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GUEST VIEW

By: **John Accardo**
Candidate for Legislature

We can call it a tale of two cities. Here in Niagara Falls, New York, the population has steadily dropped to 49,000 over the last several decades, from nearly 100,000 in our heyday. However, an hour and a half away, in a city visible from our escarpment, the population is exploding. Accord-

(Cont. on pg. 2)

Diodate is No 'Cowart'!

By: **Ken Hamilton**

Public corruption in Niagara Falls! Say that it just ain't so. Ah, but it is; and if Niagara Falls NY was the size of Buffalo then many would say that the FBI would have to put not less than 5 field offices here to deal with it. The question most citizens would ask is why our city has so very much of it, but for former Niagara Falls City Council administrative assistant Mark Diodate, the question is, if he is found guilty of attempting to pad his outgoing pay, could he

(Cont. on pg. 6)

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GUEST VIEW: Capitalizing on Niagara Falls and Town of Niagara as Bedroom Communities for Toronto Cont. from Cover

ing to the United Nations Statistics Division, in a one-year period between July 2018 and July 2019, an estimated 77,000 people moved to Toronto and the surrounding suburbs, bringing that city's population to over 3 million.

Let this sink in. In just one year, Toronto's population jumped more than one and a half times our city's entire population.

There are many reasons why Toronto has continued to grow, from job opportunities to diverse communities that make this lakefront city such an attractive market in which to live, work, and play. One of the most overlooked factors is their access to GO Transit, a combination of rail and bus routes, that allows people to live across the Niagara Peninsula and commute to work.

While Toronto's growth accelerates, the demand for housing can't keep up with the influx of people who have migrated there. The cost of an average home is a staggering \$1 million Canadian. Traffic congestion can regularly turn a simple commute from the city's outskirts into a three-hour ordeal.

It's time for Niagara Falls and Niagara County to get in on this expansion. And it all starts right at the Niagara Falls Train Station.

Imagine for a moment if we had a commuter train that ran from

Niagara Falls, NY to Toronto and back on a daily basis. We would be able to promote our city as a bedroom community from which people could commute to work in Toronto each day. This would be something I would champion from day one as a Niagara County Legislator from the 5th District.

Let's explore the ways in which we can capitalize on the rapid growth of our neighbors to the north.

1) Expanding the train routes to bring residents to and from Toronto would most importantly increase traffic to our very large, highly underused \$44 million train station. We have the capacity to do this, we just need to work out the logistics between our government and the Canadian government.

2) Because our housing stock is priced at a mere fraction of what is found across the border, we can attract people who work in Toronto but don't want to pay the high price for a home or rental there. With a commuter train, their transportation time into the metropolitan area would be similar to a commute on the congested QEW, which can move at a snail's pace.

3) We are a small city with the capacity to provide the amenities that big city dwellers can appreciate, without the crowds. Just re-

cently, Gov. Cuomo announced that Niagara Falls' North End/Bridge District won \$10 million from the Downtown Revitalization Initiative. Combined with new investors to Main Street and traffic being redirected from the waterfront, we can expect that section of town to see a renaissance within a few years. Already, we have plenty of great restaurants, shopping areas close by, and a host of other features that people look for with relocation.

4) For a smaller community, we have two top line medical centers in western Niagara County, along with urgent care clinics. There are three school districts located close to the border: Niagara Falls, Niagara-Wheatfield, and Lewiston-Porter. In recent years, Niagara Falls City School district's programs have been greatly enhanced under Superintendent Mark Laurie. Our teaching staff is outstanding, and we have many state-of-the-art offerings, especially in the high school.

5) With an infusion of working-class families to our region, we can then spur business development, especially along the north sections of Military Road and Route 31, where there's room for business parks and other enterprises.

Toronto's growth patterns are likely to continue for years to come,



Candidate for the Niagara County Legislature, 5th District, John Accardo.

which means there is a great need to expand east and south to welcome everyone. Let's utilize the resources we have here, right now, including a large housing stock, other amenities, and an untapped transportation mechanism, to encourage people to relocate across Niagara County, especially here in Niagara Falls and Town of Niagara. As your next Niagara County Legislator from the 5th District, I am ready to champion this initiative and give our region a much needed boost.

NIAGARA



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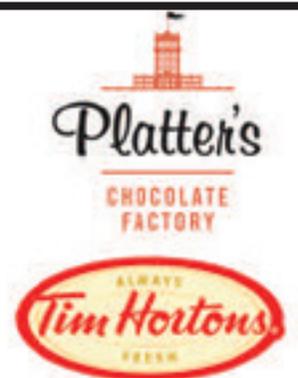
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Sanborn: Smokin Joes (gas station and store) & Tim Hortons

Wilson: Lakeside Market

Youngstown: Anchor Spirits & Wines, Bandanas Bar & Grill, Public Library, Rite Aid, Village Diner

Chris's Corner: Stemming the Tide of Decline

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



Chris Voccio
NF City Councilman

As some of you may know, I knocked on a lot of doors during my 2017 election campaign. I listened to a lot of voters and believe I got a good feel for what was on people's minds.

While I'm not up for re-election until 2021, I'm knocking on doors again this year, and I'm hearing the same things this year that I heard two years ago.

So many of our residents are thinking of moving out of town.

Some want to move far away, to places like Florida or South Carolina. Others are considering a closer move, to places like Lewiston or the Town of Niagara.

One major issue relates to blight. Many residents, usually renters, and many property owners, usually from out of town, don't care about their yards, or their neighborhoods. These people are pushing their good neighbors to want to move away.

While law-abiding, tax-paying citizens flee to other municipalities or states, we're left with more and more of those that came here or are staying here because of cheap rents and, thanks to New York State, generous social welfare policies.

It's time we stem the tide of decline and make Niagara Falls a more attractive place to live for the productive, law-abiding working or retired people of all races and colors and creeds. The immigration debate is in the news a lot lately, but when it comes to people moving to our city from other countries, states and municipalities, let's welcome them with open arms — IF they are coming

here to assimilate, to work, pay taxes, abide by our laws, and take care of their yards. We need as many of them as possible.

I've read somewhere that 60% of our residents are on public assistance. Whatever the real percentage is, the fact is that the ratio of taxpayers to those who live off taxpayers is dramatically lower than it was in the city's glory days.

In the halcyon days of Niagara Falls, a huge percentage of our population were working class people, middle class people, people who earned a living, paid their taxes, kept up their properties and cared about and contributed to their community.

To reverse the city's decline, we should focus on the following:

No new taxes or tax increases. When we increase property taxes, we essentially encourage law-abiding, tax-paying citizens to consider moving out of town, lessening our tax base and increasing our percentage of people on public assistance.

Encourage private development of market-rate housing. If we're going to attract productive, working

people to Niagara Falls, we need more market-rate housing. This is why I'm so encouraged that a private developer plans to build market-rate apartments downtown.

The city should not incentivize low-income housing. If a private operator wants to build low-income housing on their dime, OK. But the city shouldn't encourage it.

Transfer city-owned properties to private owners. We need to, as rapidly as possible, transfer city-owned properties to private owners, people who will either live in those homes or next door neighbors who want an empty lot to be their side yard. This needs to be done in a thoughtful way, as these are city-owned properties.

Certainly there are other things that can be done to stem the tide of decline of our city. Niagara Falls may never again be what it was a generation or two ago. But it can be dramatically better than it is today.

And of course, we need to continue to care for our less fortunate neighbors while we focus on making the city a more attractive place to live.

Restaino Endorsed by Libertarian Party Cont. from Cover



Niagara Falls Mayoral Candidate Robert M. Restaino.

The Libertarian Party of Niagara County endorsed Robert M. Restaino for the office of Mayor of the city of Niagara Falls, NY.

In issuing the endorsement, local Libertarian Party Chairperson, Kathy Ligammari stated, "Robert has expressed views central to the principles of our party, individual liberty and limits on government interference in business growth and

development. His position on the reduction of partisanship in order to spur economic growth in the City, is sorely needed in Niagara Falls. Robert Restaino is our choice for the office of Mayor for Niagara Falls."

Notably, Restaino has already been endorsed by the Democratic Party, Conservative Party, Independence Party, and numerous unions.

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THE CRIME

WEEKLY HEADLINES

-Niagara Falls Police and Fire responded to the 1300 block of Ashland Avenue in the afternoon hours of Tuesday, August 27th, 2019, after reports that someone had fallen, or was pushed, out of a second story window. According to reports, there was also a report of a stolen vehicle involved in the call. The injured person was transported to ECMC.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to 15th Street in the afternoon hours of Tuesday, August 27th, 2019, after reports of a suspicious person. According to police, the caller stated there was a man standing in the middle of the road holding a knife with two dogs threatening people.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to reports of a hit and run at the corner of 19th Street and Pine Avenue in the evening hours of Tuesday, August 27th, 2019. According to reports, the driver of the striking vehicle fled the scene in reverse. Another person, possibly a witness, also ran from the scene and was then picked up with by the striking vehicle.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to the Coastal Gas Station in the early morning hours of Friday, August 30th, 2019, after reports of a stolen vehicle. According to reports, a Lockport man left his keys inside of the vehicle with two other males inside and when he exited the store it was gone. Police did eventually locate the vehicle.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to 77th Street in the early morning hours of Friday, August 30th, 2019, for a welfare check. According to the caller, there was a naked man in a wheelchair yelling outside in the street.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to Deveau in the late hours



of Friday, August 30th, 2019, for reports of a domestic altercation. According to the caller, a couple was fighting over the use of shampoo. Police did not discover the brand of shampoo, but know that it was a shampoo-conditioner mix.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to Tops on Niagara Falls Boulevard in the evening hours of Saturday, August 31st, 2019, after reports of disturbing the peace. According to reports, an intoxicated man with a dog, who was also wearing a cape, began yelling racial slurs at people. The same individual then went into Tops and began yelling racial slurs at people there. The police nicknamed him, "Captain Swears A Lot."

BREAKING NEWS

Niagara Falls declared most dangerous place to live in New York State by Background-checks.org who compiled a list of the safest cities in the State. Niagara Falls came in last.

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Diodate and Corruption Cont. from Cover

get the same deal that former Niagara Falls Housing Authority executive director Stephanie Cowart got caught with her hand in the proverbial cookie jar for her much worse crime of padding the pay of her family members to a much higher degree and still not getting any -time in the hoosegow for it.

Frankly, neither one of them would have fared well in jail: Cowart due to her fragilities nor Diodate because – well, because of he's who he is. But will who-and-what they are have any impact upon the crime or the punishment?

While I didn't get to know the affable Diodate until very recently, I have known Cowart for many years and found her to be an extremely bright and driven woman. When Michael Raymond, her former boss, was retiring, the commission was determined to vote to do a national search to replace him. Now, for all of those who think that the political place for African-Americans -- and that we should stay in our place -- is with the Democratic Party, it was when I was the treasurer for the Niagara Falls Republican City Party, I thought that Cowart deserved a chance to lead. We had several GOP committee members serving on the NFHA board; and while Democrats for Cowart were protesting out in front of the authority's 744-10th Street headquarters, I was in the kitchens and living rooms of those members quietly and decisively changing their minds about the national search. Because partially on my efforts Cowart got the job, I have the right to say

the following.

Because whenever the housing authority's HOPE VI partner, Norstar Development and their project manager Linda Goodman was lobbying the council, I too often saw Cowart in the chambers when none of the business impacted the housing authority. I could only guess that she was supporting Goodman and seemingly keeping an eye on former City Councilman Charles Walker, who also once worked for the Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center -- whose board upon which Cowart prominently served. After decades of community development work and political experience, and with Cowart's very light sentencing, it led me to think that the FBI's investigation into Cowart didn't go far enough. Even though, I suspected something far worse would come out of it than her nefariously enriching her family through no-show jobs -- an employment policy that many area residents have come to believe to be standard operating procedure in governmental arenas in the city. What then did Diodate allegedly do that was different?

Even if convicted, Diodate's failure would have only initially cost the government a comparatively moderate \$500. By comparison, Cowart's moral failure was initially more than 45-times that amount. But in the long run, the convicted Cowart would have likely remained at the help of the housing authority for another 10-years and with an earning potential of not less than 1.4 million dollars plus benefits.

Contrast that to an if-convicted Diodate, given inflation and him working until 69-years old or older, his lifetime earnings could have been much more.

Now comes the question of justice in the federal case of Cowart and the potential state case of an-indicted Diodate. As I explained in a recent Niagara Reporter column that it seems that I (a black man), after an argument with a militant lesbian, was likely punished by being cut loose from my previous writing gig and thereby asked the question if the "sympathies" of militant lesbians trump those of black men. I think that Diodate, if found guilty, could ask the question during sentencing if the "sympathies" of black women trump those of white men.

Good argument can and ought to be made by those outside of the legal system that white men have long had the privileges that neither black women or men have had, and that affirmative justice is itself justice; but we can all agree that our legal system should be more pure than that. If Diodate is convicted and sentenced to anything

more than to what Cowart received in this post-Obama America, then I think that a double standard would have taken place and would doubly have to be fixed. All Americans should be treated equally before the law. And as Martin Luther King said, "Injustice anywhere is injustice everywhere," and we Americans are indeed everywhere.

But Diodate is no Cowart. When it comes to that magnitude of what Cowart did (unto whom much is given, much is required), I suspect that she should have gotten more than what she did; and if Diodate is convicted, he should get whatever was commiserate with what Cowart should have gotten.

But one of the lessons in all of this for all of us is the proverbial, "It ain't what you know, it's who you know"; to which I respond, then you all had better get busy knowing some folks -- especially those in government to whom you have given over your own destinies.

Bless her heart, Cowart knew a lot of influential people.



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North Tonawanda Home Gets Free Paint Job Thanks to Project H.O.P.E.



Owner of Painters Plus Home Decorating, and current Niagara County Legislature member from the 7th District, Jesse Gooch.

Tony Farina

Sometimes, even in the darkest of days, there's a ray of sunshine to cheer the moment. Just ask Paul Kalinowski and his sister, both of them senior citizens suffering from serious and chronic health problems, about that sliver of light they received last Saturday.

It was definitely a sunny day in more ways than one for Paul and his sister as their one-story home at 233 Edward St. in North Tonawanda received a free paint job thanks to being selected for the 9th Annual Project H.O.P.E (helping others paint exteriors) job.

"It is definitely a labor of love," says Jesse Gooch as he and his crew from Painters Plus went about their work on the home which hadn't received a coat of paint since the early 1970s.

Gooch, a Niagara County legislator, and his crew looked in great spirits as they surrounded the small home on a quiet residential block and cheerfully went about their charitable painting work for the occupants who remained inside as their house received a completely new look.

North Tonawanda Mayor Arthur Pappas and other city officials took

part in the Project H.O.P.E. effort and family and friends of the workers set up a small stand in front of the home to provide refreshments. The Sherwin Williams store in North Tonawanda completed the community effort by supplying the paint for the work.

As we said at the beginning of this little item, sometimes even in the darkest of days, the sun can break through and provide some temporary relief to people who are in pain or need a lift. That's what happened last Saturday in North Tonawanda, and thanks to Project H.O.P.E., it will be shining again next year.



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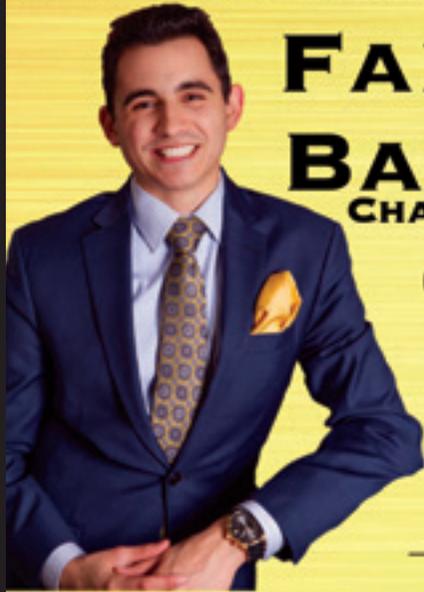
September 11 – A Day to Remember

September 11, 2001, will forever be one of the most tragic days in American history. Through the unimaginable despair, however, ordinary Americans etched into our history remarkable illustrations of bravery, of sacrifice for one another, and of dedication to our shared values. The shock from the indelible images of the smoke rising from the World Trade Center and Pentagon gave way to countless inspiring videos of co-workers helping one another to safety; of heroes running into collapsing buildings to save the innocent people trapped within; and to the unforgettable story of the patriots who charged the cockpit of Flight 93 to save untold numbers of lives. These heroes moved us with their bravery. They make us proud to be Americans. The enemy attempted to tear at the fabric of our society by destroying our buildings and murdering our innocent, but our strength has not and will not waiver. Americans today remain steadfast in our commitment to liberty, to human dignity, and to one another.

It has been 18 years since the tragedy of September 11, 2001. Children who lost their parents on that day are now parents of their own, while many teenagers currently in high school learn about September 11th only from their history books. Yet all Americans are imbued with the same commitment to cause and love of their fellow citizens as everyone who lived through that dark day. We will never forget. The events of September 11, 2001, did not defeat us. They did not rattle us. They, instead, have rallied us, as leaders of the civilized world, to defeat an evil ideology that preys on innocents and knows nothing but violence and destruction.

By a joint resolution approved December 18, 2001 (Public Law 107-89), the Congress has designated September 11 of each year as Patriot Day. On Patriot Day, we honor the nearly 3,000 innocent lives taken from us on September 11, 2001, and all of those who so nobly aided their fellow citizens in America's time of need. We rededicate ourselves to the ideals that define our country and unite us as one, as we commemorate all the heroes who lost their lives saving others. On this anniversary, let us thank our Nation's incredible service members and first responders, who are on the front lines of our fight against terrorism. We will always remember the sacrifices made in defense of our people, our country, and our freedom.

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