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(Cont. on pg. 4)

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OFFICIAL HOME OF **THE CRIME** PAGE 4
Niagara Falls

Anello Asks: Window Dressing or Real Cuts by City Leaders?

By: Tony Farina

Former Niagara Falls Mayor Vincent Anello thinks some of the council's cost-cutting budget maneuvering is more for show than dough and doesn't amount to much. In fact, he takes it a step further and says some of it might hobble some of

(Cont. on pg. 2)

Niagara Reporter Publisher Parlato to Star in Discovery ID 'Special Event'

By: Staff Reports

The rise and fall of Keith Ranieri and the now defunct NXIVM cult is one of the most disturbing scandals of our age. What began as a purported self-help group spiraled into a dark, secretive world of illicit

(Cont. on pg. 6)

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Real Cuts Cont. from Cover



Former Mayor of Niagara Falls Vince Anello.

the city departments that provide valuable services to taxpayers with very little financial savings.

"City leaders have been nickel-and-diming for years with regards to the budget, and now they are behind the eight ball," said Anello, referring to cuts in departments like public works. Anello believes the city work force is not bloated and it might have been wiser to have been honest with the public and explain the need for small tax increases in the past before

reaching the current crisis point.

"There is still a need to make tough decisions," said Anello who believes lawmakers may be trying to sidestep reality with the department cuts and some concessions by the fire union which, according to experts, may simply be a case of kicking the can down the road in the payment of retirement benefits and not amount to very much.

Republican Councilman Chris Voccio, who voted against those concessions, says no one is really sure what their value is considering the uncertainty about who or how many will retire.

For his part, Council Chairman Andrew Touma says lawmakers are continuing to work to find budget savings and to eliminate waste. The chairman said he believes the council has identified about \$335,000 in budget reductions in the work sessions and lawmakers will continue to explore consolidations to make every taxpayer dollar count in the delivery of services.

As things stand now, lawmakers will vote on a charter amendment

that would enact the mayor's proposed garbage user fee (\$181 per tote) this week (Thursday), that would bring in about \$4 million, coupled with a likely 2.5 percent increase in taxes for businesses and homeowners alike. The mayor had originally proposed a 9 percent business tax increase and a 3 percent property tax hike.

The mayor had pegged the deficit at \$4 million and the council's amended budget with the tax increase, garbage user fee, and other cuts will probably be on the mayor's desk by Friday. In all likelihood, the user fee and tax increase will be in the final budget and then the new mayor (Robert Restaino) and the new council (still one seat undecided) will hope that the Seneca Nation stops fighting the state and agrees to make the back payment and restart slot revenue sharing.

Touma said that Mayor-elect Restaino has been keeping in close touch with the council on the budget process and for one is certainly hoping that come January after he takes office, the budget situation, at

least for now, will improve dramatically if the Senecas resume paying the state.

Touma said the city's restructuring board and other financial advisers are in support of enacting the garbage user fee not just for next year's budget but going forward as the city badly needs new revenue sources, casino cash notwithstanding.

"It is certainly preferable [user fee] to laying off 70 public safety officers," said Touma.

But as Anello and Touma agree, even with the end to the gaming stalemate, the city will still have some tough political decisions ahead to get the city on the road to recovery. Years of avoiding those tough decisions and relying on casino cash have, as Anello said, put the city behind the eight ball.

Part of the recovery plan likely to unfold under the new mayor is a more collaborative regional approach, including with the Senecas, to strengthen the calling card that is Niagara Falls for tourists from around the world.

NIAGARA



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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

HAMILTON: Should Niagara Falls Have Total Control Over the Disbursements of Casino Money?



Ken Hamilton

Perhaps it is time that while the Seneca casinos' issue is still tied up in litigation that Niagara Falls reassess both the distribution and the use of its share of casino money.

Rich Fontana, former WBEN Radio 930AM newsman and now current Buffalo Common Councilman, was amazed when I told him that the City of Niagara Falls NY was not allowed to put 100% of its 25% of the state's 25% of Seneca Niagara Casino slots-take directly into its general fund. In Niagara Falls, I told him, the city is required to give a percentage to certain other institutions, and some of which are actually non-governmental. Fontana, who heads up Buffalo Common Council's Finance Committee, like me, was stunned by the news. He said that all of the monies that Buffalo gets from their Buffalo Creek Casino goes directly into their own general fund.

But Buffalo is one of the state's "Big-Five" cities, and are chartered and configured very differently than smaller cities like Niagara Falls and Salamanca. Though Buffalo's casino funds (which were coming in over the amounts that the city had budgeted) do indeed go into the general fund, the money for Buffalo's school system – along with state aid – comes out of the city's coffers. In Niagara Falls the school system levies its own

taxes, however school taxes charged but not paid must come out of the city's general fund. Fontana said that the Common Council also supports many 501-c-3s out of the general fund into which went the casino funds, in a sense, it also partially uses casino funds to do so, but not on the casino fund budget line.

Would it benefit Niagara Falls to have such a system, whereas in the past portions of the city's funds went to the Niagara County, where every legislator except 3 of the 4 Niagara Falls legislators got a fair share. It is estimated that a pot of \$75,000 was divvied up by the 11-1/2 legislators, and Legislator Jason Zona, whose district overlapped into the Town of Niagara got a half-share for that part of his district. The County Legislature's action of not giving Niagara Falls a share was premised upon the city already received a share of the funding. Each non-Niagara Falls legislator then would have gotten an estimated \$7,000 with Zona and his Town of Niagara District receiving closer to 3,500. There's a however, however.

A portion, up to \$750,000, of the Niagara Falls city's share also goes to Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center, a facility that serves as Niagara County mental health facility; and as the moniker implies, it serves the entire county and county and other policing agencies regularly drop off people from their areas for treatment.

One such case was that of off-duty Niagara Falls Police Officer Walt Nichol's justified shooting of errant patient Jonah Drisdorn. Drisdorn was reportedly dropped off by the Lockport PD and peacefully went in for evaluation prior to the arrival of Drisdorn. For some reason, Drisdorn had the right to leave when he wanted prior to the end of his evaluation and apparently fled the hospital carrying a table knife from his dinner tray with



The Niagara Falls City Council.

him. A hospital staffer then shouted to Nichols to stop that man. Reports also said that when Nichols confronted the knife-wielding man, the man turned and charged Nichols, who then dispatched. The family sued over the 1997 case, the Niagara Falls City Council indemnified the off-duty officer, and in 2010 the case was settled out of the city's coffers for \$225,000. That's 3-times the amount of Niagara Falls casino money that was received in any single year.

But why did the hospital get casino money?

Former Senator George Maziarz, then the negotiating senator on the issue in the then Republican-led State Senate said that he toured the antiquated mental facilities of Memorial and thought that they needed to be improved; and hence the money to do so would be casino money. Maziarz also said that then-Niagara Falls Schools Superintendent Carmen Granto had applied for bonding to make all Niagara Falls schools Americans with Disabilities Act compliant. "I think that [Joseph] Ruffalo and Carmen both did a great job [with the money]," Maziarz said.

And then there was the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority that wanted to build a new terminal in the Town of Wheatfield for the namesake Niagara Falls International Airport. The older terminal was located largely in the Town of Niagara. Even though the terminals were not in Niagara Falls proper, \$28-million of Niagara Falls' casino money would pay for half of the costs. Maziarz again said that it would benefit the hotels in Niagara Falls, where nearly every hotel in Niagara County is located.

Two other entities received Niagara Falls casino money. Former Niagara Falls-area Assemblywoman Francine DelMonte said that Destination Niagara, formerly Niagara Tourism & Convention Corporation (NTCC), received an estimated \$500,000 (as memory serves) casino money for the purposes of the development of the Underground Railroad Interpretation Commission's master plan, and for putting together a plan for the north-end of Main Street, the area that Blue

Cardinal Capital has recently made significant purchases.

And then there's Salamanca. In the case of the City of Salamanca, the City and Cattaraugus County have entered into an agreement which sets forth how local share is to be apportioned which briefly provides as follows:

- The City, the County and the School are first reimbursed for tax loss as a result of Native American tax immunity (each time an enrolled member of the Seneca Nation of Indians or the Seneca Nation itself buys property located on the Reservation, that person and property are immune from taxation).

- The City and the County are reimbursed for direct impact costs (expenses incurred directly related to the casino being located within the municipality).

- Any remaining local share funds are divided 75 percent to the City and 25 percent to the County for economic development.

Like Salamanca, Niagara Falls is similarly reimbursed; albeit, according to DelMonte, with strong language in the agreement that the casino funds were to be used for economic development. DelMonte, along with then-Mayor Vince Anello, believed that, like Buffalo, the money should have gone first to the city.

Remember, When property is taken off the tax rolls, or the taxes are unpaid, the local school and the county are reimbursed the loss by the city. Likewise, when the towns properties are no longer or unpaid, every city of Niagara Falls taxpayers must likewise make up the differences in the town through city dwellers' county taxes.

Maziarz was bold enough to say that he was glad that not all of the money went to the city because, he said, he knew that they would blow it.

Despite that, while the entire matter is still in litigation, should not only direct talks be held with the Senecas to act as partners, but should Niagara Falls also negotiate with the state to have total control over the disbursements of its casino money?

What say you? Send your comments to niagarareporter@gmail.com.



Niagara Falls City Hall.



THE CRIME

WEEKLY HEADLINES

-Niagara Falls Police and Fire responded to the 400 block of Portage Road in the afternoon hours of Wednesday, November 13th, 2019, after reports of a shooting. According to police, the victim stated that he was shot at some point over the last twenty-four hours somewhere around 15th and Pine Avenue.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to the 7-Eleven at 402 Niagara Street in the early morning hours of Wednesday, November 13th, 2019, after reports of an armed robbery. According to witnesses at the scene, two black males were wearing masks and stated they had a gun when demanding items from the store clerk. Witnesses stated that the suspects made off with multiple cartons of Newports, cash from the registers, and pre-paid debit cards. Police are continuing to investigate the incident and studying the store surveillance footage for clues as to the identity of either individual.

-Niagara Falls Police and New York State Police responded to the 400 block of 24th Street in the evening hours of Thursday, November 14th, 2019, to execute a search warrant. Police were seen entering and exiting the premises wearing respirators and carried out multiple buckets and bins of material. Police stated afterward that the search warrant was issued after reports of a meth lab being operated out of the apartment. Police confirmed that materials from the meth lab was what they carried out of the apartment. Police expect to make arrests relating to the meth lab. We were told that a makeshift meth lab was being operated out of the apartment.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to the 1500 block of Weston Avenue, at the Grace Calvary Church, after reports of a hit and run. According to police, a vehicle drove into the side of the church and then drove away without contacting police or church officials. People inside of the church immediately felt the impact of the vehicle crash.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to the Tops on Portage Road in the evening hours of Friday, November 15th, 2019, after reports of an assault. According to police, medical personnel was requested for a person who was severely beat up by multiple individuals. The individual was bleeding heavily and not fully conscious. Police are continuing to look at video from Tops to determine any leads. The man was said to be homeless.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to the 7-Eleven at 1501 Pine Avenue in the



evening hours of Friday, November 15th, 2019, after reports of an armed robbery. According to witnesses, three individuals were involved and displayed a silver gun to the clerk while demanding money and other items. Police are reviewing security footage for any leads.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to the 2400 block of Linwood Avenue in the evening hours of Saturday, November 16th, 2019, after reports of shots fired. According to police, no injuries were reported.

-Niagara Falls Police, U.S. Border Patrol, Town of Niagara, Lewiston, and New York State Police, responded to the Mobil gas station at 4708 Hyde Park Blvd. in the evening hours of Sunday, November 17th, 2019, after reports of a robbery with handgun displayed. According to police, the suspect made off with quite a bit of money and items from the store. Police attempted to pursue, but it was unsuccessful. Police are continuing to investigate.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to the 300 block of 19th Street in the evening hours of Sunday, November 17th, 2019, after reports of a robbery with a deadly weapon. According to police, witnesses at the Merry Mart stated a suspect attempted to rob the store after waving around a knife. This same individual then returned to the store to steal redbull.



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Investigation Discovery Announced New Special "The Lost Women of NXIVM"

Two-Hour 'Special Event' to Air on Investigative Discovery Channel Sunday, December 8th, 2019, at 9pm



NXIVM defector Susan Dones reveals shocking insights to Frank Parlato about the cult that brands and blackmails women and possibly murdered some of them also.

sex, money laundering, and exploitation all at the hands of founder Keith Raniere and his accomplices.



Forensic and ballistic specialist, Cynthia Birr, discusses with Frank Parlato the possibility that the "suicide" of Gina Hutchinson was actually a murder. From the Discovery ID special airing on Sunday, December 8.

Now, former NXIVM publicist turned investigative journalist Frank Parlato, who first revealed that NXIVM was branding women, takes a deep dive to answer the questions surrounding the tragic deaths and mysterious disappearances of four women who all had connections to NXIVM and Raniere himself. With exclusive access to members of Raniere's former inner circle, some speaking for the first time and others who remain anonymous for their safety, Parlato leads viewers through a two-hour investigation that questions if there is more to this sadistic story. The provocative new



special, THE LOST WOMEN OF NXIVM, premieres Sunday, December 8 at 9/8c, only on Investigation Discovery (ID).

"Understanding the depths of depravity of the NXIVM cult goes far beyond what we have seen in the headlines," says Henry Schleiff, Group President of Investigation Discovery, Travel Channel, American Heroes Channel and Destination America. "This explosive ID special takes a never before look at the stories of four women who were unfortunately caught in Raniere's twisted web and explores how their

association with him may have led to their tragic fates, providing hope that authorities might reopen these cases to bring closure to the victims' loved ones."

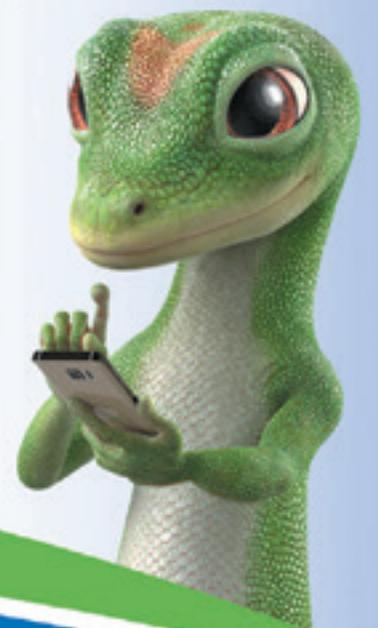
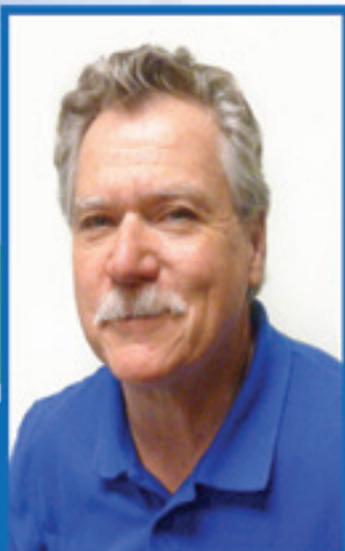
THE LOST WOMEN OF NXIVM begins with Parlato's investigation into the missing persons case of Kristin Snyder, who disappeared on February 6, 2003 after being forcibly removed from one of NXIVM's Executive Success Programs (ESP) due to erratic behavior. Her abandoned vehicle was found the next day with an apparent suicide note inside, but her body has never

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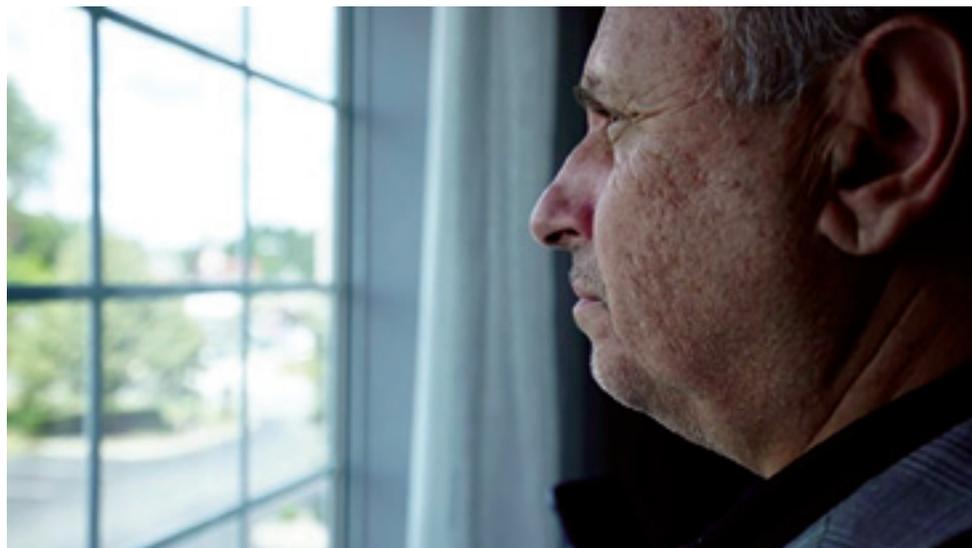


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NXIVM Cont.



Publisher of the Niagara Reporter, Frank Parlato, busted the NXIVM sex cult resulting in the incarceration of its leader, Keith Raniere and convictions of five other members. Parlato has achieved world-wide fame from this remarkable accomplishment. Discovery ID is airing a two hour "special event" featuring Parlato's investigative efforts.

been recovered. In an exclusive interview, Parlato speaks with Snyder's wife of two years, Heidi Clifford, who claims that Snyder was pregnant with Raniere's child at the time of her disappearance. Parlato quickly discovers that just months before Snyder vanished, 33-year-old Gina Hutchinson was found dead also due to an apparent suicide. Heidi Hutchinson speaks with Parlato about her sister's association with Raniere from a young age.

With the help of an anonymous source, Parlato also explores the deaths of two additional LOST WOMEN OF NXIVM, 63-year-old Barbara Jeske and 57-year-old Pamela Cafritz. Both women lived with Keith Raniere and were part of his trusted inner circle, many of whom mysteriously developed terminal cancer. After collecting potential hair evidence from the source, Parlato sets out to explore if it is possible that the women, experiencing a cluster of cancers, were poisoned over a period of years.

Additional revelations in THE LOST WOMEN OF NXIVM include the very first on-record interview with Kristin Keeffe, who divulges what she knows from her 24-year relationship with Keith

Raniere. She is one of the many women Raniere impregnated, but unlike allegedly dozens of others, she was not forced to have an abortion. When her son was 7-years-old, Keeffe escaped and went into hiding to protect herself and her son. Additional interviews include: Susan Dones, a former NXIVM trainer, whose video footage secretly recorded Raniere speaking to other high-ranking officials of NXIVM boasting "I've had people killed because of my beliefs." Neil Glazer, an attorney for NXIVM survivors; Rick Ross, an expert on extremist groups; Dr. Jana Lulich, a sociologist, former NXIVM consultants; and many more.

THE LOST WOMEN IS NXIVM is produced for Investigation Discovery by AMPLE Entertainment. For AMPLE, Ari Mark, Phil Lott, Alex Weresow and, filmmaker Pat McGee are executive producers. For Investigation Discovery, Eugenie Vink is executive producer, Sara Kozak is senior vice president of production, Kevin Bennett is general manager, and Henry Schleiff is Group President, Investigation Discovery, Travel Channel, American Heroes Channel, and Destination America.



Scenes from the Discovery ID special event, "The Lost Women of NXIVM."



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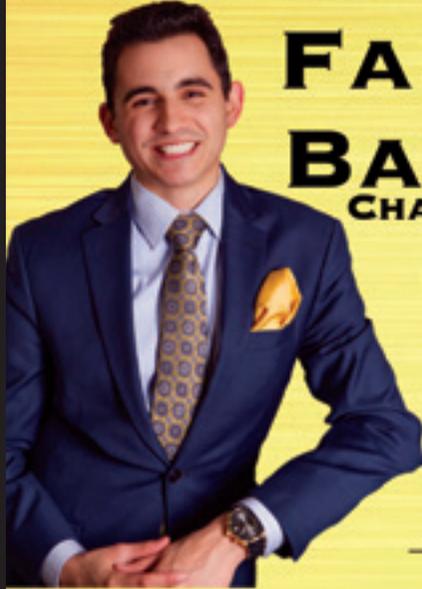
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What are some advantages of Registered Apprenticeship?

The benefits to employers are: more highly skilled employees, reduced turnover rates, higher productivity, lower investment in recruitment, a more diverse workforce, a new pool of workers and the creation of career pathways. The benefits to registered apprentices are: being nationally recognized and portable credentials, improved skills and competencies, higher wages as skills increase and career advancement.

Registered Apprenticeship programs are operated by partnerships of employers, labor management organizations and government. Apprenticeship sponsors – employers, employer associations and labor-management organizations – register programs with federal and state government agencies. Sponsors provide mentors, on-the-job learning opportunities and required technical instruction to apprentices. Incorporating Registered Apprenticeship directly into your workforce development system will strengthen your local and regional economy by offering highly trained and educated residents. Let Registered Apprenticeship be your competitive advantage. Laborers' Local 91 accepts apprenticeship applications the first Tuesday of every month from 8 AM – 12 noon at our training facility located at 4500 Witmer Industrial Estates Niagara Falls, NY 14305.

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