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**THE NIAGARA REPORTER**

FREE July 4th, 2018 - July 10th, 2018 NiagaraReporter.com Vol. 19, No. 8 FREE



**Happy 4<sup>th</sup> of July!**

**Niagara Falls Police Detective's Ashes Remain in Stranger's Hands**

By: Frank Parlato

1.  
Here is a strange story... it centers around the ashes of the late Jan P. Dal Porto, a former detective for the Niagara Falls Police Department. She was sworn in in 1986 and retired some 20 year later. Her retirement did not last long. Jan died March 3, 2013. She was 55. The cause of death was cancer.

Following her death she was cremated.

2.  
Jan is survived by two adult children – Christopher M.

(Cont. on pg. 3)



Diane Roberts poses with the urn holding the ashes of Jam Dal Porto -a former Niagara Falls Police Detective and a certificate authenticating that these are her remains.

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**Criminal Defense Attorney**

OFFICIAL HOME OF THE ACTION  
PAGES 4 & 5  
Niagara Falls



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# NIAGARA FALLS

## Two Local Businesses Give Niagara Falls Veteran a Backyard Makeover

### Rob Bennett

Timothy and Colleen Degenhardt thought they did their homework when looking for a contractor to build an addition onto their home.

Timothy, a disabled army veteran, has health ailments that limit his ability to use his legs. As a result, the Degenhardts were looking to add a bedroom to the back of the house so that Timothy would not have to climb any stairs.

Unfortunately, a project that, at first, seemed quick and easy did not stay that way for long.

The "so-called contractor," Kyle Edwards, who Colleen calls a "criminal" and a "thief," took their money and left them with nothing but huge trenches in the ground. Some of which were at least two feet deep.

Degenhardt gave Edwards roughly \$12,000 towards the project.

The Degenhardts filed in Small Claims Court seeking their \$12,000 back, but were ultimately unsuccessful. Despite Edwards not showing



What the backyard initially looked like (photo courtesy of Rob Bennett)

up to court, the judge only entered a judgment in their favor for \$5,000.

Timothy and Colleen found out the hard way that a judgement and collecting on a judgment are two different things. As a result, not one cent



Councilman Ken Tompkins surveying the property (photo courtesy of Rob Bennett)

has been collected.

Niagara Falls City Councilman Ken Tompkins, who works at H.W. Bryk & Sons, was contacted by a neighbor and knew something had to be done.

Councilman Tompkins then spoke with Jeff Bryk, Vice President of the locally and veteran owned company, who offered to donate their time, resources, and services to help restore the backyard to a more usable state.

"With so much negativity in the world it feels good to give back," said Mr. Bryk, "especially to a veteran."

A crew spent the afternoon leveling and grading the backyard. Although the end result looks worlds better than it did to begin with, there is still much work to be done.

In addition to H. W. Bryk, KJ



H.W. Bryk crew works to level the area (photo courtesy of Rob Bennett)

Smith Enterprises came and spread grass seed and hay over the area. In no time, the Degenhardts will have a new lawn in their backyard.

Local Niagara Falls attorney Nicholas D. D'Angelo, Esq., has offered to assist in obtaining a judgment for the remaining \$7,000 along with collecting on the judgments pro bono.

"I think it is important for us all



(photo courtesy of Rob Bennett)

to do our part," said D'Angelo. "This is a special community filled with people who are always willing to help others. I am just thankful to be in a position where I can hopefully make

a difference for them."

While the Degenhardt's still hope for the addition, they do not have the money after being swindled by



(photo courtesy of Rob Bennett)

Edwards.

Despite having \$12,000 stolen from them, the couple is thankful to Councilman Tompkins, H. W. Bryk, and KJ Smith Enterprises for giving



The finished product (photo courtesy of Rob Bennett)

them the ability to enjoy their backyard this summer.

If you're a licensed contractor or someone who can assist with product or services, please contact Ken Tompkins at (716) 940-7092.

## NIAGARA



## REPORTER

Frank Parlato, Jr.

Publisher & Editor in Chief

Nicholas D. D'Angelo

Managing Editor

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## Delivery Locations by Town/City

### Amherst

Tops (3035 Niag. Falls Blvd.)

### Grand Island

Tops (2140 Grand Island Blvd.)

### Lewiston

DiCamillo Bakery (535 Center St.)

Public Library (305 S. 8th St.)

Tim Hortons (2970 Saunders Settlement Rd.)

Tops (906 Center St.)

Rite Aid (731 Center St.)

Syros Restaurant (869 Cayuga St.)

Village Bakery (417 Center St.)

### Lockport

Lockport City Court & County Courthouse

Save-A-Lot (5770 Transit Rd.)

Tops (5827 South Transit Rd.)

### Niagara Falls

City Hall (basement)

The Como (restaurant, deli, & airport locations)

DiCamillo Bakery (all locations)

Frankies Donuts

John Duke Center (1202 Hyde Park Blvd.)

Key Bank (800 Main St.)

Memorial Medical Center (entrance to lobby)

Michael's Restaurant (3011 Pine Avenue)

Marketside Restaurant (708 E. Market St.)

Mom's Restaurant (2410 Military Rd.)

Niagara Towers (901 Cedar Ave.)

Niagara Falls Family Court (775 Third St.)

Niagara Falls Police Station (1925 Main St.)

Niagara Falls Public Library (Main St.)

Rite Aid (7804 Buffalo Ave. & 4407 Military Rd.)

Save-A-Lot (2429 Military Rd.)

### North Tonawanda

Broadway Hotel (158 Main St.)

Budwey's Market (535 Division St.)

City Hall (216 Payne Ave.)

Lou's Diner (73 Webster St.)

Public Library (505 Meadow Dr.)

Olympia Restaurant (3312 Niag. Falls Blvd.)

Tops (301 Meadow Dr.)

Roman Café (797 Payne Ave.)

Save-A-Lot (1365 Nash Rd.)

### Sanborn

Smokin Joes (gas station and store)

Tim Hortons (2970 Saunders Settlement Rd.)

Tops (2956 Saunders Settlement Rd.)

### Tonawanda

Tops (890 Young St.)

### Wilson

Lakeside Market (337 Lake St.)

### Youngstown

Bandanas Bar & Grill (930 Lake Rd. (18F))

Public Library (240 Lockport St.)

Rite Aid (214 Lockport St.)

Village Diner (425 Main Street)

Spallino Towers (720 10th St.)

Supermarket Liquor (8438 Niag. Falls Blvd.)

Tops (Niag. Falls Blvd., Portage, & Military)

Tim Hortons (all locations)

Wedge Liquors (825 Pine Ave.)

Wrobel Towers (800 Niagara Ave.)

\*\*\*All businesses that advertise with the Niagara Reporter will also have the paper delivered there\*\*\*

# Eerie dispute centers on who will pay for ashes of the late Jan Dal Porto

Seel, Jr., and Miranda Dal Porto-Warming-ton – the latter is also a Niagara Falls Police officer.

Jan is also survived by her mother, Theresa M. Jones, her father, George W. LaRocque, and sisters: Lynn Cummings, Bridget "Shelly" Schroeder, Paula Alexander, Debbie Dyson, Sue LaRocque, and brother, George W. LaRocque III.

Jan also had a boyfriend - Michael Kurdziel - who her family thought was her husband - at the time she passed away.

3.



Jan Dal Porto was sworn in in 1986 as a Niagara Falls Police Officer.

The cremation for Jan was performed at Mount Cavalry Cemetery and arrangements for this and other services were made by Daniel Smolarek Funeral Home of Cheektowaga. The memorial services were held at Czestochowa Roman Catholic Church on March 7, 2013.

The Niagara Falls Police Department sent an honor guard. People gave sympathy cards. There was a memorial breakfast. And Jan's ashes were placed in an urn – a black sealed box – awaiting a family member to



The still grieving family of Jan Dal Porto places this memorial notice in the Niagara Gazette last Christmas.

claim it.

And that was the quiet end of the life of Jan Dal Porto – or so most who attended the services thought. There only remained to pay the bill to the funeral home -- \$4,849.83.

4.

The boyfriend – who, again, the family thought was Jan's husband - Michael Kurdziel - paid \$1,700 toward the bill. He claims Jan's family agreed to pay the rest. The ashes were kept at the funeral parlor pending the payment of the balance of \$3,149.83.

Four months later – on July 16 - the bill was not paid. Smolarek Funeral Home sent a demand letter to Michael demanding payment of the remaining balance.

A woman friend of Michael's – a Roman Catholic woman - who barely knew Jan – Diane Stephens- heard there were collection efforts being made and the ashes were sitting unclaimed at the funeral home.

On July 18, 2013, Diane went there - and without consulting any of Jan's family - paid the bill - for a near stranger - charging the balance of \$3,184 to her credit card.

Diane collected the urn containing the ashes and expected to collect the money from Jan's family.

Diane later became Michael's wife and later they divorced.

5.

It is strange, no doubt, that Diane should pay - and it was natural to ask her - "Why did you pay for the ashes of a someone you barely knew?"

Diane told the Reporter: "When I found out that her cremated remains were still at the funeral home, I was shocked! I wanted to know why this happened, so I went to there. It just hit me the wrong way when I heard Jan's remains would not be released until someone paid the rest of the bill. It was stupid, I know, but at the time I felt horrified. I pulled out my credit card to get her out of there and paid the bill, and got Jan's remains out. I never heard of anyone leaving a loved one in a funeral home and not putting them to rest!"

6.

After paying the bill, Diane contacted family members. She contacted Jan's son, Christopher, repeatedly, and her daughter, Miranda. She called Jan's mother, Teresa of Lewiston, several times. She spoke with her father, George, of Murrels Inlet SC. She reached at least one of her sisters, Bridget, in Lewiston.

Evidently none of them were prepared to pay.

The Reporter spoke to Jan's son and daughter. Both knew Diane had the ashes. Both thought Michael – who they thought was their mother's husband - should pay. When contacted by the Reporter several months ago, Jan's sister, Lyn, did not seem to know the ashes remained unclaimed, but said she would look into it.

Diane suggested that family members each contribute - two parents, two children,

six siblings - - 10 relatives – a payment of \$318 and claim the ashes.

All the family members contacted by the Reporter said they did not think it was right that Diane was making this public.

7.

Michael is the man the family thinks should pay – for, after all, he married Diane, and they once thought he was married to Jan.

Michael told the Reporter that he and Jan were never married. And he did not marry Diane until well after Jan died.

Michael explained: "The agreement I made with Jan's family at the funeral home was I would pay a third. The family said they would pay the other two thirds. I told them Jan and I had a commitment ceremony. But it was not a legal marriage. Perhaps they think I got money, but Jan borrowed against her life insurance. She was having financial problems. She owed the IRS money. The house we lived in was my house. There was no estate. She left me no money. When she was sick, I took care of her and there were a lot out of pocket expenses that the health insurance did not cover. I did not have the capital to pay it. In fact I wound up filing bankruptcy and had to refinance my house."

A judge did not agree that the family should be forced to pay for the ashes. Michael sued Miranda in Small Claims Court to try to get her to pay the rest of the bill. He lost. The judge ruled that Miranda did not have to pay. But he made no ruling on the disposition of the ashes.

8.

Today, Diane holds the ashes of a woman who was almost a stranger. She keeps Jan's ashes in an urn in her spare room. For the past five years, Diane has been the caretaker of Jan's ashes.

Over those years, Diane has called, emailed, and texted family members. Recently she started distributing a flier telling the entire tale – from her perspective. This has led some to express shock that the family won't pay for the ashes. Others have said Diane is "holding Jan hostage" and that she should turn the ashes over to the family and forget about payment.

Still others say, that Diane should keep quiet. If the family does not wish to pay, she should keep the matter private and keep the ashes.

Diane remains adamant: She refuses to relinquish the ashes until she is paid and refuses also to keep quiet.

9.

Jan DalPorto was a Catholic and sent her children to Catholic schools. Her daughter went to Niagara Catholic High School. Her son went to St. Mary's High School.

10.

On April 26, 2014, The Most Reverend Douglas Crosby, OMI, the Bishop of Hamilton explained the Diocesan Policy regarding the disposition of cremated remains: "Church teaching makes clear the necessity of treating the cremated remains in the same manner as the deceased human body."



OBITUARY FROM NEWSPAPER Jan P. DalPorto

11.

The Catholic Burial Service reads: FORASMUCH as it hath pleased Almighty God of his great mercy to take unto himself the soul of our dear sister here departed, we therefore commit her body to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust; in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change the body of our low estate that it may be like unto his glorious body, according to the mighty working, whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself.

12.

What are ashes worth? 'For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.' It is her memory that counts.

And there are some who will claim this story should not have been printed.

Yet what would you do – if a stranger had your loved one's ashes?

Would you pay or let it go – knowing that it is not ashes but the blessed memory of the departed that counts?

Last Christmas, Jan's family placed a memorial ad in the Niagara Gazette, with a picture of Jan. The caption read: "We will always love and miss you and wish that you were here. Love, Mom & Sisters."

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# THE ACTION

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## WEEKLY HEADLINES

- Reports of the Northwest on Grand Island was just robbed. Niagara Falls Police may have the suspect in sight.
- A rotted utility pole snapped when a lawn mower hit it while mowing the grass along New Road. The pole is reportedly owned by Verizon. There are multiple rotted poles in the area.
- Niagara Falls police requested to Niagara Catholic School for a parent meeting getting out of control.
- Vandals target the Dollar General in the City Market once again. It appears that a large amount of cigarettes were stolen. Unknown what else was taken.
- Man lucky to be alive after being pulled from the lower Niagara River near the Maid of the Mist dry docks this evening.
- New York State Police helicopter currently searching the Niagara River for a possible person in the water. This is the second incident today.
- After consulting with the Niagara County District Attorney's Office, additional charges were placed on Salvatore Prezioso for the attempted kidnapping incident that occurred in the early morning hours of 6/28/18.
- Niagara Falls police and fire on location at Hyde Park and Porter for a two vehicle hit and run motor vehicle accident with possible injuries.
- 4 people including 3 children were taken to a hospital after the car they were traveling in was rear-ended by a red Mustang on Hyde Park Blvd. and Porter Rd.
- A Niagara Falls man received the maximum sentence after pleading guilty to a October 2017 murder.
- Police said a 56-year-old woman smacked an officer over the head with her purse Saturday night while being arrested.
- Niagara Falls woman found slumped over wheel charged with DWI  
Niagara Falls Police were called to the 1100 block of Linwood Avenue at 7:10 a.m.
- Niagara Falls Police were attempting to identify an SUV found burning in a field off Ninth Street early Sunday.

## Attempted Kidnapping in Wheatfield



On June 28, 2018, Niagara County Communications received a 911 call from a resident on Ward Road in the Town of Wheatfield.

The caller reported that she was sleeping in the living room and woke up to a male carrying her six-year-old daughter down the outside steps of the residence.

She chased after the male and he released the child onto the stairs and then ran from the residence. The caller also reported that she was familiar with the male and recognized him as a neighbor.

Responding deputies located the male at his residence and detained him. He was identified as Salvatore Prezioso, 49 years old, from the Town

of Wheatfield. He was questioned by Investigators and subsequently charged with Attempted Kidnapping in the 2nd degree and additional charges may be pending.

Prezioso was arraigned before Justice Strenkoski from the Town of Wheatfield and was remanded to the custody of the Niagara County Correctional Facility in lieu of \$50,000 cash bail. Charges of burglary and endangering the welfare of the child were later added.

The child was evaluated at the scene for bruising and abrasions by St. Johnsburg Fire and EMT's from Tri-Community Ambulance. She was treated and released to her mother.

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# Niagara Catholic Jr. Sr. High School to Close its Doors for Good

*Niagara Reporter credited as first news outlet to report closing of Niagara Catholic.*

As a result of the very recent and unexpected news of a significant reduction in Diocesan financial support, coupled with continued enrollment declines and growing financial challenges, Niagara Catholic High School on 66th Street, will close its doors effective immediately.

The decision was made by the Governing Board of Trustees of Niagara Catholic Junior Senior High School following a rigorous analysis of the school's current cash flow and Fall 2018 Enrollment projections.

Parents, faculty and key stakeholders were notified prior to making the public announcement. The board and administration are assisting students and their families with transfer procedures to other Catholic schools to ensure that the transition is as seamless as possible.

"We have made every effort to

consider the impact of our decision on all of our constituent members: faculty, administration, and most importantly our customers – the parents who sacrifice to provide a Catholic education for their children – during our deliberations," said Judi Nolan Powell, Chair of the Governing Board of Niagara Catholic, a post she has held for a decade.

"We are heartbroken to have come to this decision but recognize that it is, in the long term, in the best interests of our families. To "limp along financially" in the hopes that either finances will improve or enrollment will increase does not do justice to the financial sacrifices that our families make to provide a Catholic education for their children. We will continue to provide support until every one of our current 121 students has completed the transition to a new school. Those options include area



Catholic grade schools for our 7th and 8th grade students and other Catholic high schools such as Cardinal O'Hara or Buffalo area Catholic high schools."

The decision is bittersweet, as 2018 marks the 90th Anniversary of Catholic High School education in Niagara Falls.

St. Mary's High School, the original institution, was established

in 1928 with Bishop Duffy, Madonna and finally Niagara Catholic following as successors to the Catholic high school tradition. Principal / President Robert Cluckey described the decision as "a very sad but realistic one, given the economics and stark realities of financial factors and enrollment trends in Niagara County."

## Man Jumps Overboard on Maid of the Mist in Niagara Falls

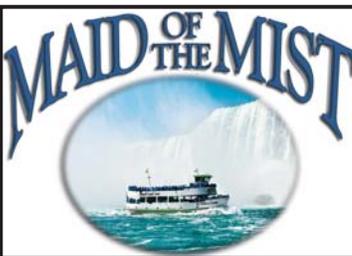


Photo courtesy of Samar Hamilton, The Action Niagara Falls

On June 28, 2018 at approximately 6:43pm New State Park Police- Niagara Dispatch received a report that an 18-year-old male subject went into the Lower Niagara River near the Horseshoe Falls from a Maid of The Mist Boat during a regularly scheduled tour.

Maid of The Mist crews quickly reacted and were able to pull the subject from the river using their utility vessel.

He was turned over to New York State Park Police Officers.

Initial investigation revealed that this was an intentional act on the part of the 18-year-old subject.

Subject was taken to Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center for mental health evaluation.

Maid of the Mist Corporation is being given credit for their quick response which ultimately saved the man's life.

## John B. Daly Blvd. Intersection Continues to Cause Problems



Photos courtesy of Rob Bennett, RobShots

Once again the intersection of John B Daly & Falls Street is the scene of a two car motor vehicle accident. The Buick was travelling eastbound from the casino lot on when it collided with the Chevy travelling northbound on John B

Daly Blvd. After the collision, the Chevy spun at least 50 feet on John B Daly before coming to a rest. One adult and two kids were taken to the hospital as a precaution.

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# FOOD AT THE FOLD

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# ANALYSIS

## Chris's Corner: Swarms of Officers

*Chris Voccio is a Niagara Falls City Council member and can be reached at ChrisVoccio@gmail.com.*



**Chris Voccio**  
NF City Councilman

This column, in light of the Independence Day holiday, reflects on a clause from the Declaration of Independence, and agenda item 15 from the Niagara Falls City Council meeting of June 6th.

The Declaration of Independence is a wonderful document. Beautifully written, easy to read and able to stir your emotions, even 242 years later. It is, among other things, a list of grievances against King George III and his minions.

If you read it today, and think about the massive expansion of our federal government beyond its Constitutional bounds, it's somewhat ironic that what our Founding Fathers complained about more than two centuries ago has mushroomed far beyond what they ever envisioned.

One of the grievances against the

king, listed in the middle of the great Declaration, reads "He has erected a Multitude of new Offices, and sent hither Swarms of Officers to harrass (sic) our People, and eat out their Substance."

I think of that line often, as our federal government has so many agencies, created, I'm sure, with the best of intentions.

We have an alphabet-soup of federal agencies that often "harass our people and eat out their substance." Millions of "officers" from the federal government, let alone New York State government, make our lives more complicated, and expensive.

A sampling of these agencies includes the FCC, EPA, FDA, HHS, HUD, NEA, NEH, GSA, DOT, NPS, FTC, et al. Lest you think the entire array of alphabet-soup agencies have three letters, consider the agency that made the agenda of the June 6th Niagara Falls City Council meeting, OSHA, the Occupational Health and Safety Administration. (There are other four-letter federal agencies, such as USDA and many more.)

The federal government, and every other government body, taxes its people to fund these agencies and an abundance of others.

Some of these agencies may occasionally serve worthwhile purposes, some of them may have outlasted their usefulness,



ness, if they ever had usefulness to begin with. OSHA, with the noblest of goals, is dreaded by many who operate manufacturing facilities, and I speak from experience.

I believe most people truly familiar with how government operates could agree that society has become over-regulated. We may disagree on the extent of the overregulation, but that great line from the Declaration of Independence rings true for most of us over the course of our lives.

And that's why, despite the many unpleasanties that our President tweets, his efforts to deregulate, along with his tax cuts, has some of us excited about job creation, increasing prosperity and greater confidence in a brighter future.

By reducing the strangulation caused by overregulation, we're freeing up the marketplace and liberating entrepreneurs (job-creators) to create jobs, wealth and prosperity. The massive improvement in business activity, job creation, stock market returns and other economic metrics is no accident.

But back to Niagara Falls. The June 6th City Council meeting, agenda item number 15 specifically, contained a resolution calling for increased OSHA regula-

tions, and increased OSHA officers (think "...sent hither Swarms of Officers"), along with some other lines indicating that unions in New York State don't have enough political or legislative influence. We'll leave that particular topic for another day.

When my fellow Council members and I got to item 15 on the agenda, I had to ask my dear colleagues about each line of the resolution, to be sure I understood their thoughts on the topics discussed. (All four of my colleagues sponsored the resolution.) I expressed my concerns about the resolution, and they in varying degrees explained their support for the resolution.

In the end, it was a 4-to-1 vote in favor of the measure, essentially criticizing the President (I agree there are many things to criticize but this wasn't one of them) and calling for an expanded federal bureaucracy. You win some, you lose some.

So enjoy your Fourth of July, and please reread the Declaration of Independence.

If you have kids, spend a few minutes reading it to them and explaining the import of those words. And then think about how governments, at all levels, impact your life with "Swarms of Officers."

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## Vietnam Traveling Wall Visits the American Veterans Monuments in Niagara Falls from July 11th - 16th



**Ken Hamilton**

“What’s that”, they asked, when I told a small group of young students that the Vietnam Traveling Wall would be visiting the city on Wednesday, July 11th. “You have heard about that war in Vietnam,” I asked. “Haven’t you?” None had heard.

As you read these words, these same high school students will likely have safely gone to the places around the area where they would have witnessed the night skies producing vivid and colorful explosions of fireworks, followed by the heart rattling noise of their terrible and booming expressions of power and devastating force.

But by the time that the week is

over, these young souls will likely have forgotten even those sights and sounds of the Independence Day celebrations. The fireworks, much less their memory or knowledge of Vietnam is as far away from their thoughts as are the battlefields where within and upon the cities, the roads and the rivers, the muddy rice paddies, the jungle-covered hills and the open fields, and even the briny seas be unknown to them.

These were the places from which came the unearned freedoms that were given to them so that they can debate among themselves what they have the right to have and to say. How then would they remember or know the immortal words of Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address?

Lincoln said, “But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate -- we cannot consecrate -- we cannot hallow -- this ground. The brave men [and women], living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract.

The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here



have thus far so nobly advanced.

It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us -- that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion -- that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain -- that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom -- and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Stan Zimmerman and the other members of the Niagara Falls Veterans Monument Commission invite

all area citizens to come on Wednesday, July 11th through Monday, July 16th (2018) to Hyde Park Blvd and Pine Avenue, Niagara Falls NY.

A motorcycle escort will lead the monument on July 11TH at 11:30 from the Chapel at Crosspoint at 500 Crosspoint Pkwy Gettsville NY.

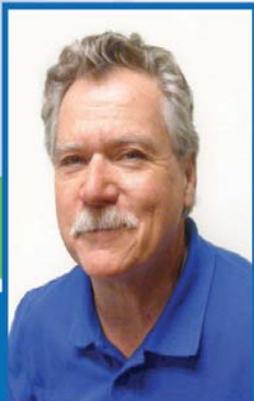
I am happy about the reception that we give our warriors today, and I try to forget the very real fireworks that I and others saw firsthand, and our lack of a reception home. Let’s come out and give the Vietnam War vets the welcome home that they so genuinely deserve.

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# NORTH TONAWANDA

## North Tonawanda Comic Book Art Show a Success

### Brendan McDonough

From Batman to Wonder Woman, it was a comic book lovers dream.

At the Carnegie Arts Center in North Tonawanda organizers held a Comic Book Art show. Deed Dewey, the event organizer, said he on the ladership role for his dad.

"It was my father's dream to hold the event," said Dewey, "but sadly he passted away a year and a half ago."

Young or old, the event offered something for everyone.

On display were comic books from the 1930's and beyond.

"I think the most recent one we have is from adventure time which was 2010. It's mostly original art. We have a few classic comics such

as the first appearance of Thor, Ironman, The Avengers, and etc, We have so many fun things here and a lot of history too," said Dewey.

The stories and artwork seemed to leap off the pages and into people's hearts. Organizers say everyone needs a hero.

"When you have characters like Superman and Captain America, who came out during World War II, they were American heroes at a time when people needed them the most. You get characters like Spiderman, Fantastic Four and the Incredible Hulk; those are all spawn from the cold war era," said Dewey.

For many North Tonawanda residents, seeing the show was a dream come true.

"A lot of these I have actually touched, held in my hands and helped opened the boxes. It was the biggest thrill," said Michael Lamanna, North Tonawanda Resident. "How many people in the world can say that they have held these original pieces of art? Not many."

For others it was a thrill to see how comic books and the superhero's in them have changed over the years.

"To see stuff from the 1950's up to the the 2000's, and how it has changed over time, is really cool," said Joe Griffio, North Tonawanda Resident.

There was also face painting, food and raffles at the event. Some of the items given away were pretty rare, too.

There is no doubt another focus of the event was to encourage residents to find their own passion for comic books and to start their own collections.

"I told my son," said Keith Fedler, North Tonawanda resident, "that I wish I had saved some of my old comic books from when I was a kid. My son started collecting a few years ago and already has well over 1,000 copies. It's incredible how infectious, and rewarding, collecting can be."

Kids also got a lesson on how to create their own comic book covers; coming up with their own characters and story lines or using existing ones.

Through art, organizers say children can learn lifelong lessons.

"It encourages kids to draw and understand that art can be wonderful entertainment," said Carlos Torres, illustrator and art teacher. "Everyone recalls when they first discov-



ered how to create something with a utensil - either a pen, pencil or whatever it was - and I believe that everyone has the ability to continue doing it. You just have to feel inspired to do it.

Dewey says he had not planned on holding another comic book show next year but if he does, he says it will focus on the "art of war."



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# Four-legged Friends Put Best Paw Forward at Local Dog Show



## Brendan McDonough

From poodles to pugs, dogs of all shapes and sizes were putting their best paws forward.

It's all part of the annual McGuire Group's Northgate Health Care Facility's annual dog show. They have been holding the event for the past 9 years.

Prizes were awarded to dogs for best in show, best trick, best outfit and most obedient.

Organizers say that, win or lose, everyone always has a good time.

"We do this once a year," said Sara Piazza, Activities Director, "and bringing dogs into the facility really brightens up our residents' day. We enjoy getting the community involved and it is just a really fun tradition that we plan on keeping."

From dancing to barking on command these four-legged friends put on quite a show. More than a dozen dogs took part in the event and judges say they had a hard time choosing winners.

For the residents of the facility it's a one day event aimed at having a good time and improving their overall health.

"It's beneficial to our residents because animals bring such joy to them," said Judith Ogden, Contest Judge. "Whether it's dogs, cats or goats, all that matters are the smiles it brings to our residents faces."

Next year they are hoping even more dogs and owners will participate.

# Overhaul to Water Meter System, Solar Street Lights, & Smoke Free City Buildings Discussed at Council Workshop

## Brendan McDonough

The Common Council Workshop on Tuesday night began with city leaders getting an education on water meters.

North Tonawanda Assistant City Engineer Chelsea Spahr talked about water meters testing, the different types of water meters, and successful projects.

The City of North Tonawanda has over 11,800 water meters with an average age of about 15 years. To combat an aging system, she proposed a total overhaul with a goal of achieving more accurate reads of water usage.

"The cost of the project would be just over 6 million dollars," said Spahr, "but we would have to see how much we get back in grant money before we can move forward with anything."

If this does come to fruition, the city would most likely contract out to



a private company to install the water meters so that everything can get done at one time.

Also discussed was the possibility of using LED street lights in North Tonawanda.

Jason Kulaszewski is the clean energy coordinator at UBI and says North Tonawanda could see a considerable savings.

"LED street light conversions can reduce street light costs by up to 65 percent," said Kulaszewski.

Kulaszewski has offered to volunteer 50 hours of his time for free technical assistance if the City decides to

move forward on this.

The conversation then turned from saving energy to saving lives. Jenna Brinkworth from Roswell Park Cancer Institute, who works to establish smoke free zones, says she would like to see the front of North Tonawanda City Hall be smoke free.

"This is really protecting public health against the dangers of second hand smoke," said Brinkworth.

She brought smoke free signs with her, but weather or not city officials will move forward on making the front of municipal buildings smoke free remains up in the air.

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# Ice Cream Sales Soaring as Heatwave Continues



**Brendan McDonough**

The temperatures outside are soaring, so too are sales at area ice cream shops.

At Jamie's on Nash Road, workers say business this past week has been brisk.

They say when the mercury rises there is no better way to cool off that with some cold ice cream.

"It has been pretty busy," said Victoria Zanatian, a server at the ice cream shop.

"It definitely picks up during

the summer time. Our pizza place gets busy when it's cool and our ice cream sales go through the roof when it's warm. I think people are just craving ice cream during this hot weather. Not to mention, t's a good excuse to come outside and get some fresh air."

Workers say the orange chocolate custard has been one of the most popular flavors this summer.

Jamie's is open each day 11am - 10pm and is located at 1401 Nash Rd.



Along with fireworks, parades and picnics, this week we celebrate the power of ideas and words.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.

These particularly powerful words are directly from the United States Declaration of Independence; a document often referred to but rarely read in its entirety or studied in depth by Americans or our elected officials. In just this small portion of the overall document, so much applies to what is currently happening at the local, state and federal levels of our governments whether in Supreme Court decisions, state court cases, social issues or last minute scrambling in Albany. Think about these words this week as we celebrate Independence Day – a day commemorated on July 4th despite the Continental Congress vote in favor of independence on July 2, 1776. From 1776 until the present day, July 4th has been toasted as the birth of American independence, with typical festivities ranging from fireworks, parades and concerts to more casual family gatherings and barbecues. This year it would be great to also celebrate the entirety of the Declaration of Independence and the true nature and meaning of being independent and free. Have our elected officials secured or maintained our rights of Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness as our Founding Fathers intended? Do our elected officials know what was meant by governments deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed? These are the questions we need to ask and have answered if we are to truly celebrate our independence as explained by our forefathers in this most powerful and profound document. While we remember how this federal holiday came to be, what it cost and what it really means, have a safe and joyful Independence Day!!



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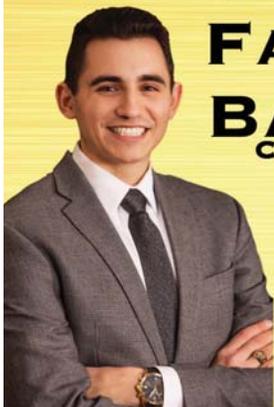
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- FIX TILE (ONE SQUARE)

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OUR OWN SINCE 2002**