Drome on Pine Ave. this week to ask them about Alan J. Roscetti, who is announcing his candidacy for City Court in 2017 to fill the seat of Robert Merino, who will reach the mandatory retirement age for judges.

"They don't come much better [than Alan]," said Angelo Tecchio, a retired airline manager. "He's a fine young man, hails from a terrific family, and would certainly be an asset to the citizens of Niagara Falls as a judge. I would support him wholeheartedly."

Roscetti, 37, has worked in the Niagara County Public Defender's Office for nearly 13 years where he has handled every type of case imaginable including murders, arsons, large-scale grand larceny, and fraud. When we interviewed him for this story on Wednesday, he had just won a jury trial for a defendant who he argued had been wrongly accused of menacing a police officer and criminal possession of a weapon as well as obstructing governmental administration. The jury agreed with Roscetti after only 10 minutes of deliberation and returned a not-guilty verdict on all counts.

"I believe in what I do, and as a public defender and an attorney in my family's law firm, I am living my boyhood dream," said Roscetti. He remembers when he was a fifth grader at Sacred Heart Villa in Lewiston and someone took a picture of him holding a law book. It was an early sign that this young man was headed for the legal career that now sees him setting his sights on a City Court judgeship.

"In many of the cases I handle as a public defender, there are mental health issues involved," said Roscetti, "and in many cases



Attorney Alan Roscetti, candidate for City Court

the problems can be diagnosed and the issues resolved in a fair and just way. You have to be able to adjust to the situation and act accordingly. As a judge, it would require the same ability to handle each case firmly but fairly and apply the right legal standards for all involved. That's what I would do."

Roscetti says he feels he has the "right temperament, right experience, and right energy to serve the citizens of Niagara Falls" as a judge, and run a fair, honest, punctual court that would best serve all citizens.

While he was raised by his parents in Lewiston, he has lived on 28th St. in Niagara Falls in the home his grandfather built 60 years ago since graduating from the University of Buffalo Law School 13 years ago. He earned his bachelor's degree at Duke University (economics, sociology), just the opposite collegiate path of his father, James, who was graduated from the University of Buffalo before earning his law degree at Duke. Like father, like son, almost.

James Roscetti is a partner in the Roscetti & DeCastro law firm and has been chairman of the board of the Memorial Medical Center since 2009. He will be honored next month at

Memorial's annual Premier dinner gala when he will receive the Nancy Gara Spirit Award presented in memory of a Western New York banking executive and former medical center board member who was renowned for her positive attitude and personal commitment to serving the community. Roscetti is also a former Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority commissioner and has held and currently holds numerous other positions in the community.

"I'm so grateful to my father for what he has accomplished and how he's helped make me the kind of lawyer that I can be proud of," said Alan. "I've learned so much from him, and perhaps most important of all, kindness."

"He (Alan) lives here in Niagara Falls and the family has a great history of commitment to the community," said Niagara Falls Republican City Chairman Bill Carroll. Carroll said his committee would meet with all candidates expressing an interest in the expected City Court vacancy--Alan makes

three--and would probably not make an endorsement until after next year's primary.

Michael Gawel, vice chairman of the GOP city committee, said, "I think Alan would make a great candidate and a great judge. I am behind him 100 percent. The Roscetti family has a long history of service to Niagara Falls and Alan has the experience and the temperament to serve on the bench."

Nick Vilaro, a member of the Niagara Falls City School Board and a retired fire fighter, echoed the sentiments of many folks we talked to about Alan Roscetti's bid for City Court:

"He's a wonderful young man, comes from one of the best families in this community, and has the right mix of youth and experience to do the job and serve our citizens firmly but fairly. I wish him all the success in the world. If he wins, we all win."

Alan has a three-year-old son, Alex, the pride and joy of his mother (Paula) and father, and a sister Maria (Scott) Hamilton who lives on Cayuga Island.

Alan has sent introductory letters to all local party leaders, major and minor, expressing his interest in meeting with them in person to discuss his candidacy. He is admitted to practice in all local, state, and federal courts in Western New York.

The entire family and a boatload of friends and supporters are expected to help formally launch his campaign on Thursday, Jan. 26, at the Hyde Park Ice Pavilion.

"I'm ready for the next step in my career and I'm prepared to work the neighborhoods to let people know that I want the honor of serving them on the City Court bench," said Roscetti. "I know it will be difficult and there will be others seeking the same seat, but I am ready for the challenge and look forward to meeting and talking to people so they can judge me first-hand. Now is the time, and I'm ready."

## NIAGARA FALLS REPORTER

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# Niagara Falls 2016; Another year older, deeper in debt!

## Mike Hudson

2016, the year that began with Niagara Falls Mayor Paul Dyster taking the oath of office for a historic third term, was in many ways a watershed year for the city.

Numerous websites including MyLife.com, NeighborhoodScout.com and City-Data.com continued to assert that Niagara Falls was the "Most Dangerous City in New York" and one of the 50 most dangerous in the nation.

And, according to a study by Market Watch published in January, New York is the most highly taxed state in the nation. A study done last year by the Empire Center for Public Policy showed Niagara County to be the most highly taxed county in the state.

Far and away, Niagara Falls homeowners pay the highest taxes per \$1,000 of property value in the county, which would make the city the most highly taxed municipality in the entire United States.

Being the most dangerous and highly taxed municipality in the state is no small accomplishment. Dyster can also boast of harboring more registered sex offenders per capita than any other municipality, and having one of the highest — if not the highest — percentage of residents collecting some form of public assistance.

But there was more, so much more to 2016, the ninth year of the Dyster regime, to remember. Let's look at some highlights!

### THE TRAIN STATION

Dyster spent \$44 million in public money to build a gigantic new train station on Whirlpool Street in the city's desolate North End. It was supposed to open in the spring but didn't, then in the summer.

It finally did get opened but no trains would come to it because Dyster forgot to get a contract with Amtrak to provide service to his train station

The station was supposed to include an Underground Railroad Heritage Museum that



would draw tourists from all over the world who burned with the desire to learn about the flight of former slaves from the Confederate States to freedom in Canada in the years prior to the Civil War, an operation that the city of Niagara Falls had no provable association with.

Some wondered, how do you open a history museum when not a single artifact had been acquired or display fabricated? Despite the fact that the city's Underground Railroad Commission has been given \$2.45 million in casino cash, it remains unknown what — if anything — they have done with the money.

Other than issuing a preliminary report shortly after the formation of the commission that failed to establish any unequivocal link between the Underground Railroad and what is now the City of Niagara Falls, little has been heard of the shadowy organization.

City Planner Thomas DeSantis touted the museum's potential as a revenue source. The museum would not turn people away and will likely be free for schoolchildren, he said, but officials want visitors to see the museum as something of value and be willing to pay something for it.

For Dyster, it has never been about the destination but the journey. Which is why, since taking office in January 2008, the city has been subjected to numerous and lengthy forays into the unknowable unknown, for the most part without any measurable result aside from money squandered and energy spent.

Dyster went ahead and spent \$44 million of other people's money to build a facility for Amtrak that the money losing railroad had

shown no interest whatsoever in occupying.

Since 1978, Amtrak officials had been content with the 800 square feet they operate on Willard Avenue near Lockport Road. Peak traffic at the Niagara Falls station averages 30 passengers an hour, an event that occurs no more than four times each day. The smallish waiting room, about the size of a dentist's office, never lacks for seating, even with the hustle and bustle of 15 people getting on a

train as another 15 disembark.

There was never any likelihood whatsoever that Amtrak would be renting the entire 22,000 square foot new train station. The heavily subsidized and money losing passenger rail line's policy is to rent just enough square footage needed to service the passengers using the station, currently well under 100 a day.

The new station is about 10 times larger than what Amtrak would require based on ridership figures.

It wasn't until November, months after the station's "grand opening," that the city even managed to get a contract with the railroad to use it. Amtrak will reportedly pay \$172,800 a year under the contract, which won't even cover routine maintenance. But even that number seems like yet another Dyster deception. No one — including the chucklehead council who voted to approve the lease — has actually seen the lease other than Dyster. There is little doubt that the \$172,000 figure is a projection based on unreachable goals, and the real rent that Amtrak will pay will be substantially lower than Dyster tells his rather stupid council, and the true expenses of running the station will be substantially higher.

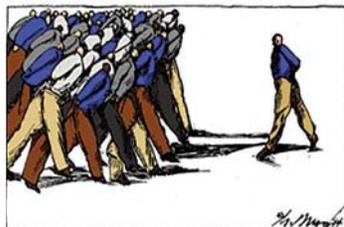
Meantime the giant station remains practically empty.

*(continued on next page)*



"Such was the will of the Father that his Son, blessed and glorious, whom he gave to us, and who was born for us, should by his own blood, sacrifice, and oblation, offer himself on the altar of the cross, not for himself, by whom "all things were made," but for our sins, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps."

St Francis of Assisi



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## Reflections on 2016 in Niagara Falls

(continued from previous page)

Why?

Because there are only about 45 people per day who take trains coming and another 45 people who take a train going.

The size or beauty of a train station has little or nothing to do with people's decision to take a train.

Nothing has been heard of the Underground Railroad museum in months.

SEX OFFENDERS

The number of registered sex offenders

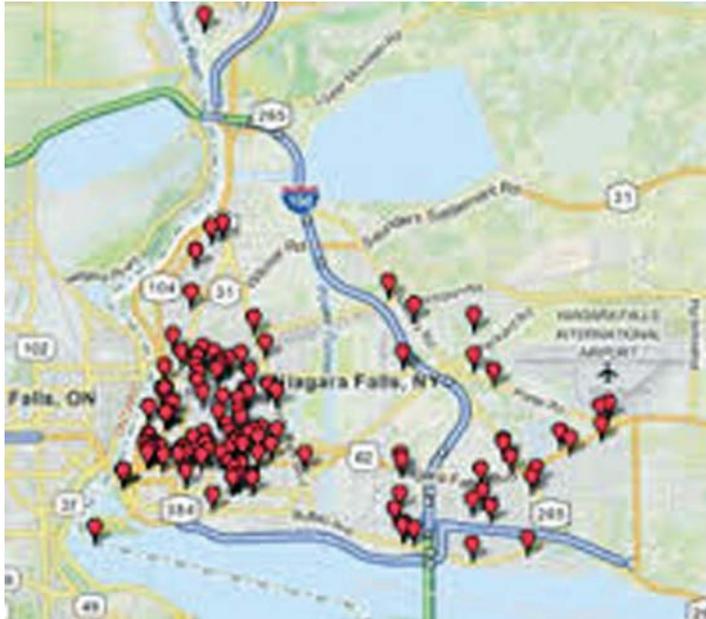
services agencies that serve the Niagara Falls community for food, clothing, shelter, medical care and psychological counseling.

They represent the top of the pyramid in an economy that is becoming increasingly based on the care and feeding of those who cannot or will not care for and feed themselves.

GRANDINETTI'S CAT PATROL

But for Dyster's main cheerleader on the City Council, Kristen Grandinetti, the population explosion of registered sex offenders wasn't as troubling as that among harmless little kitty cats.

In April, the Niagara Falls City Council



living in Niagara Falls has taken a sharp spike in 2016, shooting up from 164 in December 2015 to 190 by May and 200 as of this week. That's 40 child molesters, rapists and other perverts for every 10,000 residents.

If anyone should get credit for the city's pervert population explosion it is Niagara Falls Mayor Paul Dyster, who, during his first term in office, said famously that sexual predators "have to live somewhere," as he defended a dilapidated Niagara Street rooming house full of sex offenders from a crowd of angry parents and school district personnel at the nearby Niagara Street School.

When Dyster took office, there were just 70 registered sex offenders in the city, and in all likelihood that number will be tripled by the end of his current term, even as the general population of the city as a whole has declined by thousands.

There are currently no women on the list of registered sex offenders in Niagara Falls. So, by eliminating that half of the population from the comparison rolls, your likelihood of rubbing elbows with a convicted sex offender shoots up to an astonishing 1 in 129 men. That would constitute a small crowd at a local night club or a portion of the lunchtime rush at McDonald's.

Since no one will hire them and their families often don't want to have anything to do with them, registered sex offenders are completely dependent upon the various social

tabled legislation introduced by the clueless councilwoman that would have tightened regulations for cat owners in the city, and made feeding a stray cat a criminal offense.

Grandinetti's bill sought to amend Chapter 701 of the Codified City Ordinances, which governs ownership of dogs, cats and other animals.

Most of the changes she recommended had to do with cats, however.

"No cat shall be fed, sheltered, maintained or harbored that is not domesticated," Grandinetti's proposed new rules stated. "No person shall harbor, maintain or feed any unlicensed or stray cat."

Under her proposed legislation, cats



would no longer be permitted to "interfere with garbage receptacles," or to "defecate, urinate or dig" on any property not belonging to the cat owner.

Exactly what constitutes a "domesticat-

ed" cat is not spelled out, but Grandinetti's ordinance went so far as to provide fines and even threaten jail time for violators.

Grandinetti's quickly became the target of harassment and threats from cat lovers across the country, following an article about it in the Niagara Falls Reporter.

"Sometimes a conflict has to occur before a solution can be found," said Grandinetti, who is no stranger to conflict. Her sometimes bizarre Facebook postings alone have generated reams of newspaper copy.

She filed a police report over harassing messages that encouraged her to "drown your children" and "kill yourself," delivered both through Facebook and to her personal email account.

The violent remarks directed at Grandinetti were delivered by individuals digitally, and it is uncertain who the distributor, or distributors, of the messages were. According to the report filed with the Niagara Falls Police Department, Grandinetti claimed "aggravated harassment."

"I would like to see you drugged and (urinated) on," one message said.

"Do us a favor and kill yourself," read another.

A majority of her more sensible colleagues moved to table Grandinetti's proposal before it saw the light of day.

Ali Hansen, in a Reporter Guest View, cast a bemused eye on the silly show.

"In reading about Council member Kristen Grandinetti's boneheaded idea about fining or jailing people who are taking humane steps to manage the area's feral cat population, I couldn't help but think that it's too bad we can't trap, spay and release Grandinetti somewhere other than Niagara Falls," he wrote. "That way she won't be such a nuisance to her neighbors. And by the way, if anybody bothers to keep feeding her, be sure to slap them with a fine and throw them in jail."

Grandinetti persevered, reintroducing the proposed ordinance again and again to her reluctant colleagues.

"I don't understand the hesitation," said councilwoman Kristen Grandinetti at Monday's city council meeting just before changes to the city animal code regarding "community" cats got tabled.

Finally, at the end of June, a visibly agitated Grandinetti watched helplessly this week as her colleagues shot her controversial anti-cat legislation down for the third time, despite what she claimed were Herculean efforts on her part to make the proposed law more acceptable.

She gave up her crusade and went back

to posting on Facebook.

WHAT A WASTE

The dumping of potentially hazardous and even radioactive waste by the city was on ongoing story in 2016, the focus of two separate Reporter investigations.

City officials attempted to address concerns in the wake of a June expose in The Reporter on the creation of a radioactive waste dump on North Avenue. Approximately 100 tons of radioactive soil were excavated during the construction of the city's new train station and dumped at the North Ave. site which sits about 75 yards from the new train station.

How dangerous were the materials stored at the dump?

A tall, padlocked chain link fence was built around it, festooned with warning signs.

"DANGER HARD HATS, SAFETY GLASSES, SAFETY SHOES REQUIRED IN THIS AREA AT ALL TIMES," one stated.

Another advised, "IN CASE OF EMERGENCY CALL 911 FIRE RESCUE POLICE."

A third sign warned of the presence of "RADIOACTIVE MATERIAL" and reads: "Caution Radioactive Materials Area."

The Reporter visited the site and found that the gate of the fence had fallen down, and that large holes and tears appeared in the plastic safety sheeting used to cover the radioactive waste. In some sections, the plastic sheeting had blown off and the area was soaked with groundwater.

The fence was repaired after the story was published, and Thomas J. DeSantis, the city's acting director of planning, environmental and economic development, responded to media and public inquiries downplaying the safety issue.

"It's not contaminating anything, the levels are so low that they don't cause a health threat," said DeSantis. "It's safe to anybody walking by."

In August, the radioactive material suddenly disappeared. The pile had sat on an abandoned North Avenue lot for more than a year—near a densely populated part of the city. The Dyster administration made no official announcement of its removal or where it went.

In April, following another expose in the Reporter, the NYS DEC ordered the city to close down and clean up an illegal dump near the Hyde Park Golf Course off Porter and New Road that the city has been using for years to dispose of street debris, dead animals, tree stumps, building materials and other de-

tritus.

The makeshift landfill – formerly wetlands – has not been legally sanctioned and does not have containment mechanisms (like liners or containment walls) that landfills are required to possess.

The property was originally owned by the New York State Power Authority, but was deeded to the City after the 2007 relicensing of the power project.

Following the Reporter publication with pictures showing the site – said to be used for only compost – filled with all manner of illegally dumped street material including needles, used condoms, plastic, concrete, metal, and more, The DEC inspected the site and made tests.

Within three weeks the site was closed and later concrete bollards have been installed by the city to prevent the site from being used.

What the cost has been to city taxpayers for the Dyster administration's negligence in the creation and removal of these illegal dumps is anyone's guess.

### BIG BUCKS

A portion of local tax burden here goes to help pay the salaries of 69 city employees who make \$100,000 or more a year, according to the public service website SeethroughNY.net.

Indeed, the impoverished City of Niagara Falls is rich with top earners, most of them with the police and fire departments.

With 49,468 residents as of the 2013 US census estimate, the proportion is high compared to other cities. For every 717 city residents, there is one city employee who earns more than \$100,000.

Looking at similarly sized municipalities around, Binghamton, with 47,376 residents, has only seven \$100,000 plus city employees. Or one out of every 6,768 residents.

Troy, with 50,129 residents, has 34 city workers making more than \$100,000. Or one out of 1,474.

Utica, with a population of 62,235, has only 19 earning more than \$100,000. This translates to one city worker earning more than \$100,000 for every 3,275 residents – about five times lower than Niagara Falls.

Schenectady, with a population of 66,135, has 70, only one more than Niagara Falls. With 17,000 more people, the city comes in at one out of 945, compared to Niagara Falls' one out of 717.

Albany, the state's capital, with almost twice the population, at 97,856, has only 81 city employees earning more than \$100,000 or one out of 1,208.

### SCALPED BY THE SENECA

They said it couldn't be done. Or, rather, they said it wouldn't be done. When leaders of the Seneca Nation of Indians were gifted with 50 acres of prime real estate in the city's tourist district, along with the multimillion dollar convention center for use as a casino that opened in 2002, they swore up and down that a tax free gas station and smoke shop just wasn't in the cards.

For some odd reason, we here at the Niagara Falls Reporter didn't believe them.

The Senecas began construction on their new gas station / smoke shop / fast food outlet last summer, and a Seneca website this week promises it will be "Opening Soon!"

Doesn't that beat all?

"Determining the future use and development of our sovereign lands is the right and responsibility of the Seneca Nation," said Mo John Sr., Seneca Nation president. "This project is in keeping with those sovereign rights as recognized by the federal government."

The Niagara USA Chamber of Commerce, Niagara County's leading business advocacy organization, came out strongly against the plan to open the 24-bay gas station on sovereign land within the city of Niagara Falls.

"While we respect the rights of a sovereign nation, the negative impact that a tax-free gas station would have on local convenience stores, businesses and the city and county would be devastating," a prepared statement from the organization stated.

Others are opposed as well.

Likely victims of the Seneca plan include the Star food Mart, which serves up gas and cigarettes at Fourth and Main, the Citgo Mart at Seventh and Main, the Mobile station at 10th and Pine and the Mobile station at 29th and Pine.

The 7-Eleven, almost right across the street at 402 Niagara St. and Andy's Quick Stop at 18th and Niagara will also feel the effects of the cut rate cigarette trade.

And who will make the trek out to the Tuscarora smoke shops and gas stations such as Smokin' Joes and Randy's once bargain basement gas and smokes are available right in downtown Niagara Falls?

Originally, Seneca officials said they would sell gasoline and cigarettes at "competitive" rates. They've since modified this, but why is there any reason to believe anything they say when they said they weren't going to open a gas station / smoke shop to begin with?

"There is nearly a \$5 difference in the price of a pack of cigarettes between New York retailers and Native American smoke shops," the Niagara USA Chamber's statement read. "While the merits of New York's tax policy can be debated, local retailers are caught in the middle. While they must comply with New York state regulations, their neighbor can conduct business virtually unimpeded by such burdensome regulations and taxes. This is simply unfair."

### TAXPAYERS BUY HOTEL

It was more than three years ago that Gov. Andrew Cuomo and Niagara Falls Mayor Paul Dyster rammed the controver-



sial Hamister Hotel project down the throats of a hesitant city council, telling anyone who would listen as an election approached that the Hamister deal was pretty much do-or-die for the future of downtown redevelopment and must be approved.

Meanwhile, Hamister's estimated cost shot up from \$22.4 million to build the luxury resort to \$35.7 million to build the faceless, middle market hotel. And guess what? It turned out Hamister didn't have the money after all.

Well, after years of false starts and broken promises, all shrouded in "official" secrecy for lack of a better description, Cuomo finally announced that plans to build the Hyatt Place Hotel are at last underway because the Hamister Group has secured financing and is finally moving forward.

You could almost sense the relief coming from the Cuomo camp given the circus of broken promises that followed all the hype in 2013 when the state led the charge to approve the deal for the politically-connected Buffalo developer who won development rights without the financing piece in place, as we now know nearly three years later.

The state had already boosted the public subsidy to Hamister to \$3.85 million (up from the original \$2.75 million), and tax breaks from Niagara County total \$4.25 million for the next 10 years. Plus, the city gave him a choice piece of Rainbow Boulevard property valued at \$1.5 million for a token payment of

\$100,000.

What more he was given before finally deigning to break ground on the project in July is anyone's guess.

All we know is that Canadian hotelier Michael DiCenzo offered to build the hotel for around \$18 million, with comparatively little in public money.

The Reporter has indicated time and again that the hotel deal with its wildly inflated cost which determined the subsidy should be investigated.

Meantime the best undeveloped property in all of Niagara Falls – some 300 feet from the entrance of the Niagara Falls State Park – was given to a Cuomo campaign contributor to build a fully subsidized low level hotel.

It was first put out to bid by an RFP where Cuomo and Dyster selected Hamister because the developer said it would be an upscale hotel with market rate apartments and stores, shops and boutiques which would create more than 100 jobs.

Other developers were ignored and finally Hamister delivered a hotel where he said there would be only 6 full time jobs and about 30 part time low level jobs at his now mid-scale hotel without market rate apartments and no shops after all.

And at a price that ensured Hamister got twice as much as he should have out of the taxpayers.

Only in Niagara Falls kids, only in Niagara Falls.



## Delaware North western meltdown makes for shocking comparisons with Niagara Falls State Park

### James Hufnagel

As part of an ongoing effort to acquaint our readers with some of the more unsavory aspects of the business and personal dealings of Buffalo billionaire Jeremy Jacobs and his family-held multinational corporation Delaware North, which has the exclusive rights to operate food and beverage concessions in Niagara Falls State Park, we wrote three weeks ago about the disruptive turmoil that Jacobs and his clan stirred up at their swanky winter retreat of Wellington, Florida, a sleepy little equestrian-oriented paradise outside of Palm Beach.

A developer named Mark Bellissimo simply wanted to expand the stable facilities, add some amenities and make a little money in the process. The result was a nasty legal and political battle with the uber rich, horsey clan from Buffalo. Bankrolling sympathetic candidates for the village board to the tune of hundreds of thousands of dollars and bring-

ing considerable legal and financial resources to bear, the Jacobses mostly prevailed, but at the cost of enormous bad feelings and bitter rancor in the previously placid small Florida retreat.

The ruthless, take-no-prisoners business approach of Delaware North, which last year posted revenues of over \$3.2 billion based mostly on selling beer, pop and hot dogs at sports stadiums, parks and similar venues, was on full display back in 2003 when they participated, with state government, in the ouster of a woman entrepreneur who had established a very successful and attractive cluster of shops and restaurants at a state park in California.

Three decades prior to that, Dianne Powers took a run-down motel located in a corner of Old Town State Park, near the site of possibly the oldest European settlement on the west coast and reflecting, to this day, a Spanish colonial-type ambiance, and turned it into a very popular destination called "Bazaar del



Delaware North wasn't a good fit for Old Town State Park in laid-back San Diego.

Mundo", a collection of shops and restaurants that, by 2003, was employing 550 people and grossing in excess of \$22 million in sales annually.

Strangely enough, after watching Bazaar del Mundo develop into the most lucrative operation in the entire California Parks system, then-California Governor Gray Davis and his Department of Parks and Recreation put the operation out to bid. The decision to do so may or may not have been finagled by influential Sacramento lobbyist Darius Anderson, at one time Gov. Davis' chief fund-raiser, who had been paid \$280,000 by Delaware North to see to the matter.

Delaware North offered \$2 million a year in rent and an additional \$13.6 million in "improvements" over the life of the 10-year deal. In addition, the company agreed to pay the state 8.5% of gross sales up to \$18 million, and 9% after that. Power's bid was \$1.5 million a year for rent and \$9.9 million

in capital improvements. She offered 7.3% of gross sales without any bump at \$18 million. Delaware North won the contract, and Powers moved out in May, 2005 after legal challenges to the changeover fell short.

"Oh my God!" said Fred Grand, president of the Old Town Chamber of Commerce, which represented 450 businesses, "I am shocked and disappointed because of all the efforts that Diane Powers put in over the years to create something really spectacular there."

You'd think the brain trust at Delaware North would have had this food and beverage thing down pat by then, but much like the Yosemite National Park debacle of last year that became a public relations disaster after Delaware North first lost the contract to competitor Aramark and then sued over trademarks it had obtained for historic names (including "Yosemite National Park"), the Old Town State Park concessions business collapsed spectacularly.

Delaware North announced in Decem-

# 2017 Calendar





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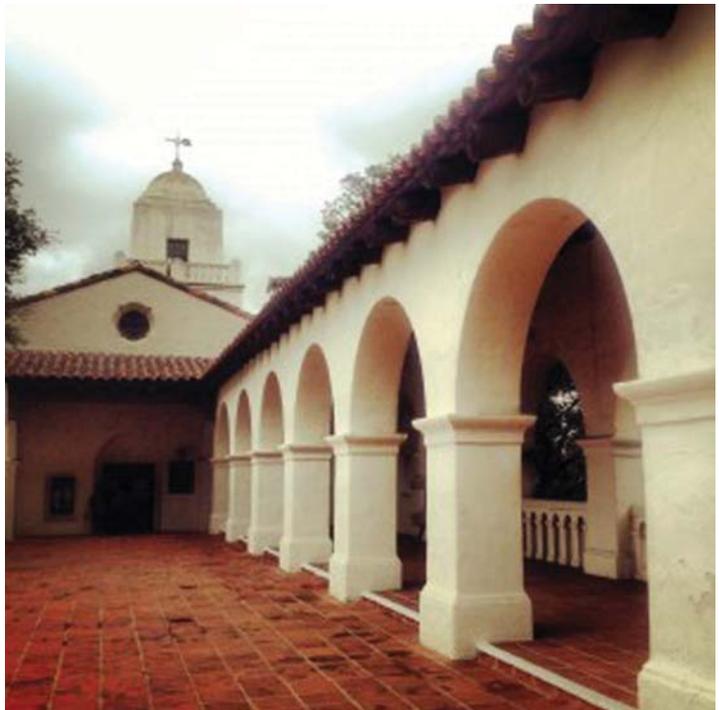
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No.	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	No.	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	No.	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr
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April 2017							May 2017							June 2017						
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July 2017							August 2017							September 2017						
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14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31			
October 2017							November 2017							December 2017						
No.	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	No.	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	No.	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	
40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31										



Plenty of room at the Hotel California - but not for Delaware North!



Delaware North's tacky food booths scattered throughout Niagara Falls State Park are among the numerous violations of Frederick Law Olmsted's plan.

ber, 2008, after a scant five years running the renamed "Puerto del Pasado" (having refused to purchase Bazaar del Mundo from Powers), that they were throwing in the towel. Revenues had plummeted from the \$22 million achieved by Diane Powers in her final year, to \$7.53 million for Delaware North in 2008. It was a stunning repudiation of the notion that large corporations, utilizing all the financial and management resources at their disposal, can do a better job than dedicated, locally-based business people.

At the time, it was generally agreed that Delaware North, despite the marginally higher rent paid and attempts at capital improve-

ments to the park, really wasn't a good fit, with their pre-processed greasy french fries and burgers and machine-dispensed drinks, in contrast to the variety of delectable ethnic food choices and specialty gift shoppes that the park had previously been endowed with when it had been run as Bazaar del Mundo.

At practically the very same time Delaware North was conniving its way into the California State Park system, it entered into a \$10.2 million agreement with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, commencing on July 1, 2002, to operate food, beverage and gift shop concessions in the Niagara Falls State Park, feeding

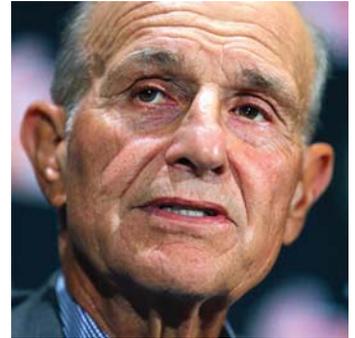
the eight million tourists who visit Niagara Falls every year, with a contract end date of Dec. 31, 2121. Comparing the two contracts side by side is enough to make the average taxpayer gasp.

Duration of Old Town State Park contract: 10 years. Niagara Falls State Park: 20 years.

Old Town State Park annual rent: \$2 million. Niagara Falls State Park: \$500,000.

Capital Improvements to Old Town State Park: \$13.6 million by Delaware North. Niagara Falls State Park: \$50 million Niagara Falls Landscape Improvements plan, paid for by taxpayers and Niagara Greenway.

That's just life in this fabulously corrupt state of New York.



Jeremy Jacobs, Sr. owner of Delaware North

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## We're in the Business of Teaching and Learning a Message from the Superintendent

### Mark Laurrie

Supt. of Schools for the Niagara Falls School District

Back in June when I became Superintendent, I identified objectives I wanted to achieve to move the District forward. Aligned with the Board of Education's Strategic Goals, these objectives are specific and designed to support students and employees, protect our physical plant, safeguard our finances, and enhance our community relationships.

With the help of staff, I am pleased to say much has been accomplished. While progress is ongoing, I want to take this time after the first 10 weeks of the academic year to report to the community; a complete report can be found on our website at [www.nfschools.net](http://www.nfschools.net).

One objective was to engage staff in the study of the factors affecting children, with the ultimate goal of increasing achievement and reducing suspensions. To that end, emphasis has been placed on providing a deeper look at poverty and its effects on students. A Poverty Simulation Experience took place at LaSalle Prep School and another is planned. At Abate School, staff participated in an adult community read of a book on poverty, and took a bus tour of students' neighborhoods. The ultimate goal was to impress upon staff that poor children need to be held to the highest possible standard in order to empower them.

I also purposed to increase the hiring



Mark Laurrie

of minority individuals for professional and para-professional jobs. While still actively recruiting, we have so far hired secretaries, Business Office personnel, PSAs, Safety Officers, and others, all of whom are qualified, successful District employees.

Another key objective has been to expand learning opportunities. I am pleased to report that the Extended Day Program is up and running at all schools. This program provides socialization as well as academic sup-

port to students.

At NFHS, we have introduced suicide and pregnancy prevention programs, peer to peer mentoring, the Big Eagle/Little Eagle Program with Niagara University, and begun a mentoring program between students at NFHS and LPS.

Elementary schools have adopted Basic Emotional Skills Training and held Bullying Beyond the Pledge workshops. The Too Good for Violence program continues in grade one classrooms. At Maple Avenue, Northpointe Council held a conflict resolution workshop with grades 5 and 6. This month, mental health counselors will begin work at Kalfas and Niagara Street schools.

We have instituted trimester report cards for primary grades and placed greater emphasis on the active participation of teachers in using data to inform their instructional practices at all levels.

Because I believe employees are most effective when they are empowered, encouraged, and respected for their training and experience, I have made it an objective to communicate with them. I have attended faculty meetings at all schools and begun recognizing deserving employees at Board meetings.

In order to protect the investment made in District infrastructure, we held the first of many cleaning blitzes at NFHS, performed preventative maintenance on key systems from HVAC to plumbing, and have replaced or repaired exterior building lights and tended

to parking lots and bus drop-offs. We are currently conducted State-mandated lead testing at all buildings.

We have upgraded the equipment at the OSC-TV station, as we completed Phase I of Smart Schools, a grant which allows us to improve technology across the district.

Finances matter and I am pleased to report that the District received a very favorable audit from external firm Drescher & Malecki, showing \$4.8 Million increased fund balance (restricted and non-spendable, assigned and unassigned). The firm complimented staff for cooperation and transparency.

I also wanted to increase communication with organizations, educational partners, community leaders, media, and the community in general. To that end, the District has joined NOAH and the Regional Economic Development Team for Mentoring. We have formed a Student Advisory Committee, established a social media presence, begun talks to establish an Air Force ROTC at NFHS, and formally recognized five outstanding alumni. By year's end, we plan to have welcome packets available to every family with baby born at Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center in 2017.

This a sample of what has been achieved so far; there is much to do in the weeks ahead. I encourage all residents to follow our progress, and more importantly, the progress of our students. I am confident great things are happening.

### Supt. Laurrie puts his children where his job is... School District leader shows confidence in Niagara Falls Schools

Mark Laurrie, the recently installed Superintendent of Schools for the Niagara Falls School District, has risen through the ranks of this school district and its city.

He was a student of the district and worked in the district for years as an administrator before being appointed by the Niagara Falls School Board to replace Cynthia Bianco upon her retirement.

This 'raising of our own by our own' is a sign that, like everywhere else, some people in Niagara Falls get it that all people, all cities, all nations, must rise by their own exertion.

The School Board wisely did not choose some "brightest and best" educator from another state with a long line of initials after his or her name, but chose instead a man who believes in the community, who loves the city, who lived here all his life and went to school here in the very school district which he now leads.

Perhaps most impressive of all, is that Laurrie sends his own children to Niagara Falls schools. While he certainly can afford the best private schools, it is the mark of the man's confidence in the job he is doing and the people he is working with that 'what is good enough for your children is good enough for his children.'

From time to time we get callers who have lists of teachers and administrators of our local public schools who they say send



their children to private schools. We have chosen not to publish these lists since we believe in the freedom of parents to choose where they want to educate their children. However it does not give one great confidence that teachers and administrators don't think their own schools are the best place their children may learn.

It gives us confidence in Laurrie, the educator, that his first pick for learning and growing for his own children, like he, himself, as a boy, is the Niagara Falls Public Schools.

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Telephone 286-0771

# WINTER TERM 2017

## Classes begin Jan 9, 2017

### BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Robert Restaino, Vice President  
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Ron Barstys  
Earl F. Bass  
Arthur Jocoy, Jr.  
Anthony Paretto  
Russell Petrozzi  
Nicholas Vilardo

### ADMINISTRATION

**Mark R. Laurrie**  
Superintendent of Schools

**Dorothy L. Brundidge**  
School Administrator

Julia Destino, Secretary  
Debbie Mort, Office Support Clerk  
**Main Office**

The Niagara Falls City School District is committed to life-long learning and through the Community Education Center offers programs for people of all ages. Our course list contains opportunities for participation in activities that promote physical fitness, the use of technology and other special interests during the Winter Term of 2017.

Please note that we are interested in expanding the number of future course offerings and invite community experts who are willing to share their expertise to contact the Community Education Center.

Registration begins on January 3, 2017. If you have any questions, or would like more information about a specific program, please call us at 716-286-0771.

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# NIAGARA FALLS COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTER

## DAILY PROGRAMS O/N BOCES

**\*\*There are no fees for these programs**

### \*\*ADULT BASIC EDUCATION/HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY



This course is designed for the adult learner interested in completing their High School Equivalency diploma. It is also recommended for anyone who has been away from school for a long period of time or for those who feel they need prior preparation for the TASC (Test Assessing Secondary Completion) Exam. The course reviews the basics of Writing, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science and Reading. Applications are available at the Community Education Center. The course and TASC exam are free of charge. New York State has selected a new high school equivalency test called the TASC™ to replace the GED® as the primary pathway to a NYS High School Equivalency Diploma.

Monday through Friday 8:30 am – 11:30 am or 12:00 pm - 3:00 pm

*Stephanie Bevacqua* Call for information: 716-286-0768

Tuesday & Thursday 5:00 pm – 8:00 pm

*Erica Kopp* Call for information: 716-278-8154

### \*\*ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE FOR THE FOREIGN BORN

Developed for the adult learner to read and speak the English Language.

Monday through Thursday  
Intermediate 8:30 am – 11:30 am  
Beginner 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

*Sarah Wright*

*Call for information: 716-286-0772*

### \*\*NATIONAL EXTERNAL DIPLOMA PROGRAM (NEDP)

This is a non-instructional program that incorporates a variety of assessment techniques, which are designed for the adult learner who has acquired academic skills through life experiences. The techniques include home projects, performance assessments, interviewing and documentation review. NEDP provides competent adults with the opportunity to earn a regular, High School diploma. Qualifications: 21 years and older.

*Stephanie Bevacqua or Joan Caldwell. Call for information: 716-286-0768*

### CERTIFIED NURSING ASSISTANT PROGRAM

The program consists of ten weeks of instructional classes held at the Niagara Falls City School District Community Education Center. You will receive a New York State certification upon successful completion of the program. Cost to be determined.

Qualifications: 21 years and older with **no high school diploma**

*Terry Josker* Call for information: 716-731-4176 ext. 4445

### HHA – HOME HEALTH AIDE



A one-month program (4-5 weeks) of 105 clinical hours (75 hours theory class and 30 hours clinical) with a final exam. Students become trained and certified health-care worker who provides assistance to a patient in the home with personal care (as hygiene and exercise) and light household duties (as meal preparation) and who monitors a patient's condition.

*Please contact*

*Tanya Moore @ 278-8599 or Terry Josker @ 731-4176 ext. 4445*

## FITNESS ACTIVITIES

### SWIMNASTICS

Have fun getting fit with stretching, toning, water exercise in the pool. This program is suitable for those with or without swimming background. Experience increased flexibility, stomach, and cardiovascular benefits. (Limit 12) Class meets once per week.



<i>Susana Nicholas</i>	<i>CEC Pool</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>10:00 am-11:00 am</i>	<i>\$30.00</i>
<i>Susana Nicholas</i>	<i>CEC Pool</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>11:00 am-12:00 pm</i>	<i>\$30.00</i>
<i>Susana Nicholas</i>	<i>CEC Pool</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>6:00 pm – 7:00 pm</i>	<i>\$30.00</i>
<i>Susana Nicholas</i>	<i>CEC Pool</i>	<i>Tues</i>	<i>9:00 am-10:00 am</i>	<i>\$30.00</i>
<i>Susana Nicholas</i>	<i>CEC Pool</i>	<i>Tues</i>	<i>10:00 am-11:00 am</i>	<i>\$30.00</i>
<i>Susana Nicholas</i>	<i>CEC Pool</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>11:00 am- 12:00 pm</i>	<i>\$30.00</i>
<i>Susana Nicholas</i>	<i>CEC Pool</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>6:00 pm – 7:00 pm</i>	<i>\$30.00</i>
<i>Susana Nicholas</i>	<i>CEC Pool</i>	<i>Thurs</i>	<i>10:00 am-11:00 am</i>	<i>\$30.00</i>
<i>Susana Nicholas</i>	<i>CEC Pool</i>	<i>Thurs</i>	<i>11:00 am-12:00 pm</i>	<i>\$30.00</i>

# NIAGARA FALLS COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTER

## WATERWALKING

Exercise your entire body with added benefit of water resistance. One-half hour equals two hours of street walking. (Limit 10) Class meets once per week.

Susana Nicholas CEC Pool Mon Noon - 1 pm \$30.00  
 Susana Nicholas CEC Pool Wed Noon - 1 pm \$30.00

## TOTAL BODY WORKOUT

Fitness program targeting upper and lower body, abs, legs and buttocks – plus cardiovascular workout (bring hand weights). Class meets two times per week.

Susana Nicholas CEC Gym Mon & Wed 7:00 - 8:00 pm \$45.00

## CHAIR EXERCISES FOR SENIORS



A total body workout including strength & toning for abs, legs and arms, all done while sitting. Improves balance and mobility. The program uses elastic bands, balls or you may bring your weights. Class meets once per week.

Susana Nicholas CEC Gym  
 Wed 10:00 am – 11:00 am  
 \$25.00

## CROCHET CLASS



Do you hate cold winters? Do you want to learn a way to pass the time that will help keep you warm throughout those long cold days? If you answered “Yes” to these questions then grab your crochet hook and come learn to crochet. We will make squares of different stitches and put them together to make a lap-ghan to help keep you warm!

The supplies needed are: 1 crochet hook Size H & 4 skeins (7 oz) of your favorite colored worsted weight yarn. Class meets once per week.

Christine Goodwin CEC Tues 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm \$45.00

## SO YOU WANT TO BE A CLOWN – PART I



Come one, come all. This hands-on, interactive class will have you on your way to becoming a great clown. Get introduced to the art of clowning by exploring the history of clowning and learning about the different types of clowns. Discover your own clown persona and receive helpful hints on putting together a fascinating costume and the art of developing your clown face using grease paint. Other items covered but not limited to, are: balloon animals, basic magic tricks, plate

spinning and juggling. (Minimum of 5 students required.) Class meets once per week.

Carol Shire NFHS Wed 5 weeks, 1/11 – 2/8, 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm \$35.00

## SPECIAL INTERESTS

### INTRODUCTION TO COMPUTERS FOR SENIOR CITIZENS



If learning how to use a computer is something you have been putting off, this is the class for you! This class is designed as an introduction to computers for beginning students ...like you! Class starts with “Here’s the on button.”

You will become familiar with the very basics that include parts of the computer, how to use the mouse, games, searching the Internet & email. Class size will be limited to a small group for more one-on-one help and instruction. (Maximum of 7, minimum of 5 students required for each class.) Class meets once per week.

Carol Hartwig CEC 205 Tues 3:00 pm-5:00 pm \$45.00

### SO YOU WANT TO BE A GREAT CLOWN - PART II



This class is designed as a continuation of Clowning – Part I for students that would like to expand their knowledge and skills. In this class we will continue with balloon animals, magic tricks, juggling, puppetry, storytelling, skits and performing at birthday parties. Students continue to learn skills enabling them to become a great clown. At the end of this five-week session, all clowns will participate in a graduation ceremony, enabling all students to show off their skills in front of family, friends and other clowns.

Supply costs vary depending on the skills the students want to pursue. (Minimum of 5 students required.) Class meets once per week.

Carol Shire NFHS Wed 5 weeks, 2/15–3/15, 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm \$35.00

# REGISTRATION

The Winter Term begins on January 9, 2017. Classes are held for 10 consecutive weeks unless otherwise noted. Classes will not be held on:

Monday, January 16 – Dr. Martin Luther King Day  
Monday, February 20 – President's Day

Registration by mail is preferred and will only be accepted with a postmark PRIOR to the start of classes on January 9, 2017. There will be no registration on the first day of class. Please make checks or money orders payable to: **Niagara Falls City School District**

**NO CASH WILL BE ACCEPTED & there is a \$30.00 charge for returned checks**

**Please forward registration and payment to:**

**Niagara Falls Community Education Center**  
**ATTN: Julia Destino**  
6040 Lindbergh Avenue  
Niagara Falls, New York 14304

**You may register in person starting on January 3, 2017 in the Community Education Center Main Office from 11:00 am – 2:00 pm. Class size is limited.**

**FEES:** As a self-sustaining division of the Niagara Falls City School District, all costs for instructors and staff are covered by course fees. Fees must be paid at time of registration. Residents of the City of Niagara Falls who are 65 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER may receive a \$5 discount (Chair exercise class is excluded from discount). Please refer to the course listing for the fees required.

**CLASS CANCELLATIONS:** Classes may be canceled or rescheduled if enrollment is low or if an instructor becomes unavailable. **If classes are canceled due to weather conditions, the community will be notified by local television and radio stations.**

## REFUNDS:

Refunds will be issued only in the following circumstances:

- If a course is canceled – total refund.
- If you withdraw one week prior to the start of class – refund, less \$3.
- If you withdraw during the first or second week of class – refund, less \$6.
- No refunds will be issued after the second week of class.
- To receive a refund you must notify the Community Education Center Office of your intent to withdraw from the class.

## Please Remember:

- Register starting January 3, 2017
- There will be no registration on first day of class

- Make checks and/or money orders payable to:  
**Niagara Falls City School District**
- If you have questions, please call 286-0771

## NIAGARA FALLS CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT – REGISTRATION FORM

Make Check Payable to: Niagara Falls City School District or N.F.C.S.D.

Send to: Niagara Falls Community Education Center, Attn: Julia Destino, 6040 Lindbergh Ave., Niagara Falls, NY 14304

Last Name			First Name			Initial		
Mailing Address				City		Zip Code		
Home Telephone			Alternate Telephone			Senior (65 yrs) Y/N		
Course Title		Location		Day/Time		Fee & Check/ M.O. #		

**NIAGARA FALLS COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTER**

# WERE YOU WRONGLY ACCUSED BY THIS MAN?



**Former Assistant US Attorney  
Anthony M. Bruce**



Upon information and belief, court records, document review, and eyewitness testimony, Anthony Bruce suborned perjury, obstructed justice, deceived the courts, recklessly and blatantly disregarded evidence that pointed to innocence, lied by omission and committed outright fraud and perjury as a regular pattern of conduct during his notorious 38 year role as an assistant US attorney and sent an unknown number of innocent people to prison. This heretofore 'dirty little secret' was known by a certain number of people in the legal community and Bruce barely escaped being disbarred and prosecuted in the past.

Up until now, no one had the temerity to publicly challenge this allegedly 'villainous bully' until Frank Parlato, who claims to have been falsely accused by Bruce, brought Bruce's alleged misconduct to light in a series of articles in this publication. Bruce's alleged blatant prosecutorial misconduct in the Parlato case has prompted other defendants and lawyers to contact Parlato who now has a growing body of evidence that the conduct Bruce showed in his case was not singular. Other victims are and will be going on record in coming articles. Were you or your family victimized by Bruce too?

**BE NOT AFRAID:** If you were a victim of Bruce join the ranks of victims who are fighting back and contact us. Your inquiry will be kept confidential. Your name will never be used without your written permission. Our goal is to prevent prosecutorial misconduct which so often occurs but goes unpunished. It can only be stopped when there is a consequence for prosecutorial misconduct. Absolute power corrupts. Prosecutors have virtually no checks and balances on their conduct unless the people themselves stand up for justice. Contact Parlato at **716-990-5740** or email **news1926@gmail.com**. All calls and emails kept confidential.

"When we neither punish nor reproach evildoers, we are not simply protecting their trivial old age, we are thereby ripping the foundations of justice from beneath new generations." *Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn.*

Contact Parlato at **716-990-5740** or email **news1926@gmail.com**.  
All calls and emails kept confidential.

# Niagara Falls Citizens Organize To Take Back The City from Albany, but Must Reckon with Pro-Albany Mayor

## Frank Parlato

Earlier this year the Niagara Gazette announced that a group of locals organized something called "Reclaim Niagara" - formed to "get Albany out of our pockets."

To combat the "exploitation of our resources by public authorities and state entities" is its stated goal.

It is described as "a growing movement of citizens dedicated to exposing the injustices faced by Niagara Falls" and this injustice they have rightly divined is due to nothing more than the fact that Albany hijacks the wealth of this city - primarily to enrich the politicians who control the state - who are from New York City.

Two local businessmen, Shawn Weber, landlord, entrepreneur, sometimes beggar of taxpayer money for his businesses, and owner of the popular nightclub Wine on Third, Patrick Proctor, owner of Rainbow Air Helicopter Tours, and attorney and city of Niagara Falls firefighter, Jason Cafarella, were introduced as the leaders of a group who, according to its website, are "Demanding action for what the city of Niagara Falls deserves."

The group organized a small protest march on May 14. Attended by a couple dozen residents, these walked along the state-owned south Robert Moses Parkway, through the state-run Niagara Falls State Park and up

the state-managed Old Falls Street, calling attention to the fact that the waterfront and all of its resources - like tourism and hydropower - which should benefit the city of Niagara Falls, have been totally and utterly hijacked by Albany.

Ironically, one of the individuals who had been complicit for several years in the theft of Niagara Falls' assets by Albany -- NYS Assemblyman and former State Parks administrator, John Ceretto, joined the march.

Possibly some saw the hypocrisy in Ceretto, who never made a peep about Albany taking Niagara Falls hydropower, its tourism, its convention center, its conference center or its development of downtown. He became one of the few incumbents in the entire state Assembly to be unseated this November.

If nothing else, Reclaim Niagara, which has not updated its Facebook page since October, is trying to raise consciousness among residents about the issues.

There are a handful of Reclaim Niagara lawn signs, including one prominently in the window of Wine on Third.

And, frankly, anytime anyone gets off their duff and marches up the street in protest of anything, well, good for them.

But more than marching is required. If lawyer Cafarella can come up with some solid strategies on how to rock the boat here and in Albany, drawing national or even international attention to the city's plight, which is the most violent, poorest and high-



One-time busy centers of commerce in the city of Niagara Falls like Pine Avenue fell on hard times, and won't begin the journey to prosperity until leaders are elected who address the structural issues that face the city, like the theft of tourism and hydropower by Albany.

est taxed in the state, (despite having a world tourist destination and the greatest natural hydropower in the world) he should consider a run for mayor.

In a couple of years, the beleaguered residents of this city will probably have had enough of the non-stop toadying to state agencies by the present mayor, Paul Dyster, who, having been a cheerleader for the south parkway and traffic circle upgrade, Greenway Commissioner who passed the Niagara Falls State Park Landscape Improvement plan that expanded parking lots and food service in the park, boosted Maid of the Mist owner James Glynn's boatyard to be built in a matter of

months while north parkway removal has languished for the nine years he's been in office, and from whom never is heard a discouraging word with regards to NYPA's looting of hydropower, desperately needs to go if the city of Niagara Falls is going to make progress on any of the goals of Reclaim Niagara.

Let's start with that: Reclaim Niagara should either get Dyster on the record that Albany must return Niagara Falls' hydropower and tourism to local control, or at the very least, let the city share largely in its profits - or Reclaim Niagara should let the public know Dyster is the old fraud that we here at the Reporter know he clearly is.

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The Niagara Power Project ships its electricity to Canada and seven other states while residents of Niagara Falls pay nearly the highest electricity rates in the nation.

While Reclaim Niagara seems to be silent right now, a new group has emerged. Called the Pine Avenue Redevelopment Project (PARP), it is described as "A group of Business owners working together to promote Business, Economic Development, Beautification and Safety for the Businesses, Residents and Visitors," according to its Facebook page.

Without denigrating any effort towards the good, the word "directionless," comes to mind with regards to the latest effort.

To undo the frustration existing among some who pine, no pun intended, for the glorious days of yesteryear when Niagara Falls was a thriving city and Pine Avenue was its epicenter, they will need to make a decision - beg from city hall or strike up their own independent strategy.

Members of the Pine Avenue group met recently with City of Niagara Falls Community Development director Seth Piccirillo and City Administrator Nick Melson, and they received warm praise and free advice from Council Chairman Andrew Touma, and council members Kristen Grandinetti and Kenny Tompkins which, of course, means little, if nothing at all.

The group - either will be dependent on the good graces of local government - or will eventually wither and die like all community groups that don't have direct political ties to Mayor Paul Dyster, qualifying them for some kind of government hand-out.



"Reclaim Niagara" marches on Albany. Here in Niagara Falls, that is.

And no one in this town ever got a hand-out in the nine years Dyster has been mayor who did not either pledge to support him politically - either openly or tacitly, and/or donate money to him and/or did something that Dyster could use as a press release or photo op to promote his own political interests.

It's a political catch 22: Dyster is committed to following the lead of his masters in Albany who are bent on using this city as New York City's tool, which means in the end keeping it poor and on welfare. A rich city will come into its own and want to keep its own.

Here, if anyone wants Dyster's support (which are the few crumbs left for the city Dyster can dole out after Albany has eaten our lunch) they must pledge an overall fealty to Dyster and support his agenda (which is Albany [the governor] first).

The only way any group concerned about restoring the city to what it once was can succeed is to break ties with Dyster, the most pro-Albany mayor this city ever had.

That means in turn no help from the city. In fact, not only will one get no help but also the active enmity of the mayor.

And no help from the mayor means no help from the council.

(Think the smashing of the council majority who opposed the Hamister deal).

The various councils over the last nine years have largely supported Mayor Dyster, who in turn wholly supports Albany, so in ef-

fect this is also a largely pro-Albany council.

How wise Albany is, too: they give pitances to the mayor. Think Seneca Casino whose slot machine payouts go 75 percent Albany/25 percent Niagara Falls (while Niagara Falls businesses compete against a host of tax free Seneca businesses [soon to come online is a gas station and mega convenience store] in the highest taxed city in the state).

But Albany handled it wisely by giving the whole casino cash to the control of the mayor who could (and has) blown it on his own agendas (Consider how little \$200 million under Dyster's control has done for this ever declining city)

Albany gives Dyster crumbs, such as the left-over bed tax money and other free little hand-outs - which he can hand out to his little favorites - while Albany eats our lunch and our supper and most of our breakfast too.

Did you ever hear of a city that gets 8 million tourists per year and has the topography and water to produce a billion dollars of hydropower per year that is broke?

Dyster even voted to give control to Albany of our water by supporting the creation of the water authority that is controlled by Albany appointments. Small wonder people in Niagara Falls pay higher water rates than places in the desert. In the city with the greatest freshwater in the world, we pay high water rates. In the city with the greatest hydropower, we pay nearly the highest electric rates in the country.

The highest taxes, the highest crime, the most welfare, the fastest declining city - all of this is the cost of Albany.

But for Albany we would be rich.

And none of this poverty could be done without Paul Dyster aiding and abetting Albany interests.

He is the worst- for he had \$200 million in casino cash to squander - which he did. And he is the man who led the city to the absolute abysmal status it now suffers.

We will believe that Reclaim Niagara and Pine Avenue Redevelopment, etc. will do even a lick of good - if and only if - they make a break from every politician who is not opposed to Albany's hijacking of our assets.

Ceretto is gone. That leaves the number one Albany booster Mayor Dyster.

How about it: Let's ask Dyster to demand a far greater share of our hydropower?

Ask State Parks to pay large fees to the city for taking up all of our waterfront?

Charge Delaware North and Maid of the Mist - the big takers in the state park - to pay market value rent - and give that to the city.

You want to Reclaim Niagara? Start with that. Demand the mayor of our city to stand up for what is ours.

Otherwise these groups that talk about Albany are just a bunch of people with a lot of hot air, a couple of signs and the willingness to walk in the park (owned by the state) with John Ceretto (also owned by the state until he was fired by the people).



Mayor Dyster chums it up with his pals in the Niagara Falls State Park. L to R, State Parks Western Region director Mark Thomas of Chautauqua County, Dyster, State Parks Commissioner Rose Harvey, Cuomo, Niagara Frontier Parks Commission chair Cindy Abbott Letro.

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## McNall Stays at Top County Slot, But Others Eyeing Post

## McNall Easily Fended Off Rivals



Keith McNall, at right, Niagara County Legislature Chairman



Majority Leader Randy Bradt

The unsurprising news broke late Tuesday night: the chairman of the Niagara County Legislature, Keith McNall, R-Lockport, would be keeping his job.

In the annals of Niagara County's political news, this wasn't exactly an earth-shattering announcement; after all, save for the on-again, off-again sacking of former chairmen Bill Ross, C-Wheatfield, and Clyde Burmaster, R-Porter, the governing GOP bloc in the county legislature hasn't exactly made big, bold moves to dump its leadership.

Given that this year will mark the Republicans' 14th year in power here, perhaps that is wise: the Republicans, after all, must be getting something right, or the Dennis Virtuoso-led minority caucus would be growing from its paltry four seats.

The Republicans point to what Majority Leader Randy Bradt, R-North Tonawanda, who also is keeping his job, called "historic

tax and spending cuts."

A press release issued by the county government's Public Information Office quoted McNall as saying, "It's been a good year, and I thank my colleagues for working not only to enact our tax-cutting agenda, but also helping make three major transitions very smooth... We began the year with a new team with a mandate to implement fiscally-conservative policies, and we've done just that. We passed a serious budget that lowered taxes and cut spending by \$575,000 over the previous year."

Perhaps Bradt's claim seems boastful, but I checked his numbers, and numbers presented during the county legislature's budget meetings, and the GOP's brag that they have reduced property tax rates by 15 percent since 2006 holds up to scrutiny. So does the claim of a reduction in spending, although in a budget well above \$300 million, I'd like to see the Republicans do more.

Sources close to the Republican caucus tell me that McNall, while the overwhelming choice of his colleagues and Republican Party leaders to continue in his post, was not the only legislator eyeing the job.

Entreaties were made on behalf of two other majority members, but party leaders are said to have shut them down.

"Of the 11 legislators in the majority caucus, Keith solidly had the votes of seven or

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## Lewiston's Wydysh Gains Committee Chairmanship, Seen as Rising Star

eight, plus his own," one party insider told me. "How do you argue with leading the first legislative majority to actually cut not just taxes, but spending too, in no-one-can-remember-how-many years?"

McNall also benefits from what that same insider called "the Gentleman Thing." When Republicans drafted McNall to succeed aggressive partisan battler Glenn Aronow, one thing that impressed many about the former Lockport school board president was a certain coolness under pressure. As my source put it, "You could call Keith an a\_\_hole to his face, and he'd just smile and tell you he's sorry you feel that way. He might put your name on a list, mind you, but he would never lash out. That's not his style. He keeps his word, too, which is kind of a big deal in politics."

Bradt and Burmaster, who continue in their roles as majority leader and legislative vice chairman, meanwhile, faced no serious contenders seeking their jobs.

"Chairman of the legislature is the big enchilada," my Republican source explained over coffee. "Majority leader is a lot of work and no rewards, other than a \$500 stipend, and vice chairman is like vice-anything. You're perpetually a bridesmaid."

This is a marked departure from a year ago for Bradt. At the time, several Republican Party insiders told me that they, and even some of Bradt's colleagues, didn't believe he was up to the job of succeeding long-serving Majority Leader Rick Updegrave of Lockport.

"Rick had a management style that worked. He got the GOP's agenda through, he fought when he needed to, but mostly he kept the majority caucus itself together," the Republican leader I spoke with said. "There was a lot of concern out there that Randy Bradt — a guy who had only been elected to the legislature, or even to public office, two years before, was ready to be majority leader. The biggest thing he'd done is get into a public pissing contest with Dennis Virtuoso over pension padding. There was a whole Greek chorus warning against electing him majority leader a year ago."

Now, though, that chorus has gone silent.

"The legislature passed a great budget, the legislature got favorable headlines for addressing issues important to voters like the opioid crisis, gun rights, things like that. The committee chairmen, guys like John Syracuse at Public Works, they were allowed to run their committees and make real policy decisions. And a team that a year ago was starting to pull apart, with Rick Updegrave leaving, really came back together."

One other surprising aspect of Bradt's leadership has been a degree of rapprochement with Niagara Falls' Democratic minority to pass big-ticket items that the two parties can agree on, like an effort to build a replacement for the defunct Niagara Falls Conference Center.

"Rick Updegrave got a lot done, and was a success by any measure," my source reminded me. "But he was very deliberate. If Rick was old Peyton Manning at the end of his football career, Randy Bradt is a young Jim Kelly in the days of the K-Gun Offense. And it seems to be working."

The leadership trio will start off 2017 with some modest agenda items, according to Bradt, who expects to roll out some bigger initiatives later in the spring.



Legislator Rebecca Wydysh

One majority lawmaker whose star is on the rise is Lewiston's Rebecca Wydysh.

The freshman Republican, who runs jury selection efforts at the county courthouse, has impressed her colleagues and party brass enough that she's being given a portfolio heading the county's opioid-addiction panel.

That effort, begun by Bradt himself and Wilson legislator David Godfrey, who heads up the legislature's Community Security and Safety committee, won some favorable media coverage for the majority last year, including several community meetings to discuss the heroin and opioid epidemic and what a unified county policy for deploying naloxone, the potent antidote for heroin overdoses, might look like.

They also unveiled new anonymous

drop-off boxes for drugs at police stations around the county.

"Becky [Wydysh] is a really superb legislator, who understands the scope of the current addiction crisis because of her work every day in the state court system," Bradt said. "She's also shown the ability to follow things through to get results, and isn't afraid to make waves."

Earlier this month, Wydysh and Bradt jointly sponsored a legislative resolution calling on the state to break a legislative logjam that has thwarted the ability of ride sharing services like Uber to set up shop in Western New York. Bradt noted that Wydysh's research and preparation on that, and other, items had convinced him she was ready for a starting leadership role.

"We want to put people who can get things done out front," Bradt said.

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## Niagara Falls writer Kratts documents Falls during WWII



Michelle Ann Kratts

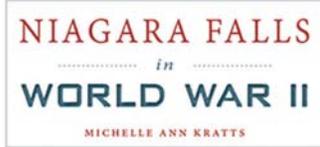
For last minute Christmas shopping, consider the new book by Niagara Falls author and historian Michelle Ann Kratts, "Niagara Falls in World War II".

Niagara Falls, both a natural wonder and a tourist destination, played a prominent role on the homefront during the Second World War. Many men and women worked diligently stateside in wartime industrial plants. One of the area's largest employers, Bell Aircraft, produced P-39 Airacobras and P-63 Kingcobra fighter planes. The company also contributed to more than thirty thousand aircraft for America and its Allies. Other residents, including Mayor Edward W. Mirrington Jr., were called to serve. Through numerous personal interviews, photos and wartime recipes, author and local historian Michelle Ann Kratts

honors the World War II efforts of locals both at home and abroad.

Rated on Amazon at 5.0 out of 5 stars, one admirer posted the following review:

"Second to none writing in this book about local history. WW2 enthusiasts (and everyone else) will enjoy the intimate details and human stories encapsulated here. From timed blackouts to factory contamination, war weddings, and the infamous Love Canal disaster, there are a plethora of treasures in this quick-read, poignant tome. A superbly researched work."



## Niagara Falls Jokes

We were so poor when I was growing up that at Christmas time Dad used to suck a peppermint and we'd all sit round his tongue.

sweater for Christmas? Because he was hoping for a screamer or a moaner.

\*\*\*

We were so poor when I was growing up that at Christmas time we couldn't afford tinsel on the Christmas tree, so we'd just wheel old grand dad in and make the old coot sneeze.

Why is there an angel on top of the Christmas tree?

One Christmas Eve, Santa was under a lot of stress. He and Mrs. Claus had just had a fight, his sleigh wasn't loaded and the elves were talking about going on strike. An angel walks into his office and asks, "Hey, Santa, what do you want me to do with this Christmas tree?"

\*\*\*

We were so poor when I was growing up that at Christmas time we would get batteries with a note, "Toys not included".

We were so poor when I was growing up that one Christmas Dad gave Mom a set of perfumes for Christmas called "Ample". She couldn't even tell that he had scraped off the "S".

\*\*\*

What did Adam say on the day before Christmas?  
"It's Christmas, Eve!"

\*\*\*

Santa sometimes acts a little squirrely around this time of year. What do you expect? He's been diagnosed bi-polar.

\*\*\*

Why was Santa upset when he got a

At a monastery high in the mountains, the monks have a rigid vow of silence. Only at Christmas, and only by one monk, and only with one sentence, is the vow allowed to be broken.

One Christmas, Brother Thomas is allowed to speak and he says, "I like the mashed potatoes we have with the Christmas turkey!" and he sits down. Silence ensues for 365 days.

The next Christmas, Brother Michael gets his turn, and he says "I think the mashed potatoes are lumpy and I hate them!" Once again, silence for 366 days (it's leap year).

The following Christmas, Brother Paul rises and says, "I am fed up with this constant bickering!"



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