

Could Council election end the rubberstamp era?



# NIAGARA FALLS REPORTER

THE TRUTH IS ALWAYS FAIR

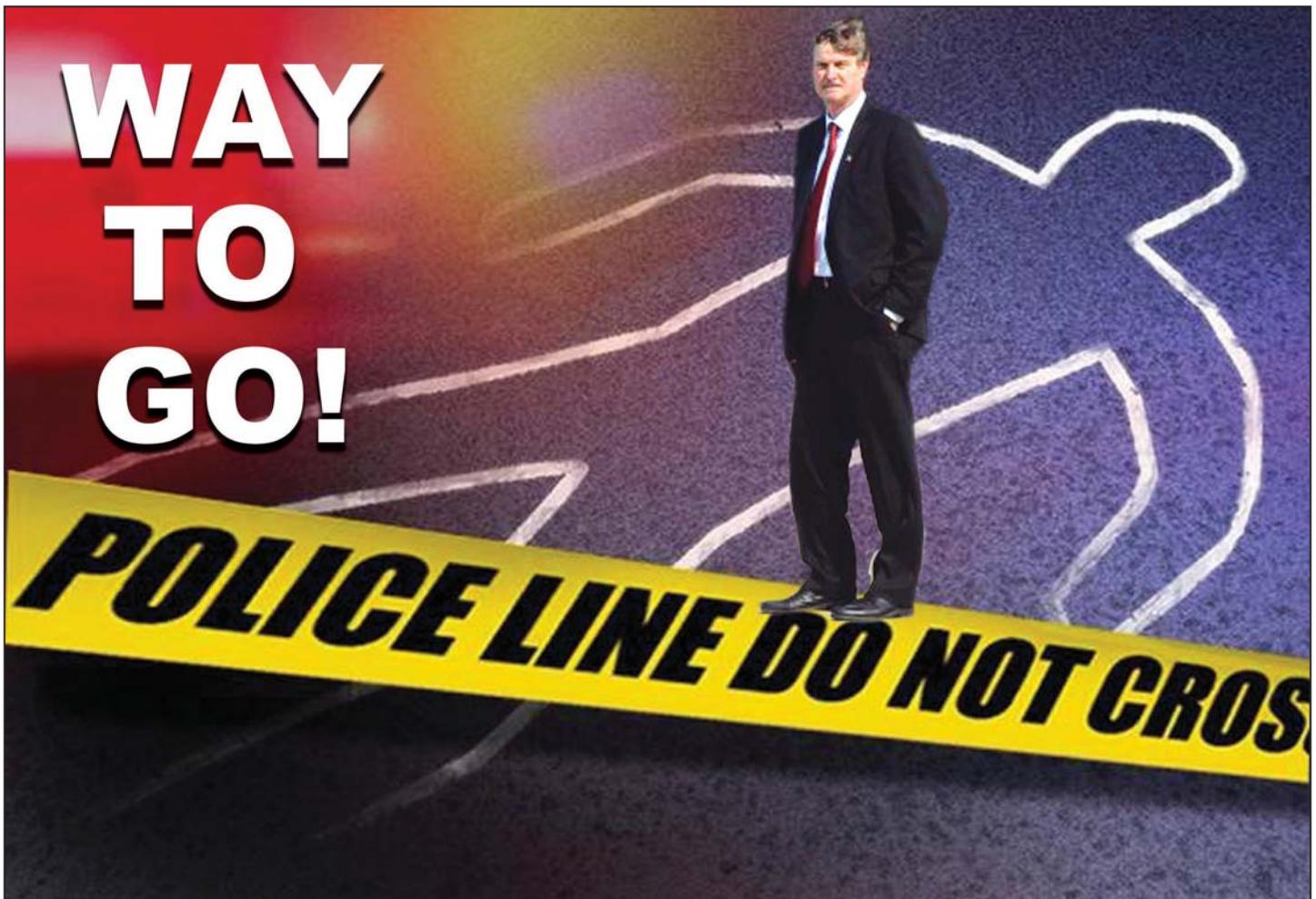
FREE

MAY 18, 2017 - MAY 25, 2017

VOL. 18, NO. 20

FREE

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## Three Open City Council Seats May Attract As Many As 10 Candidates

### Mike Hudson

At least six contenders will vie for three open seats on the Niagara Falls City Council this autumn, and insiders say as many as eleven others are likely to announce before the July filing deadline.

Charles Walker, a 20-year veteran of the Council, has decided not to seek re-election, while members Kristen Grandinetti and Andrew Touma have announced they are in the running.

The Council has been seen largely as a rubber stamp, approving the programs and policies of Mayor Paul Dyster, rarely questioning his decisions. This has led to fiascos such as the city's new train station that has yet to see a train and the 72nd Street water main that left residents without water for two winters in a row.

On the Republican side, Chris Voccio, Sam Archie and Robert Pascoal have announced their intention to run political newcomer Danielle DePalma will be running as a Democrat.

Voccio recently retired as publisher of the Niagara Gazette following a nearly three year tenure. He also stepped down from the boards of the Niagara USA Chamber and the United Way of Greater Niagara. In his announcement, Voccio described himself as "a lifelong arch-conservative - limited government, free enterprise, law and order."

Pascoal, president of the Landlords' Association of Greater Niagara, was a surprise, dark horse candidate for mayor in 2015. He left the race after losing to John Accardo in the primary.

His view of the Dyster administration remains unchanged, however.



Chris Voccio

"I continue to watch this administration set forth unmeasurable and costly programs and policies without proper checks and balances from certain members of the current council," Pascoal said. "We have two separate governing bodies in City Hall. If one fails to act responsibly to ensure the best interests of residents and businesses are met, then it is the sworn duty of the other to protect constituents. I believe I can provide residents with the level of oversight needed to slow the speed at which the issues that burden residents and businesses prevail, while offering solutions to the many concerns people continue to voice."

"I want to be there for the residents whose issues get lost due to inefficient practices at city hall. I want to be there for the business owners whose tax burden leaves them feeling the pinch from unbridled spending," he added.

Archie, a former vice chairman of



Sam Archie

the city GOP committee, managed the unsuccessful mayoral bid of Glenn A. Choolokian two years ago. Archie lost Council races in 1993 and 1995.

"We don't have the right leadership on the Council to effectively supervise and manage the current administration in the best interests of the residents of Niagara Falls," Archie said. "They have forgotten that it's about your money. We have all seen current Council members turn their backs on residents and allow the careless and unfocused spending of casino funds by the administration."

Danielle DePalma says she will seek the Democratic and Working Families lines in this year's primary. DePalma works at Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center, providing health insurance options for local families. She worked previously for the Niagara Wheatfield School District as a Per Diem Substitute.

"I am excited at the possibility of



Robert Pascoal

servicing our community by obtaining a seat on the City Council. Now, more than ever is the time for new names to step forward and serve our city, and I am confident in my abilities to work in government and positively represent this great city."

"I believe that I am an excellent candidate for the City Council. I feel now is the time to step forward, and offer my services in city government. The time is right for new blood in local government," she said.

DePalma has been with Niagara Falls Memorial working in the Navigation Program since 2016. She also sits on the LIVE NF Board of Directors, serves as a member of the Resident Engagement Council and volunteers for the Niagara Falls Beautification Committee. She serves as secretary of the city's Democratic committee.

"Without a doubt, the biggest chal-

### NIAGARA FALLS REPORTER

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Danielle DePalma



Andrew Touma

lenge that faces our entire region is economic development” she said. “As a local elected official, I will provide true leadership and hopefully help build a bridge towards working with city, county, state and most importantly private developers looking to grow our city.”

In interviews this week, chairmen of the two parties' local committees alluded that the field of candidates could grow as the July deadline to file nominating petitions approaches.

City Republican Committee Chairman William Carroll as many as six additional challengers under his party's flag, while City Democratic Committee Chairman Gordy Stewart estimated seven, including the two previously announced incumbents.

If the predictions are correct, the field will grow to 10 candidates.

Stewart said the Seneca Nation of Indians financial cutoff of casino cash is among the top concerns of the Democratic candidates. The agreement, which used to net between \$21 million and \$16 million annually, cut off when the Senecas announced they would stop payments to the state for its downtown facility.

Stewart said the Democratic candidates have a shared intention of using the election to "educate" the community on the past use of the funds, evaluating where they were best used and strategically implementing them in the future.

"It's government's job to be bold enough to make those decisions, to evaluate those decisions and make changes moving forward," he said.

While it is typical for the committee to endorse its incumbents, but Stewart said Walker's decision creates an opportunity to invite newcomers into this year's city election alongside the Grandinetti and Touma.

With the 2015 election of freshman Councilman Ken Tompkins, a Republican, November's election presents a chance for residents to elect a GOP majority on the city council, a make-up which has not occurred in decades.

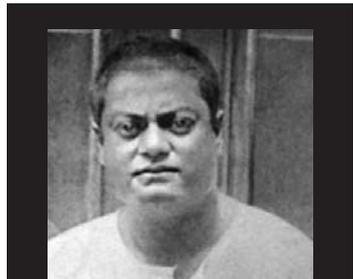
Carroll called November "the most



Kristen Grandinetti

critical" the city has faced in years. He said he'd like to see an expanded focus placed on the city's business culture. It presents an opportunity to confront what Carroll sees as problematic visions in the Falls, one of which he described as an "industry of poverty" through the proliferation of subsidized housing.

"That vision, in my opinion, has to change," he said.



The remedy for weakness is not brooding over weakness, but thinking of strength...

~ Swami Vivekananda

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There's a FREE SUMMER CAMP for EVERYONE in 2017

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Some camps are provided in partnership with other agencies.

**Summer STEM Camps—Three Options**  
 1: Robotics Camp  
 2: STEM Camp  
 3: Coding Camp  
 Grades: Vary by camp.  
 Location: Cataract Elementary, 6431 Girard Avenue  
 Dates: August 14-18, 2016  
 Times: 9am-12pm  
 Busing: Not provided  
 Register: After June 1 at [www.nfschools.net](http://www.nfschools.net)

**Extended Learning**  
 Math, reading, arts, crafts, swimming, more.  
 Grades: Students exiting Kindergarten to five  
 Location: Abate, Cataract, Kalfas, Niagara St schools  
 Dates: July 10– August 10, Monday through Thurs-day  
 Times: 8:45 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
 Busing: To and from the child's home school. Register: Applications were sent home. Call 286-4249.

**Civic Engagement Camp 2017**  
 21st Century Grant  
 Make a difference in the civic life of our community. Grades: 7-8  
 Location: Niagara University  
 Dates: July 25, 26, 27  
 Times: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
 Busing: Transportation provided; lunch, too! Register: Applications available at Prep Schools

**Summer Fine Arts Camp 2017**  
 Choral, band, theatre and more.  
 Grades: Grades five and six  
 Location: Harry F. Abate Elementary School  
 Dates: July 17- July 27 Monday through Thursday  
 Times: 12 pm to 3 p.m.  
 Busing: Transportation available at 3 p.m. dismissal  
 Register: Applications will available May 17th

**Summer Camp 2017**  
 Sports, dance, athletic conditioning, arts and more. Grades: 7-12  
 Location: Niagara Falls High School  
 Dates: July 12 - August 11  
 Times: 11:30 am to 3 p.m. (Monday-Friday)  
 Busing: Transportation provided; lunch, too! Register: Applications available after May 15

**Kindercamp**  
 Students entering Kindergarten practice school readiness. Two sessions will be offered.  
 Grade: NFCS students entering Kindergarten in September of 2017  
 Location: Niagara University Campus  
 Dates: Session 1 July 10 – 13; Session 2 July 17 – 20  
 Times: Morning session -9 a.m. – 12 p.m.  
 Afternoon session— 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.  
 Busing: Not provided  
 For more information contact [eay@niagara.edu](mailto:eay@niagara.edu) or (716)286-8309

**Literacy family workshops**  
 Grades 1-6.  
 Location: Abate, Kalfas, Cataract, Niagara Street schools  
 Times: 10:30 a.m.—11:30 a.m.  
 Dates: 7-13, 7-20, 7-27, 8-4

**Camp Wolverine and Camp Wolverine Jr**  
 A summer program focused on maintaining academic, vocational, social and behavioral consistency of self-contained special education students in the district's Functional Life Skills/Autism classes.  
 Ages: 5-20  
 Location: NFHS/Cataract  
 Dates: See applications  
 Times: 8:30-11:30 (Monday-Thursday)  
 Busing: Provided  
 Fee: Free  
 Register: Applications are sent home with students within the FLS/Autism programs. Students will be accepted on a first come, first serve basis.

\*\*\*Please note that there are two camps. Camp Wolverine is at NFHS and Camp Wolverine Jr is at Cataract.

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# Turmoil At Empire State Development Revealed In State Comptroller's Audit

## Mike Hudson

State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli's scathing audit report of the Empire State Development Corp. reveals an agency in crisis, one all but unaccountable to the people of New York or anyone else.

Many here have long suspected that Empire State Development, headed up locally by former state assemblyman Sam Hoyt, and its' subsidiary, USA Niagara Development Corp., run by former state assemblywoman Francine DelMonte, exist largely to benefit campaign contributors and provide jobs for political hacks.

In Niagara Falls, the agencies have been involved in such dubious projects as the Hamister hotel, Wonderfalls, the NCCC Culinary Institute, Gov. Andrew Cuomo's scandal plagued Buffalo Billion initiative and Mayor Paul Dyster's massively overbuilt North End train station.

DiNapoli's audit found that Empire State Development often does not bother to check whether projections of jobs created in various projects have been met, blasted the agency for failing to meet reporting requirements after handing out tax credits, low interest loans and out-



NYS Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli

right grants like candy at Halloween, and charged that the agency has become less transparent and accountable with each passing year.

"Too often Empire State Development Corporation is either late or not reporting on the results of economic development programs," DiNapoli said in a statement.

"We need better reporting to ensure transparency in economic development spending and to promote an informed analysis on the return of the investments

state taxpayers make in these programs," he added.

Under various state laws and regulations, ESD is mandated to report on the outcomes of many of the programs it supervises. Reporting requirements for specific programs vary and some of the requirements are specified in the legislation that established each program.

Reporting requirements for specific programs vary and some of the requirements are specified in the legislation that established each program.

Instead, auditors found:

- Empire State Development failed to produce many of the statutorily-required performance and outcome reports that were due between April 2012 and September 2016. Auditors found 27 of 57 of general outcome reports, or 47 percent, were not finished.

- 17 programs requiring independently prepared evaluations were not evaluated; and

- 93 of 152 program-specific reports, or 61 percent, were not completed.

In most cases, auditors were not provided an explanation by Empire State officials for why they had not completed required reports. Auditors also had difficulty obtaining information and feedback from uncooperative agency officials during fieldwork.

Auditors found that the required general summary reports, which are supposed to account for all programs, actually accounted for less than half of the programs that provide financial assistance to participants. For example, 12 programs with appropriations during the period totaling over \$500 million were not reported on at all.

For the reports Empire State Development prepared, auditors often could not determine whether they were done on time because there was no evidence when they were published. For 27 reports with evidence of when they were completed, auditors found that generally the agency

submitted them late.

Among DiNapoli's recommendations:

- The agency develop and adhere to procedures for meeting statutory outcome reporting requirements;

- Review information contained in summary outcome reports to ensure all active programs are included;

- Ensure that all existing subsidiary corporations meet Public Authority Law reporting requirements; and

- Ensure required reports are issued in a timely manner to provide decision makers with relevant information to evaluate the various economic development programs.

Empire State Development spokesman Jason Cornwall said agency officials mostly disagreed with the audit's findings. Officials did say they are adopting new controls to make sure they comply with reporting requirements.

"This report is yet another example of a politically motivated 'independent audit' that cherry-picks information and profoundly misrepresents our efforts," Cornwall said in a statement.

"While this might be a convenient way to distract from what the comptroller has not done to clean up his own house following a massive fraud within the \$178 billion state pension system, we encourage OSC to be more objective in their review of our efforts," he added.

Despite the massive amounts of taxpayer's money spent by Empire State Development and USA Niagara over the past 17 years, Niagara Falls still wallows in poverty and few here — aside from those who actually work for the agencies — would say they owe whatever jobs they have to the agencies.

DiNapoli has always been known as a straight shooter, and — to paraphrase Shakespeare — we think Jason Cornwall doth protest too much.

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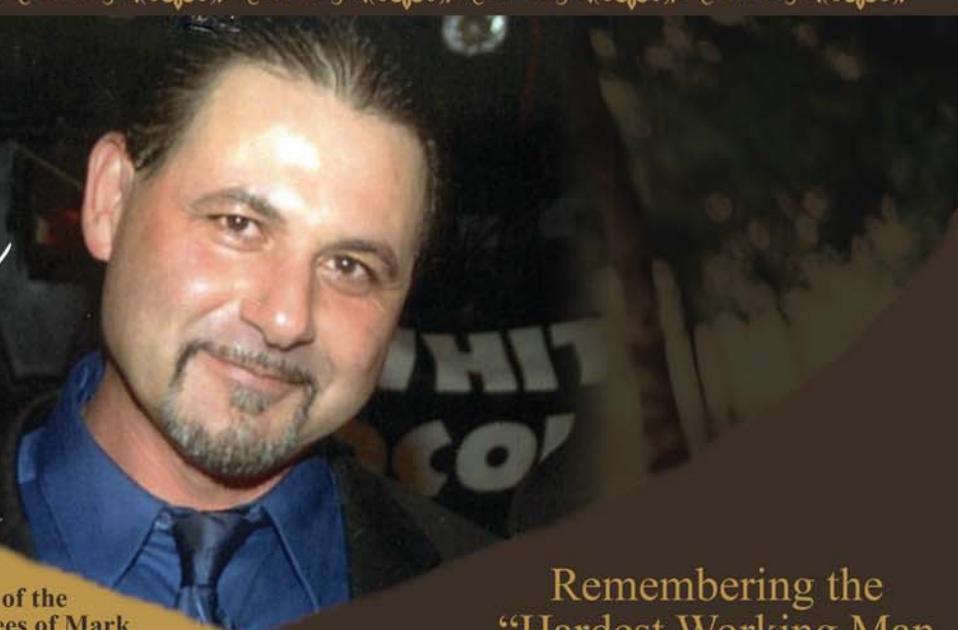
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# Mark Cerrone



Just over 10 years ago, the lives of the Cerrone family and the employees of Mark Cerrone, Inc. changed forever when Mark Cerrone was diagnosed with cancer. Though he fought a noble fight for five months, on May 21, 2007 Mark passed away at just 50 years old. A dedicated husband, father, and grandfather, His wife, children, and the company that still bears his name, Mark Cerrone, Inc.

## Remembering the “Hardest Working Man in Niagara Falls”

It was former Niagara Falls Reporter writer David Staba who dubbed Mark “the hardest working man in Niagara Falls.” Then, the Reporter wrote that even as his business grew, Cerrone “was more like to be on a job site operating piece of machinery than behind a desk.”

Mark was born and raised in Niagara Falls. He was committed to hard work throughout his career starting as a union laborer and equipment operator with Armand Cerrone Construction, his uncle’s company. After twenty years at that company, Mark went out on his own and started his own civil construction firm, Mark Cerrone, Inc. in 1999. From humble beginnings and a few pieces of used equipment, Mark grew the company from small residential and commercial jobs to completing large-scale municipal projects like the Third Street Renovation and the new Niagara Street School in Niagara Falls.

Just as the company was hitting its stride and gaining a more positive reputation as a high quality contractor, Mark became ill and passed away. Though devastated by the tragedy, the company went on. Stephanie and George Churakos, long time employees and friends, joined Mark’s brother Vincent Cerrone to carry on Mark’s legacy for his family and employees. The company has worked on a number of award-winning and transformational projects in Niagara Falls, Buffalo, Rochester and beyond, all while remaining committed to Mark’s core values of hard work and generosity.

While building a business and raising a family in Niagara Falls, Mark never forgot his community. From youth sports leagues to local hospitals and more, Mark’s generosity was well known. Giving back in whatever form was a key part of his vision and value.

In the years prior to his death, Mark took up cycling and frequently traveled across Niagara County on his bicycle after work. True to form, Mark began participating the “Ride for Roswell”, a bicycle-riding fundraiser for the Roswell Park Cancer Institute. Upon his death, we formed a team, named “The Renegades” after Mark’s former racing car team, to ride each year in memory of Mark Cerrone. Ten years later, “The Renegades” have raised over \$80,000 for Roswell Park and have frequently placed among the top 25 ride teams.

To commemorate the 10th anniversary of his passing, “The Renegades” will ride again on June 24, 2017 at this year’s Ride for Roswell event. We are asking those that remember Mark fondly to consider joining us for this anniversary ride as a rider or contributor. To get on the team as a rider, please call Christina at 716-282-5244. If you would like to make a donation, you can go on-line at [www.rideforroswell.org](http://www.rideforroswell.org) and choose Donate to “Christina Cerrone-Pecoraro” or, you can make a donation payable to “Ride for Roswell” in care of Mark Cerrone, Inc., PO Box 3009, Niagara Falls, NY 14304. We would like to thank everyone who has supported the team over the years and ask that you consider joining us in this commemorative year.



## Moribund Wonderfalls back in news following DiCienzo's harsh criticism

### Mike Hudson

Nearly three years ago, in August 2014, Gov. Andrew Cuomo came to town to announce a "transformational" \$150 million project known as Wonderfalls Resort.

Uniland Development and Delaware North would partner to build the project he said, which called for a 15-story tower, 300 hotel rooms, an indoor water park, upscale restaurants and boutiques and a daredevil attraction that officials have said would involve tightrope walker Nik Wallenda all appended to the largely unused portion of the Rainbow Centre Mall, now owned by the city.

Empire State's Sam Hoyt, former USA Niagara head Chris Schoepflin and Mayor Paul Dyster were all on hand to provide sketchy details about the proposal.

The state said it would provide up to \$75 million in taxpayer subsidies to get the thing built as part of Cuomo's "Buffalo Billion" program, an initiative that has since come under scrutiny by the federal government, which has indicted eight individuals in connection with bid rigging and bribery, including officers of the LP Ciminnelli construction company here and Joseph Percoco, a former top aide to Cuomo.

But since the gala announcement, state and local officials have said nothing about the proposal. Until this week. And the briefing given by Uniland officials to the city Council was most likely prompted by a media blitz conducted by Michael DiCienzo, the Canadian hotelier whose company owns the Sheraton and Days Inn here.

DiCienzo has offered up a \$70 million dollar proposal to add six additional floors to the Sheraton with 200 oversized four-star suites on top of his existing hotel, and to construct a new indoor water park on a parcel behind the hotel, which is located at Third and Old Falls Street.



Michael DiCienzo

But despite the fact that DiCienzo has a proven track record of developing both hotels and water parks, his proposal has fallen on deaf ears, both at City Hall and the offices of Niagara USA Development.

"We really want this to happen, but we're looking for some assistance like other developers are getting," he said. "Generally they provide assistance in the neighborhood of ten to 20 percent of the project. That's been pretty much typically what they have done in the past with other developers."

But state officials have shown no interest.

"The state is saying it can't provide assistance because our project would be competing with a state assisted property nearby," he said.

DiCienzo was referring to Wonderfalls.

While developers like Uniland and Delaware North and Mark Hamister, who was given millions in tax breaks, loans and grants to build a hotel right across the street from the proposed Wonderfalls

Resort.

The principles of those companies have donated heavily to the Cuomo campaign, and DiCienzo has not.

"That's probably the reason, in part why we are in this predicament," said DiCienzo. "But we should put everything aside and look at what is right for the market and the people in the market."

Whether or not DiCienzo's proposal and suspicions were responsible for it or not, Uniland's presentation before City Council this week was hardly encouraging. Probably the biggest difference between the 2014 proposal and now is that Delaware North is no longer a part of the project, a result of a bitter and acrimonious dispute between the to companies over a separate project in Buffalo that led to lawsuits being filed.

But Uniland Senior Development Manager Kellena Kane preferred to be upbeat.

"Our concept has also evolved," she told Council members. "We really see it as fulfilling a niche market, not only a kids-only water park, but really trying to appeal to families and adult-only groups of all ages."

Negotiations over an incentive package, and the due diligence that will define the project's scope, remain ongoing, she added.

In a prepared statement, Empire State Development said the project is, well, complicated.

"A project of this size, scale and complexity requires extensive due diligence to ensure that it will be a success for all parties," the statement read. "Uniland has been working steadfastly on project requirements such as site analysis, geo-technical investigation, structural and seismic study, environmental report, design refinement and market analysis."

"We are committed to this process in order to deliver the best tourist destination for the site."

And for his part, Dyster did what he does best — Act as a cheerleader for the

state.

"A large amount of work has been done, but none of it is the sort of thing that results in a major announcement," Dyster told the Niagara Gazette. "I have heard they have faced some engineering-related challenges trying to get all the programmatic elements into the space."

"We're very, very excited about this project moving forward," he added. "It has the potential to be transformational for downtown."

The twists and turns of the Wonderfalls resort project, are immediately familiar to anyone who followed the saga of the Hamister hotel project here.

The delays, the long silences followed by minor announcements in answer to DiCienzo's criticism and final offer to build the hotel for half of what nursing home operator and political gadfly Mark Hamister said it would cost and the final massive injection of taxpayer dollars into the project that allowed Cuomo, Dyster and Empire State Development provide a likely blueprint for what might happen with Wonderfalls.

That's bad news for the taxpayers of the state, bad news for anyone interested in good government and possibly bad news for those involved in the projects, should the scope of the federal probe into the Buffalo Billion program widen.

The total taxpayer funded subsidy to the Hamister hotel project has yet to be publicly announced. But somehow, after years of delays and rejection by legitimate commercial lending institutions, he suddenly came up with the cash to go ahead with the project.

Will the same thing happen with Uniland's Wonderfalls?

And why is it that DiCienzo, who doesn't make political contributions here, is continually rejected by state and city officials despite his proven track record when Hamister, Uniland and Delaware North benefit from millions in taxpayer subsidies?

Can anyone say quid pro quo?

# ELECT ALAN JAMES ROSCETTI

for

## NIAGARA FALLS CITY COURT JUDGE

YOUR VOTE COUNTS





VOTE

# Violent Crime Sweeping The Falls Can Be Laid Directly At Dyster's Door

## Mike Hudson

The wave of violent crime currently sweeping over the city of Niagara Falls is something Mayor Paul Dyster doesn't like to talk about.

Why would he? In 2010, when he bent over for then state Attorney General Andrew Cuomo and entered into a consent decree that would cost city taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars and make rank and file police officers here leery about pulling over a car filled with gang bangers unless it could be verified as stolen, he showed plainly what side he was on.

Dyster sold city cops down the river when he entered into a consent order with the state based on 30 citizen complaints against the police - which were never made public - alleging that officers in the department are biased against black people.

One source who saw the complaints told the Niagara Falls Reporter that they run the gamut from use of unnecessary force to one where a woman complained that the children of a neighbor who happens to be a police officer have repeatedly



kicked a football into her yard.

Many of the excessive force complaints, police sources said, came from habitual criminals who claimed the police were too rough and abusive on them.

But Dyster was satisfied he had "cleaned up" Niagara Falls' finest and moved on to appearing at Hard Rock Cafe concerts, building cricket fields and other more pressing concerns.

And what has been the result?

On May 13, An online argument apparently led to windows being shot out at a South Avenue home in broad daylight, city police said.

The homeowner told police that she had been involved in an argument with another woman on Facebook and that afterward the woman started sending her threatening messages, including threats to get her boyfriend and "shoot up" the victim's house.

Shortly after noon, the victim told police that she heard a vehicle outside her home, then heard three small "pops" before noticing that the front windows of her home had been damaged. She told police that her infant son was nearby at the time, but was not injured.

Just this past Tuesday night, the NFPD on the scene in the 2400 block of McKenna Avenue for a car that was shot up in a drive by. Earlier in the day, cops responded to 1611 Pine Ave. for an armed robbery. The suspect pointed a gun at the clerk and grabbed a pack cigs then ran. He was described as tall black male wear-

ing a red shirt and black jeans and was last seen running north on 17th Street.

Really? Pull out a gun for a pack of cigarettes?

The day before a victim was robbed at knifepoint by two masked men at the Valero gas station on 19th and Ferry.

On May 10, officers were involved in a foot chase at Highland and Centre avenues after a report of a subject with a gun. They took the suspect into custody in front of 1015 Centre Ave. The suspect had ditched the gun during the chase. The day before, the NFPD was called to the scene of a gang fight in the 1800 block of Niagara Avenue, with reports of people waving guns and shots fired.

On May 5, a security guard at Seneca Niagara Casino went into cardiac arrest and died early Saturday after subduing a man who had reportedly assaulted a female patron inside the casino's Stir nightclub.

Niagara Falls police said the suspect tried to flee the area after punching the woman in the throat shortly before 3 a.m., but he was caught by Thomas Dardes, who was working security.

Dardes wrestled with the man briefly. After the suspect was detained, Dardes was out-of-breath and looked pale, casino employees told police. He went to a room to lie down and then went into cardiac arrest, according to police.

He was pronounced dead a short time later at Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center.

Since the days of Stefano Magaddino, Niagara Falls has been known as a lawless place, but this new wave of crime has become terrifying for many residents here.

"There are a few individuals in Niagara Falls who have been involved in 10, 11 shootings. Sometimes they're on the receiving end of it, but often they're shooting," said Craig Rivera, a Niagara University criminal justice professor involved in a study of gun violence here. "The frequency with which these types of events occur in their lives is alarming..."

The FBI has officially labeled the city as the most violent in New York State, echoing previous assessments by websites such as MyLife, Neighborhood Scout, City Data and Roadsnacks. By some estimates, and despite its small size, it has been ranked as the 44th most dangerous place in the entire United States.

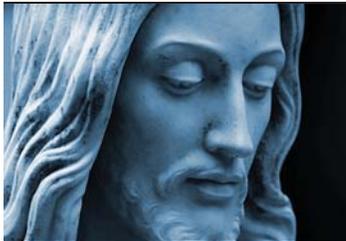
With a crime rate of 70 per one thousand residents, Niagara Falls has one of the highest crime rates in America compared to all communities of all sizes - from the smallest towns to the very largest cities," the Neighborhood Scout report stated. "One's chance of becoming a victim of either violent or property crime here is one in 14."

To add insult to injury, Mayor Dyster has rolled out the red carpet for registered sex offenders from all over the country here. As of Tuesday, there were 165 living in the city, well up from the 70 that called Niagara Falls home when he first became mayor.

During his long tenure in office, Dyster has never mentioned violent street crime as a problem in Niagara Falls. Instead he has pointed to the lack of fishing piers and canoe launches along the Niagara River, the need for a skateboard park at Hyde Park and other nonsensical complaints.

The current opioid epidemic now gripping the city, combined with a resurgence of violent, organized street gangs here, render such willful ignorance dangerous.

Dyster clearly thought the police were the problem in Niagara Falls. And that was bad news for those who live here.



"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



If the whole world stands against you sword in hand, would you still dare to do what you think is right?

*"The FBI has officially labeled the city as the most violent in New York State, echoing previous assessments by websites such as MyLife, Neighborhood Scout, City Data and Roadsnacks."*

## Celebrating Niagara Falls Greatest Generation

### Councilman Kenny Tompkins & Terry Ortt Tompkins

Dick Lacey, Gordon Ortt, Chester and John Gawel, Patricia Knibbs.

They're not household names and yet they are REAL heroes in our community. These are just a few of the men and women from Niagara Falls who proudly served our country in World War II.

In the Tompkins' house, all veterans, especially those who served in conflicts like WWII, are revered for their valor. Terry's dad, Gordon Ortt, served in the U.S. Army 345th Engineer Regiment from 1942 to 1946 and was an MP in Italy. Before he was honorably discharge from his honest and faithful service to this country, Dad was awarded the Victory Medal; America Service Medal; European, African, Middle Eastern Service Medals; Good Conduct Medal; and the Bronze Star. Dad died in 2014 at 92, but will forever live on in our hearts as the hero he was at home and abroad.

Kenny's uncle and Godfather, Thomas Schiro, was deployed and served in World War II at the same time as his brothers Paul, Joseph, and Hank.



Uncle Tom served in the U.S. Army 8th Infantry Division from 1942 to 1945, earning four Bronze Stars for his valor during the Normandy campaign. He was to be awarded the Purple Heart but

declined it because he didn't want to worry his mother! While he never really talked about his service, Uncle Tom loved his family, city, and country. He showed his love through actions, not

words, until he died in 1993 at age 73.

When we rebranded the Community Memorial Day Parade last year, these were the men who inspired us to honor those who sacrificed all for our freedoms. Since then, we've met several more World War II veterans who are living in our city. Their dedication and the sacrifices they made are immeasurable. It brings tears to our eyes when we think about what they experienced.

We would like to introduce them to you.

Chester Gawel, 95: Mr. Gawel served in the U.S. Navy from 1943 to 1946, receiving the Victory, American Campaign, European, African, Middle Eastern, Asiatic Pacific, and Philippine Liberation Medals.

John Gawel, 98: Mr. Gawel, Chester's older brother, served in the U.S. Marines from 1942 to 1946. Mr. Gawel is a Purple Heart recipient. He was also awarded the Bronze Star and the Pacific Campaign Medal with four battle stars.

Harvey Albond, 89: Mr. Albond served in the U.S. Navy beginning in 1946. His service during that time earned him the Victory Medal. Mr. Albond went on to serve in the Korean War until 1953.

Bill Kressman, 97: Mr. Kressman served in the U.S. Army from 1941



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Join us on Saturday, May 27, at 10 am for the Community Memorial Day Parade on Pine Avenue, and for the Memorial Day ceremony at noon at the Niagara Falls Veterans Memorial. Let's remember and honor all of those who sacrificed for our freedoms.



bomb on Japan.” At that time, no one knew what an atomic bomb was or its impact.

Dominic Etopio, in his 90s: Mr. Etopio served in the U.S. Marines from 1943 to 1945. He was stationed in the South Pacific and Guam.

Thomas Etopio, in his 90s: Mr. Etopio served stateside in the U.S. Navy from 1944 to 1946.

While each of these people served in a different branch and in a different place, they share something in common. Each person recognized here, and countless more who we never met, felt a duty to serve their country. They were quite young at the time of their military service, yet they showed honor and courage beyond their years. They immeasurable sacrifice during their young adulthood ensured the freedoms we enjoy, and often take for granted, today.

Each year we lose more of these heroes. With them goes the honor, valor, and dedication to this nation with which they served. We lose a little more of our history, a little more of our pride in our country, and a little more inspiration to stand and fight for freedom against tyranny and to protect basic human rights.

We need to remember they are the Greatest Generation. We need to make sure that their sacrifices will be remembered and cherished for generations to come.

to 1945. He is a Purple Heart and the Bronze Star recipient.

Richard Lacey, 92: Mr. Lacey served in the U.S. Army from 1943 to 1946 and received three Purple Hearts during this time.

Patricia Kribbs, 100: Ms. Knibbs served in the U.S. Army from 1943 to 1946. She was a Motor Transport Tec 5 and an MP during that time.

Cliff Brockway, 92: Mr. Brockway served in the U.S. Army from 1943 to 1946. On August 6, 1945, he was stationed at Nognog Island in the Pacific readying 100 war ships to invade Japan. A serviceman in a Jeep drove by with a sign that read “They dropped the atonus



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# Reefer Madness; Administration Signals Crackdown In Cannabis Despite Science

## Mike Hudson

Reefer madness indeed.

Statements made recently by President Donald Trump's Homeland Security Secretary and Attorney General would seem to indicate that a crackdown on marijuana — even for medicinal use — may be in the cards.

Marijuana is the most commonly used illicit substance in the U.S., and more than half of states in the country allow some form of medical marijuana. Eight states and the District of Columbia allow recreational use.

But Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly has called marijuana a "gateway drug" and vowed his agency will uphold federal laws against its possession.

"Let me be clear about marijuana. It is a potentially dangerous gateway drug that frequently leads to the use of harder drugs," Kelly said during a speech about his agency's mission at George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

"Its use and possession is against federal law and until the law is changed by the United States Congress, we in DHS, along with the rest of the federal government, are sworn to uphold all the laws that are on the books," he added.

Kelly seemed to go out of his way to say marijuana is not something the Trump administration takes lightly.

"When marijuana is found at aviation checkpoints and baggage screening, TSA personnel will take appropriate action," Kelly said. "Finally, ICE will continue to use marijuana possession, distribution and convictions as essential elements as they build their deportation, removal apprehension packages for targeted operations against illegal aliens."

And Attorney General Jeff Sessions has been a longtime opponent of cannabis, even for medicinal use.

Current Justice Department policy, spelled out during the administration of former President Barack Obama in 2013, calls for federal prosecutions in only a narrow subset of possession cases — those involving distribution to minors, the involvement of gangs or organized crime, sales across state borders and cultivation of marijuana plants on federal land.

But Sessions remains unimpressed.

"It remains a violation of federal law," he said. "I don't think America will be a better place when more people, especially young people, smoke pot."

At his confirmation hearings, Sessions said he wouldn't commit to "never enforcing" the federal ban against its possession even for medicinal use.

All of this flies in the face of considerable scientific research. In a massive, 396 page report released by the National Academy of Sciences earlier this year based on 10,000 research studies, the therapeutic and benefits and risk factors of marijuana were weighed.

The review states quite clearly that there is "conclusive or substantial evidence" that marijuana is effective for the treatment of chronic pain, as a tonic for nausea and vomiting in cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy, and in treating spasticity in multiple sclerosis patients.

The review, conducted by a panel



of experts led by Harvard public health researcher Marie McCormack, also provided convincing evidence that marijuana may be an effective treatment for a host of other disorders—such as insomnia relating to painful syndromes, increasing appetite in people with HIV/AIDS, decreasing severe anxiety, glaucoma, and combating the effects of PTSD.

The review also looked at the health risks associated with marijuana use, dispelling some popular arguments against it. For example, according to the review of the research, smoking marijuana is not associated with the same cancer risks as tobacco—there was no evidence that marijuana use was associated with lung, head, and neck cancers. Tobacco, unlike marijuana, is recreationally legal nationwide.

"It just reinforces what our policy makers should already know," said McCormack. "This is a product with significantly lower risk factors than other things that we regulate and consume, like alcohol."

It's also far less risky than another commonly used pain reliever, one sold over the counter in drug stores, gas stations and convenience stores all over the country. According to the Centers for Disease Control, acetaminophen — commonly marketed under the brand name Tylenol — is the leading cause for calls to Poison Control Centers across the U.S., more than 100,000 per year.

And, each year, the over the counter drug is responsible for more than 56,000 emergency room visits, 2,600 hospitalizations and an estimated 458 deaths due to acute liver failure.

In fact, acetaminophen poisoning is responsible for nearly half of all acute liver failure cases in the country. It can be toxic to your liver even at recommended doses when taken daily for just a couple of weeks.

And, unlike cigarettes, children can buy Tylenol.

For his part, President Trump said he supported the use of medical marijuana while stumping on the campaign trail. Earlier this month, while signing his \$1 trillion spending bill, he appeared to be having second thoughts.

He publicly objected to a provision in the bill that would prohibit the Justice Department from using any funds to block implementation of medical marijuana laws by states and U.S. territories.

In a signing statement that accompanied the bill and that laid out his objections,

Trump said he reserved the right to ignore the provision. He held out the possibility that the administration could pursue legal action against states and territories that legalize marijuana for medical use.

"I will treat this provision consistently with my constitutional responsibility to take care that the laws be faithfully executed," Trump said in the signing statement.

Despite the fact that a government sponsored poll conducted earlier this year showed that 57 percent of Americans favor the legalization of marijuana, Attorney



General Sessions expressed astonishment.

"When they nominated me for attorney general, you would have thought the biggest issue in America was when I said, 'I don't think America's going to be a better place if they sell marijuana at every corner grocery store,'" he said. "They didn't like that. I'm surprised they didn't like that."

Pick your poison. Pay your money and take your choice. Cigarettes, booze, Tylenol or marijuana. There has never been a single recorded overdose death associated with marijuana use, while the death toll from cigarettes, booze and Tylenol combined run to the millions.

Yet Trump, Sessions and Kelly, who have never been on chemotherapy and crawled to a restroom in order to vomit, now seem to make marijuana a major problem.

They are ignoring what the American public — the people they work for — want.

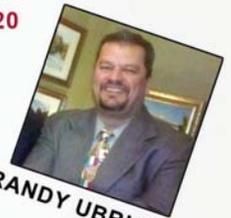
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## Thomason Announces Comeback Candidacy For Return To Council Here



Candra Thomason

As a lifelong resident of Niagara Falls, former city councilwoman, businesswoman and longtime community advocate, Candra Thomason announced her candidacy for Niagara Falls City Council this week.

“As a former member of the Council, I worked hard to cut unnecessary spending while fighting for quality of life services, and I now feel I need to roll up my sleeves and get back to public service,” she told the Niagara Falls Reporter. “I hope to use the knowledge I have of business management, accounting, public relations, marketing and organization building in the public and private sector to help fix the fiscal crises we are in, and the multitude of problems facing our city.”

Thomason served on the Council from 2001 to 2005, and ran as the Republican candidate for mayor against Paul Dyster in 2007.

“Many residents feel ignored or forgotten by those in City Hall, and they will not be ignored by me,” she said. “I intend to work hard to get us back to a city government for the people and by the people, instead of misappropriating our tax and casino dollars.”

“Residents I’ve spoken with feel our elected officials failed us when they let the State negotiate the last agreement with the Seneca Nation on our behalf, jeopardizing the future financial security of our city,” she added. “There have been no significant improvements in the infrastructure, and while City residents’ taxes keep going up, many feel a significant amount of money has been spent on countless studies and impractical ventures.”

She has been a vocal critic of the Dyster administration.

“Few people can claim things have improved for their families, nor can they claim the value of their property has

increased,” she said. “Some may think that the power and beauty of Niagara Falls end at the border of the Niagara Falls State Park. But, if you’re like me, you know that the true power and beauty of Niagara Falls lies within our people who are our greatest asset, and it is time someone truly stands up and fights for them.”

While she will run as a Republican, she said she wants what’s best for all the people of Niagara Falls.

“It has never been about a political affiliation to me, it is about our community and the people,” she said. “The issues that our city faces transcend party lines

and a fiscally sound future should be our number one priority.”

Thomason joins a rapidly growing field of candidates for three open city Council seats that includes incumbents Kristen Grandinetti and Andrew Touma, Robert Pascoal, Sam Archie, former Niagara gazette publisher Chris Voccio and Danielle DePalma.

Even more candidates are expected to announce before the July filing deadline.

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# Archie's Candidacy Is About Saving You Money

## Sam Archie

I have decided to run for City Council because of the lack of leadership and common sense. Too many times we have seen the council majority cave in to the wishes of the Mayor without asking questions. They have carelessly spent tax dollars and casino funds. I have witnessed council members silence residents who spoke to them with concerns that didn't fit their narratives. I was infuriated when a council member told residents if they don't like it, they can move. Enough is Enough.

I intend to bring transparency and accountability to the city council for the residents. I will not simply sit back and allow the administration to spend unabatedly. With the end of the casino compact agreement, we are about to realize the impact that this irresponsible spending will have on our city. **It's about your money.**

I am a fiscal conservative who believes that the priorities of this city

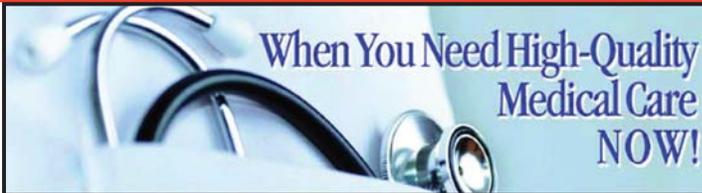


should include providing services that residents and businesses can use to enjoy a better quality of life.

We cannot afford extravagances like artwork that costs nearly three-quarters of a million dollars. We need money to fix our roads, our sidewalks, and to eliminate blight. **It's about your money.**

We cannot listen to council members say they want to see small business grow, and then turn around and raise the tax rate.

Niagara Falls needs to negotiate from a position of power, and not as a second-rate community.



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# Niagara Falls, Rest in Pieces Blighted Buildings Vacant Houses Still Plague Niagara Falls

**Jim Ostrowski**

I've been driving through the City of Niagara Falls on business recently and am just wondering if anyone else has noticed that it's a dying city? Maybe if you live there, you become used to it, but I don't live there so I noticed some things that maybe the residents miss. For example, your roads are horrible, nearly bordering on third world quality. Your housing stock is horrendous; your business districts are sparsely populated and there is very little evidence of market-driven investment. Most of the newer projects are one way or another subsidized by tax dollars, not a good sign.

This impressionistic, drive-by view is buttressed by the statistics. Crime of all kinds is way above the national average. 37% of the people are obese according to City-Data.com. Ten percent have diabetes and 26% have high blood pressure. According to census data, 27% live in poverty. Basically, all measures of social dysfunction are high in Niagara Falls.

Is anything useful being done to fix what ails Niagara Falls? I have seen no evidence of this on any level of government. This publication has often bemoaned the lack of local control in Niagara Falls, for example how the State controls the Falls itself for its own benefit. The primary public policies afflicting the City, taxes, schools, regulations, drug policy, housing and welfare, are imposed from Washington and Albany. The long-suffering residents have virtually no say in their own communities and very little personal freedom when it comes to schools and the economy. As Ayn Rand said, "what the have-nots have not is freedom." Like Buffalo, Niagara Falls suffers from an extremely high cost of government imposed by our colonial masters in New York City who control the state government in Albany.

Ultimately, underlying this system of enormous government imposed and controlled by strangers in distant capitals is the destructive political mindset of progressivism, a mindset unfortunately shared by virtually all local politicians and by the vast majority of the residents themselves. As I have explained before, progressivism is a self-imposed mental disability that robotically prevents the progressive from noticing certain facts and impels the progressive to exaggerate the importance of other facts. Because the progressive is, in effect, trapped in his own mindset, it is not surprising that he fails to perceive his own trap, his own bias. Specifically, since the progressive believes that some government program or another is the solution to all human problems, the progressive can never bring himself to accept that their favored government programs have failed miserably. Rather, they end up in an endless search for non-governmental scapegoats to blame for their policy failures. Racism and corporate greed are the current favorites.

Thus, the decline of Niagara Falls continues apace as you can tell by the rumble of your car over the endless potholes. Don't let this message in a bottle interrupt your death throes, Niagara Falls. As Emily Litella would say, "never mind."

*Jim Ostrowski is the CEO of Liberty-Movement.org and the author of five books including Progressivism: A Primer.*

**Robert Ventry**

Within the city of Niagara Falls there are plenty of vacant and abandon houses, on various streets throughout the city, the major-

ity of them are city owned. These properties hurt the appearance of the neighborhood and bring property values down in the areas they are in. These structures are also a public health threat to the community; they pose many risks to residents, such as high grass, being used to dump garbage, and rodents.

Most of these building are so dilapidated that they are beyond saving; some of these properties have been vacant for decades. Why are these issues allowed to continue, why are these problems not a major concern? Don't forget about our neighborhoods, take a look around and it seems like they have been forgotten.

The city has not done any targeted demolitions since 2014, due to funds not being available. What are targeted demolitions, it's when the city goes into a certain area of the city and tears down most of the vacant houses or buildings in one area. The only demolitions the city has done over the years have been emergency demolitions, because the building was weak and going to collapse, or sadly it had to come down due to a fire.

In previous years between 500,000 to 600,000 was budgeted for demolitions, for 2017 500,000 will go towards demolitions. But is that enough, considering the large number of vacant houses in the city. With the casino money the city received over the years, a million a year should have been spent to address this problem, and it might not be an issue today.

When the city first started receiving casino money it was supposed to be used for neighborhood revitalization, the majority of it should have been spent improving our neighborhoods, there's more to our neighborhoods than just roads. A million a year should have been spent on roads a million a year on sidewalk replacement, and a million a year should have been spent on demolitions. Unfortunately a lot of the money was spent on things we didn't need, and not on neighborhood revitalization. We had a perfect opportunity with casino money the city received; to improve every neighborhood in the city sadly that opportunity could be gone forever.

How come these questions were never asked by some of our elected officials, how come neighborhood revitalization was never the main priority? With the election upon us, some who are up for reelection will say neighborhood revitalization was a priority, but by looking around that don't seem to be the case. As residents you have to ask your selves are we any better off than we were four years go? We need leaders who are going to stand up for the people and fight to improve and rebuild our neighborhoods, and improve the quality of life for all residents that call Niagara Falls home.



# Niagara Falls Jokes

A German tourist walks into the Burger King in Niagara Falls and orders a beer. (In Germany and many parts of Europe, fast food establishments actually do serve beer).

The local guy in the line behind him immediately starts mocking him: "They don't serve BEER here, you MORON!"

The German fellow felt pretty stupid, but suddenly turns to the local guy and begins to laugh.

"And what's so funny?!?" the guy from Niagara Falls demands. "Oh, nothing really," replied the German. "I just realized that you live here."

he's worried about getting seasick. The doctor tells him, "Just eat two pounds of stewed tomatoes before you leave the dock." Steve says, "Will that keep me from getting sick?" The doctor says, "No, but it'll look pretty awesome splattered all over the the tourists you're packed in with."



\*\*\*

A man and a woman from Niagara Falls who had never met before found themselves in the same sleeping car of an Amtrak train. After the initial embarrassment, they both manage to get to sleep; the woman on the top bunk, the man on the lower.

In the middle of the night the woman leans over and says, "I'm sorry to bother you but I'm awfully cold and I was wondering if you could possibly pass me another blanket." The man leans out and, with a glint in his eye, says, "I've got a better idea... let's pretend you're my baby mommy."

"Why not?" giggles the woman. "Good," he replies, "Now shut the f\*\*\* up or I'll punch your lights out."

\*\*

Steve plans to go for a 15 minute boat ride on Jimmy Glynn's Maid of the Mist, and he tells his doctor that

\*\*\*

What did Dyster say one morning after spending the night at the Hamister, having arranged for hundreds of thousands of dollars in subsidies and tax breaks for cheaply-built box hotels in downtown Niagara Falls? "I'm sorry to leave, now that I've almost bought the place."

\*\*\*

The Niagara Falls police officer called into headquarters with bad news.

"What's the situation?" asked the captain. "A woman killed her husband. 12 stabs, 2 gunshot wounds, half burnt, and thrown down the stairs," was the reply.

"That's not good, what was the reason?" "She told us the husband intentionally started walking on the floor which she recently cleaned."

"Did you arrest her?" "No. We're waiting for the floor to dry."









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**M 400**
**M 500**

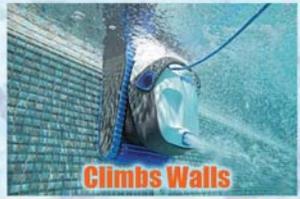
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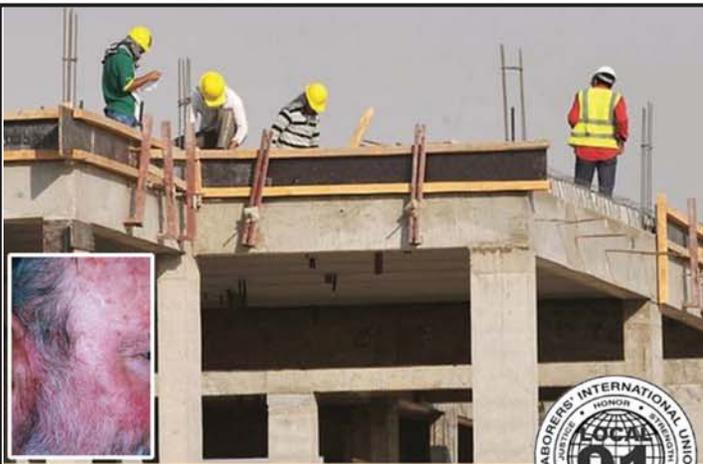


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## LIUNA Health & Safety Launches Expanded Sun Sense Campaign

For over 17 years, the Laborers' Health & Safety Fund of North America has run an annual Sun Sense campaign to raise awareness about the dangers of skin cancer. According to the American & Canadian Cancer Societies, nearly 3 million people in North America are diagnosed with skin cancer each year. Overexposure to the sun is the most common cause of skin cancer. LHSFNA through Laborers' Local 91 distributes sunscreen, lip balm, and neck flaps to protect laborers from the exposure to sunlight. Laborers or anyone spending time outdoors should take the necessary precautions to minimize their skin exposure to harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays. Of course, being outdoors for many is unavoidable so when you go outside, take these precautions:

- Most importantly, always wear sunscreen. Men, women and children should put it on every day and reapply throughout the day. Using an SPF (sun protection factor) of 30 is recommended. Any lower SPF will not protect your skin from harmful UV rays and any higher SPF gives a false sense of protection.
- Try to avoid sun in the middle of the day, from about 10 am to 3 pm. The ultraviolet rays, which cause sunburn, are strongest during this time. When you do go outdoors, especially for long periods in the middle of the day, wear protective clothing. Wear sunglasses that filter UV light.

This year in addition to the precautions of sun exposure, we are focusing on preventing heat stress. Working long days under the hot sun, sometimes in confined spaces or wearing personal protective equipment (PPE), puts Laborers at high risk for heat stress. Heat stress occurs when high heat or exertion levels do not allow the body to cool off fast enough. It leads to dehydration, muscle cramps, heat exhaustion and in extreme cases, heat stroke. New information on preventing heat stress and ways to stay cool at work will be available at the training facility this summer.

The Laborers – Employers Cooperation and Training Trust encourages all members and employers to incorporate sun protection measures into their daily routine just as they would any other safety behavior. Regular and liberal application of sunscreen and minimizing midday and high sun exposures throughout the year will usually prevent skin cancer. Laborers need to use lip balm, neck flaps, cooling clothes and sun block towelettes available free at the Union hall to protect against damaging exposure to sunlight. The Laborers encourage everyone to take appropriate steps to protect themselves from harmful sun exposure.



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## LEGAL NOTICE

**1600 BALMER ROAD LLC**, filed Articles of Organization with the NY State Secretary of State ("NYSSS") on March 8, 2017; the LLC is located in Niagara County; NYSSS is designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it can be served; a copy of any process served upon NYSSS will be mailed to the LLC at 2902 Pine Avenue, Niagara Falls, NY 14301; the purpose of the LLC is to engage in any lawful act of activity.

5/5/17, 5/12/17, 5/19/17, 5/26/17, 6/2/17, 6/9/17

## LEGAL NOTICE

**6608 SINN LLC**, filed Articles of Organization with the NY State Secretary of State ("NYSSS") on March 8, 2017; the LLC is located in Niagara County; NYSSS is designated as agent of the LLC upon whom process against it can be served; a copy of any process served upon NYSSS will be mailed to the LLC at 2902 Pine Avenue, Niagara Falls, NY 14301; the purpose of the LLC is to engage in any lawful act of activity.

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