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**Empty Train Station?**



**Grandinetti  
on 'rape culture'**



# NIAGARA FALLS REPORTER

**THE TRUTH IS ALWAYS FAIR**

FREE

JAN 28 - FEB 3, 2016

VOL. 17, NO. 04

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**Kicked Out Of Office For Telling The Truth: Now Fruscione Gets To Say It....**

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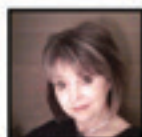
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# An Interview With Sam Fruscione: Correct About Phony Hamister Deal

It was the summer of 2013, almost three years ago, and the city of Niagara Falls was in the midst of a crisis. According to the Buffalo television stations and local newspapers quoting Mayor Paul Dyster, Gov. Andrew Cuomo and U.S. Sen Kirsten Gillibrand, one man was standing in the way on an economic revitalization that would turn the city around once and for all.

That man, comically enough, it seems now, was popular former city Council chairman Sam Fruscione.

The affable Fruscione had served on the Council for years, providing the leadership for a dissident majority that questioned Dyster administration initiatives and fought against the mayor's annual tax increases. Along with former councilmen Bob Anderson and Glenn Choolokian, Fruscione provided effective opposition.

But in 2013, he was running for reelection. And although he had often been the top vote getter in his previous reelection bids, there was absolutely no way to predict what lay ahead in that crazy year.

Mark Hamister, a Buffalo nursing home operator and major campaign contributor, proposed building a grand hotel in downtown Niagara Falls. Dyster, Cuomo, Gillibrand and other politicians who had benefitted from Hamister's largess quickly got behind the project.

Hamister had never built a hotel before but the media was quickly filled with stories of his "transformational" project. "It [Hamister hotel] could help turn the tide of development in Niagara Falls," the governor said.

There was only one problem. Fruscione, Choolokian and Anderson wanted some assurance that Hamister actually had the money to do what he said he was going to do. All hell broke loose.

Choolokian and Anderson's seats were safe that year but Fruscione's was up for grabs. And Andrew Touma, cousin of Dyster campaign manager Craig Touma, was put



Original drawing of the proposed Hamister hotel.



Sam Fruscione was right after all....

up as a replacement for Fruscione, one who would not stand in the way of an important development like the Hamister hotel.

For his part, Hamister threatened to walk away from the deal because of Fruscione's intransigence. It was imperative that Council approve the deal so that construction could begin by the early spring of 2014, he said.

The campaign against Fruscione was unprecedented. Never before in the history of Niagara Falls City Council races had the governor played a role, much less Gillibrand and U.S. Sen. Charles Schumer, who also endorsed Touma.

The media campaign was unrelenting, and mailers and robocalls went beyond simply criticizing Fruscione for his stand on the Hamister hotel, they went so far as to accuse him of being sympathetic to the Mafia!

The campaign was effective and he lost the primary to Touma.

Now, nearly 28 months later, the Hamister hotel has turned out to be what Fruscione and the Niagara Falls Reporter said it was in the first place – Smoke and mirrors. Now Dyster and other vocal supporters have all but admitted that Hamister didn't have the money to do the project after all, although they stop

short of saying that Fruscione was right.

While the Hamister project failed to accomplish its alleged goal of building a hotel it did manage to achieve what most political observers believe was its real, but hidden, intent: driving two term councilman and Paul Dyster nemesis, Sam Fruscione from office. The Reporter recently spent time with the always good humored school teacher as we posed a few questions in this exclusive interview.

Q: Let's cut to the chase: What about the Hamister project?

A: The Hamister deal was never meant to happen. It was a campaign stunt to do two things: put me out of office and put [Council members Chalre] Walker, [Kristen] Grandinetti, and [Andrew] Touma into office. Plain and simple. I saw that and I questioned the validity of the land transfer and contract drawn by the city with Mr. Hamister. And because of that the mayor and governor – the governor actually did a robo call slamming me if you remember – joined forces with the City Democratic Committee and I was politically smeared out of office. So here the city sits, close to three years later, and still no hotel. Not so much as a shovelful of dirt turned over. The project should be looked at from top to bottom. The residents deserve an answer to the entire affair.

Q: How do you rate the economic development efforts of the Dyster administration?

A: The new hotels downtown have been built not due to the administration but in spite of the administration. The overflow from Canada, our own tourism traffic and extra exposure due to the casino have caused the new hotels. And that's a good thing. The new hotels and motels in LaSalle are directly due to the growth of the airport. And the administration had to be dragged kicking and screaming to the airport growth because Mayor Dyster very jealously saw the airport project as a George Maziarz project. Aside from the hotels there's virtually no private investment downtown. If the city grants and loans were withdrawn from Third Street the businesses there would disappear. The street is virtually government subsidized. There's low income subsidized housing on Walnut Avenue that's being claimed as a great success and South Junior is going to be turned into subsidized housing. You can't call this economic devel-

opment And Hamister? Well, I answered that already.

Q: Two words, train station. Care to respond?

A: I have two words of my own, 'costly mistake.' When was the last time you or anyone you know took a train anywhere? Do families vacation like that? Do mom and dad take the kids and their luggage and "hop aboard" the train to Disney, to Cooperstown, to Corning or Las Vegas? Time and again I asked Mayor Dyster and his planner Tom DeSantis how they intended to pay for day to day operation of the building and they had no answers. None, zero. How is that possible? Yet it's being built. We have a broken budget, casino revenue is essentially gone, a State Restructuring Board is going to be taking over and yet a new, unsupported, \$45 million train station is set to open. What's going on here? I'm not even going to mention the Underground Railroad Interpretive Center next door to the train station that's tied up with a lawsuit and was supposed to have opened its doors five years ago.

Q: What is the single greatest mistake that the Dyster administration made in the past eight years?

A: That's an easy one to point out, the handling of the casino revenue. Here we were with an annual city minimum of more than \$20,000,000 in casino money and yet we're now running a \$65 million debt and \$7.6 million budget deficit! That's incredible and yet I don't see where city hall – the elected officials or employees charged with management – is the least bit concerned. Raises still go to department heads, stipends, overtime, consulting contracts, endless work change orders and casino money pushed out the door by the millions as if the dollars were being printed in Mayor Dyster's office. Where's the media editorials? The outraged voters? The state intervention?

Q: Is there a return to the world of politics in your future?

A: I enjoy being away from it. I do miss the sense of doing good and of trying to move the city forward, but the back biting and small mindedness are things that I'm happy to have left behind. I am intrigued a little bit at the thought of serving on a state level someday. Maybe the Assembly. John Ceretto's seat is open next year, you never know.

## NIAGARA FALLS REPORTER

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# Train Station Set To Open With One Tenant, No Museum Here?

**Mike Hudson**

Niagara Falls – With the city's new train station and Underground Railroad Heritage Museum ready to open by the end of May, a couple of questions linger.

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

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

With just five months to go before the train station is ready to open in the Old Customs House on Whirlpool Street, it seems highly unlikely that any sort of meaningful exhibit will be ready on opening day.

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

Genuine artifacts connected with the Civil War and slavery in particular are at a premium, difficult to obtain and expensive. DeSantis didn't make clear exactly what he



Niagara Falls has built a 20,000 square foot train station for a city that gets on average 64 passengers per day.... The costs are expected to far exceed the revenue generated. This rendering by Wendel – the designers of the station – accurately reflect that this is going to be a big mainly empty building – which taxpayer will pay to heat and maintain.

expects people to pay to see.

Other than the proposed museum, the 22,000 square foot train station facility only has one other tenant – Amtrak itself. Though DeSantis and Niagara Falls Mayor Paul Dyster made much of the ability to attract other tenants like offices and restaurants to the facility, none has come forward.

This is perhaps due in part to the fact that very few people ride the train into and out of Niagara Falls. On an average day, just 64 passengers use the service, most of them commuters going to work in Buffalo.

While DeSantis told the city Council this week that costs at the new station will be

shared 50-50 with Amtrak, no contract to that effect has been approved by the Council, and there is no reason to believe the money-losing passenger train service will need any more space than the 800 square feet it currently occupies off of Lockport Road.

A small corner of the massive building will be more than adequate for all of the railroad's needs.

City Controller Maria C. Brown said officials are in the process of setting up a separate stand-alone fund for the train station, rather than mixing operational costs into the general budget.

"Everybody will see clearly the revenues



It is anticipated that the new train station will have more pigeons than riders. And that's not counting calling Niagara Falls taxpayers "pigeons."

it generates and the expenses associated with it," Brown said. "We are hoping the train station generates enough revenue to sustain its expenditures."

Maintenance, utilities, security and other expenses will be the responsibility of the Niagara Falls taxpayers for generations to come or until whenever money-losing passenger train service finally comes to an end, whichever comes first.

While the \$41 million cost of the new train station was largely justified by the possibility of high speed rail coming to New York State, the chances of such a development have gotten more and more remote.

Congress pulled the plug on funding high speed rail in the Northeast Corridor and, in California, the only other serious effort anywhere in the country to build high speed rail is all but dead amid huge cost overruns.

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# City Spends Millions To Subsidize State's Usa Niagara Development

## Mike Hudson

Niagara Falls is home to one of the world's great natural wonders and draws more than 8 million tourists a year. It is also plays host to the Robert Moses Niagara Power Plant, which supplies much of the East Coast with electricity and generates hundreds of millions of dollars each year in revenues.

Municipal government here taxes home and business owners at a rate in relation to property values that is the highest in the state.

And finally, there is the Seneca Niagara Casino, a tourist attraction in its own right and one of the most popular casinos in the region, with a take reputed to be more than \$1 million a day.

So how could a small city with fewer than 50,000 residents have all that going for it and still be so broke that officials are begging the state Financial Restructuring Board for Local Governments for a bailout? How could six out of every 10 residents be so poor as to be collecting public assistance?

Poor fiscal management on the part of local public officials cannot be ruled out.

Looking through the online posting of

casino revenues and expenditures, one number sticks out like a sore thumb, prompting a question from even the most casual observer: Why is one of the poorest municipalities in the entire nation subsidizing, to the tune of \$1.5 million a year, a state agency created to better the local economy rather than draining it?

USA Niagara was created in January 2001 by then-Gov. George Pataki to promote economic development and tourism in Niagara Falls. "We are beginning a new chapter for Niagara Falls," Pataki said at the time. "USA Niagara ... will bring a brighter and stronger future for Niagara Falls. (It) worked in Times Square. We will use this same 'Times Square' energy and vision to revitalize Niagara Falls."

Various funding formulas have been employed to continue its existence, generally with the people of Niagara Falls footing the bill. The exception to that was in 2013-2014, when former city councilman Sam Fruscione led a rebellion that cut funding to the agency.

Fruscione argued that, since the state was already taking 75 percent of the revenue generated from the Seneca Niagara Casino, it could fund its own agency. Former councilmen Bob Anderson and Glenn Choolokian

agreed.

Remarkably, USA Niagara did not go out of business, and continued doing whatever it is it does without money from the city. By 2014, however, Fruscione was defeated in his reelection bid and Niagara Falls Mayor Paul Dyster once again began throwing money at the agency.

This time, however, he offered the state

agency \$1.5 million out of casino cash.

To gauge how successful USA Niagara has been in its stated mission of promoting economic development and tourism and revitalizing the city, just take a look around. After 15 years of effort, the city is poorer, there are fewer jobs, more abandoned buildings and less business.

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# Trademarking History: Glynn, Jacobs Become Owners Of American Heritage

**Mike Hudson**

On June 30, 1864, President Abraham Lincoln signed a bill creating the nation's first federal park at Yosemite, in northern California.

Now Delaware North owner Jeremy Jacobs Sr., who ran concessions in the park from 1993 to 2016, says a trademark he filed makes him the owner of the words "Yosemite National Park."

The first boat christened The Maid of the Mist was launched in the waters below Niagara Falls in 1846.

In 1993, Maid of the Mist Steamboat Co. owner Jimmy Glynn, who has run a tour boat concession at Niagara Falls since 1971, filed a trademark on the words "Maid of the Mist."

Both Jacobs and Glynn remain as concessionaires at Niagara Falls State Park, with Jacobs handling the retail and dining venues, including the Top of the Falls restaurant, and Glynn running his tour boat business.

Two questions arise.

The first: How can a name that has been in common usage for a century or more suddenly become one person's property?

And the second: Who holds the trade-

mark on the words "Niagara Falls State Park"?

The two businessmen never talked much about their trademark filings until they lost their lucrative concessions – Glynn's Ontario business to Hornblower Cruises in 2012 and Jacobs' Yosemite monopoly to longtime rival Aramark last year.

Now Jacobs is suing the federal government for \$54 million, which his attorneys claim is the value of the "intellectual property" he owns at Yosemite.

That property includes place names that were used by Native Americans long before the arrival of the white man, the lawsuit claims.

The park service announced it will change the names of some of the most beloved attractions in the park, at least temporarily, despite the fact that the government – on behalf of the people of the United States – owns all of the properties in question.

Even Curry Village, a collection of cabins near the center of the park that has carried the same name since the 1800s, will become Half Dome Village.

Also affected will be Yosemite Lodge at the Falls, which will become Yosemite Valley Lodge, the Wawona Hotel, becoming Big Trees Lodge and Badger Pass Ski Area, be-

coming Yosemite Ski & Snowboard Area.

Public reaction on the part of Californians has been brutal.

"While I applaud the National Park Service's vigorous legal challenge to Delaware North, it hasn't gone far enough," wrote Jon Merritt in a letter to the Los Angeles Times Saturday. "For starters, instead of changing the name of the legendary Ahwahnee Hotel to the Majestic Yosemite Hotel, how about naming it the Boycott Delaware North Hotel?"

Merritt's letter was but one of hundreds received since the story broke late last week, Times editors reported.

According to the US Trademark and Patent Office, Delaware North holds more than 30 trademarks related to various parks and venues, including the Space Shuttle Atlantis and the US Astronaut Hall of Fame. The company also applied for the trademark to the sole word "Yosemite" on Sept. 30, 2015.

It could not be determined at press time whether "Niagara Falls" or "Niagara Falls State Park" were among the trademarks.

One more question. Can the words "United States of America" be trademarked and thus privately owned?



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# Dyster Veto Stops Tompkins' Council Health Insurance Cost Saving Measure

**Anna Howard**

Niagara Falls - It didn't take long for freshman councilman Kenny Tompkins to get a close up look at Mayor Paul Dyster's veto pen. And from what we're told Mr. Tompkins is not pleased at seeing the mayor - with a stroke of his seldom seen veto pen - strike down the councilman's resolution, a resolution ending the health insurance benefit for all future members of the city council.

Tompkins' resolution ending the taxpayer paid health care had been passed in a 3-2 vote at a council meeting two weeks ago. Tompkins, Chairman Andrew Touma and council member Kristen Grandinetti supported the resolution, while Council members Charles Walker and Ezra Scott opposed passage.

A super majority of four votes is now needed to defeat the Dyster veto. That super veto looks highly unlikely.

There's no reason to believe that Walker and Scott have changed their minds and if past proves precedent we'd be surprised to see the blindly loyal Kristen Grandinetti forsake her mayor to join Touma and Tompkins in a veto override attempt. That means the 3-2 vote that passed the resolution will likely flip 2-3 as the resolution dies.

Sources that spoke to us for this exclusive story have told us that Mayor Dyster put his veto pen to paper in the belief that he was doing the right thing in keeping future coun-



Kenny Tompkins found out how hard it is to make any cuts in the spendthrift Dyster administration.

cil members eligible for taxpayer paid health insurance - which costs the city \$17,000 for a family plan. The part time council members are paid \$12,000 annually.

Yes, we are told, that the mayor who has repeatedly banged the gong of "the cost of health insurance is the real reason why my budget is deeply in deficit" is now saying that "we need to offer the health insurance in order to attract good council candidates."

Never mind that the council positions are elected and are not civil service or contractual employees. Never mind that the council members are part time employees and that all other part time positions in city government are never provided with health insurance. Never mind that there's absolutely no way the

mayor can justify his veto on any logical or common sense ground.

With a simple stroke of his pen Mayor Dyster has stopped the first legitimate cost saving measure ever taken, much less even suggested, by a council member in recent memory.

Tompkins' reasoning behind the sponsoring of the resolution, he said, was "I don't think part time elected officials should get full time benefits. In the private sector for most full time positions the employers don't pay health insurance."

Touma is said to support Tompkins initiative and is said to be trying to persuade Walker or Scott to flip.

\*\*\*

Recently Tompkins challenged the mayor on an unrelated comment.

The mayor, in arguing before the council that he needed a raft of change orders - increases over and above the regular contract a contractor has with the city, said that change orders are 50 - 50. That is they benefit the contractor half the time and benefit the city half the time.

Tompkins who is familiar with the contracting field scoffed at the idea as if the mayor was being disingenuous.

Tompkins said "Change orders benefit the contractor almost all the time. Some contractors make their profits through change orders."



"Remember that when you leave this earth, you can take with you nothing that you have received--only what you have given."  
— Francis of Assisi

## Dyster Administration Has Little Interest In Revealing Casino Account Growth

**Anna Howard**

While great attention has been paid to the condition of the city's casino revenue account, virtually nothing has been asked, much less revealed, as to how the city is using the interest earned by the many millions of casino revenue dollars that have been received and banked over the years.

The Reporter has repeatedly called for the city to post all information regarding the casino interest account and how it's been spent or invested. After all those are taxpayer dollars. So far our request for simple and straight forward fiscal transparency has fallen on deaf ears. We're not surprised. Our repeated recommendation that the entire city budget be posted in real time on the city website has met with similar stony silence.

# How Has The Casino Revenue Been Abused, Let Us Count The Ways

**Anna Howard**

What do tree stump removal, police overtime, engineering consultants, penguins, pothole patching and the train station all have in common? They were all supported with casino revenue over recent years.

It's strange, but true, that every one of these things - and a whole lot more - were deemed by mayor and council as meeting the casino revenue expenditure prime directive: The city share of casino revenue must be spent on matters directly related to economic development. While that Albany directive is on the books the observance of the directive has never been supported with a definitive written casino revenue spending policy. Consequently the definition of "economic development" remains unsettled and conveniently cloudy for the spendthrift Dyster administration.

The mayor has proposed more than \$100 million in casino cash expenditures. And he has consistently received council approval for those expenditures even though an examination as to the propriety of the spending has never taken place. Mayor Dyster has had more than eight years to formulate a transparent casino spending policy. Why hasn't he done so? Why hasn't the council demanded such a policy?

That being said we're now going to take a brief look at some of the highlights - or low-



Mayor Paul Dyster has had a unique opportunity among mayors in the nation. He has had \$183 million in casino revenue to spend to build up a city. Critics say he has squandered it. The result is a city that is worse than before he was first elected mayor in 2008

lights - of only a small portion of the casino revenue spending that's occurred in recent years.

In 2010 there was \$286,000 in ice pavilion change orders, ZOOM Team \$84,000, part time former city employee grant writer \$30,000, economic development consultant \$72,000, Blues Festival \$20,000, Hard Rock concerts \$179,500, library window blinds \$5,568, library book drop \$6,226, Greenway Wild Ones consultant \$25,000.

2011 saw the pothole killer hired at \$69,999, bridges painted at \$163,060, \$110,000 was directed to "downtown police and paddy wagon," pothole zipper \$110,000, 72nd Street fire hall roof \$89,500, ZOOM project \$83,704 and \$180,053, Holiday Market \$225,000, tree removal \$75,000, Hard Rock concerts \$150,000, New Year's Eve Hard Rock concert \$40,000, library fire alarm \$18,295, business district coordinators \$45,805.

In 2012 Hard Rock concerts \$150,000, pothole killer returned at \$140,000, Military Affairs Council \$40,000, traffic signal and flashing light \$80,000, DPW street openings \$100,000.

2013 brought a Sal Maglie light tower repair \$20,000, police vehicles and equipment \$593,000, city computers \$300,000, ice pavilion alarm \$30,645, tree removal \$75,000, DPW equipment \$1,042,259, Wrobel Towers city parking lot poles \$90,000, Custom House change order \$105,662.

2014 rebid the train station at \$350,000, city portion of train station \$4 million, \$341,266 for the police narcotics unit, \$65,000 to a parking consultant, \$2,124,449 for trash totes, \$196,000 for the Zoom Team, \$600,616 fire truck, \$58,558 SWEET team, \$100,000 Buffalo Ave landscaping, \$659,810 Carnegie Building roof, \$150,000 Community Missions, \$468,720 city hall parking lot, \$500,000 Isaiah 61 fire hall, \$200,000 police

overtime, \$35,000 part time grant writer, \$250,000 golf course clubhouse roof.

Spending continued in 2015, in part, with \$50,000 for Centennial Circle, NFC grants and loans \$670,000, 72nd Street water line repair \$438,516, tree removal \$129,204, USA Niagara payment \$1.5 million, city hall phones \$160,730, police cars \$242,938, parking ramp security guards \$92,400, \$94,000 engineering consultant, skate park design \$9,000, planning director stipend \$12,645, part time grant writer \$35,000, planning department wages \$191,461, ZOOM \$163,800, SWEET \$21,235, Aquarium penguins \$150,000.

While 2016 is not yet one month old the mayor and council recently committed \$180,500 of casino cash for police vehicles.

The above is but a snapshot at how the casino revenue has been abused in recent years. But it provides an accurate, if frightening, picture as to the illogical method in which the funds are expended as measured against the "economic development" prime directive. The money is spent randomly at the direction Mayor Dyster who last year proclaimed himself to be the casino revenue "gatekeeper." With the mayor as gatekeeper and the rubber stamp council failing to do its job as the fiscal watchdog the city now finds itself in dire straits with the casino reserve account essentially empty and future casino revenue falling more each quarter.



# Mayor Dyster Does Have A Casino Revenue Spending Plan: Spend Until The Money Is Gone!

**Anna Howard**

Last week the city reported that their share of casino revenue had dropped once again. While the city's handle of the annual slot drop peaked around \$22 million in recent years the new annual casino revenue reality is now about \$5 million less...and dropping still.

The city's announcement of the tumbling numbers drew near audible gasps as reported in a Niagara Gazette article that featured quotes from the council chair, the city controller and a member of the council's Finance Review Panel.

The Reporter is questioning the sincerity of those gasps. That's because the Dyster administration has, for the last eight years, been blowing through the taxpayers' casino cash like a Washington politician on an overseas junket. To pretend that this spending suddenly comes as a surprise is to insult the intelligence of the residents.

The Reporter contends that the Dyster administration likes the wasteful expenditure of casino revenue just fine the way it is. In fact it was the anticipated casino revenue windfall that brought candidate Paul Dyster's deep pocketed Buffalo supporters to the table in the spring of 2007 as Dyster planned his run for mayor. It was the scent of the millions in casino cash that drew the cast of Buffalo characters to the pre-election table. We contend that the casino money was the honey that attracted the Buffalo bees.

And so when we read that city employees, elected officials, and finance panel mem-

bers are now proclaiming that "Oh goodness, the casino cash is running out and we don't have a spending plan in place! How did that happen?" we want to gag. Such is the breathtaking level of hypocrisy.

The Dyster casino cash plan was to not have a plan to begin with. The only "plan" was to spend the money as fast as it came in because there were construction companies, lawyers, consultants and politically connected hangers on waiting in the wings with their hands out, hoping to access the taxpayers' millions in casino revenue. The sudden false claim that there's now a sincere realization that there's no casino spending plan in place achieves record heights in dishonesty.

The Reporter has written time and again about the immediate need for two things: a casino revenue spending policy and a casino revenue spending plan. The policy and the plan are different, one from the other, just as a hand is different from a glove. And, just as a hand must fit a glove, the spending plan must fit the spending policy.



# Underground Railroad Interpretive Center Casino Funds Defy Transparency

**Anna Howard**

Niagara Falls – The Underground Railroad Commission has been receiving \$350,000 per year in dedicated casino revenue since 2009. At \$350,000 per year for seven years that's a total of \$2,450,000. The money is set aside annually out of the casino revenue account to support and promote the Underground Railroad Interpretive Center. The center was supposed to open its doors five years ago but failed to do so after the project director was mysteriously removed from his city hall job by Mayor Paul Dyster.

Where's the \$2,450,000? Who's managing it, what bank account is it in, has any, or all of it, been spent, and if so spent on what? Sources close to the Underground Railroad Commission have expressed concerns that the dedicated interpretive center funds may have

been used to support the train station project. Has that happened? If so it would appear to be a clear violation of the terms of the casino revenue disbursement agreement.

As for the Underground Railroad Commission it's been totally silent for the past five years and there's a question as to whether the organization even exists anymore. Is the organization's membership current in its appointments and is the commission operating within their bylaws? If the organization is defunct how can the casino revenue funds continue to be directed to a non existent organization?

As for the interpretive center it has yet to open its doors and remains – as far as anyone knows – mired in a years long contentious lawsuit between the city and the Resatarits Company regarding work performed during the rehabilitation of the interpretive center building.



Five years after it was due to open, the Underground Railroad Interpretive Center on Whirlpool remains a mystery as to maintenance expenditures, exhibits and how much was really spent [and will be spent] to complete it.

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# Landmark Delaware North Trademark Battle Harkens Back To Maid Of The Mist

## Mike Hudson

Delaware North owner Jeremy Jacobs Sr. has apparently taken a page from Maid of the Mist owner Jimmy Glynn's playbook.

Friends, the pair provide concessions at Niagara Falls State Park.

Back in 2011, as Glynn was fighting against an open bidding process for his Canadian tour boat concession lease, it was revealed that he had copyrighted the name "Maid of the Mist." He publicly threatened to take the name with him if he lost.

Today, Jacobs is locked in a similar trademark battle with the US government, a standoff that the National Park Service said has forced it to rename a landmark hotel and other historic sites at Yosemite National Park in California.

A Jacobs company, Delaware North Co. Parks and Resorts at Yosemite, has run lodges, restaurants, and retail outlets at the historic park in California since 1993. After losing the concession contract last year, the company sued, seeking compensation for what it says is \$51 million of intellectual property, including trademarks on everything from ski and golf areas to the Yosemite National Park name itself.

Federal attorneys have valued the intellectual property at about \$3.5 million, and said that DNC Parks' estimate "grossly exaggerated and improper."

But the National Park Service is concerned that the dispute could prevent it from using the names when the contract is turned over to the new concession operator, Aramark, on March 1.

That concern prompted Yosemite National Park Superintendent Don Neubacher to announce last week that he is changing the names of some well-known facilities at the park, including the famed Ahwahnee Hotel, which was built in 1927.

Scott Gediman, a spokesman for Yosemite, said the park would change the names to avoid liability or the potential for closures as a result of the ongoing court battle.

"This is not something we did willingly," said Gediman, noting that the government was fighting to reclaim the old names in hopes that they someday will be restored.

While DNC Parks inherited some of the trademarks when it won the Yosemite contact back in the 1993, it registered others in ensuing years without the government's knowledge, according to Gediman.

"They did it all quietly and they did not inform us," he said.

But Todd Merry, chief marketing officer for Delaware North, DNC Parks' parent company, said the suggestion of underhandedness "completely misrepresents" the company's actions.

"We didn't wake up in 2012 and say let's trademark the hotel," he said. "We bought the trademark when we bought the company."

According to its lawsuit, DNC Parks was required to purchase the assets of its prede-



Buffalo billionaire Jeremy Jacobs Sr. is suing the federal government for \$51 million based on the fact that he trademarked a number of place names in Yosemite National Park despite the fact that the names had been in use for as long as a century or more.

cessor, Curry Co., when it won the Yosemite contract. The lawsuit claims the park service awarded Aramark the new contract without the same requirement.

Delaware North also has concession contracts for nine other national parks, including Yellowstone and Grand Canyon.

The company is claiming that the names of many historic sites within the park actually belong to them, not to the American people. Places such as Curry Village, Ahwahnee Lodge, Wawona Hotel, and the popular Half Dome logo. Delaware North is even claiming that the name Yosemite National Park belongs to them.

Many in the public are outraged.

"It would totally change the experience to visit Yosemite without these names," Jeanne O'Neil, who has visited the park annually for 36 years, told the Los Angeles Times. "I would expect this decision to create a huge public outcry."

Julie Mastrine, a 24-year-old activist at Care2, a San Francisco technology company that is hosting a petition urging Delaware North to drop its claim to the names, agreed.

"Yosemite is an iconic public asset. Its names exist in people's hearts," she said. "It's preposterous that anyone can claim to own them."

Niagara Falls Reporter Publisher Frank Parlato voiced similar sentiments when Glynn laid claim to the Maid of the Mist name.

"The name 'Maid of the Mist' has been in use continuously at the Niagara Parks since 1885, long before Glynn started using it," Parlato wrote. "For him to claim the name is outrageous."

Parlato pointed out that the first boat named Maid of the Mist was launched in 1846. It was not a tour boat, but a ferry service between Canada and America. It was not operated by Glynn's company or Glynn's ancestors.

By 1854, the ferry boat became a tourist attraction, after the opening of the Whirlpool



The U.S. Parks Service has been forced to change the name of the historic Hotel Ahwahnee in Yosemite National Park due to a \$51 million trademark lawsuit filed by Buffalo billionaire Jeremy Jacobs Sr.'s Delaware North Co.

Rapids Bridge. This lasted seven years before it ceased operations in 1861.

There were no boat tours for 34 years, until 1895, nine years after the state park opened. These boats were also called Maid of the Mist. Various owners operated these boats, always calling them Maid of the Mist.

Glynn's "Maid of the Mist Steamboat Co. Ltd." was formed in 1971, when Glynn bought the assets, including two boats of the former, similarly named Maid of the Mist boat company.

In 1993, however, Glynn moved to take the name away from the people. He filed a U. S. trademark application stating (as is required for trademark) that he had sole and exclusive use of the name. He signed a U. S. trademark application falsely stating he had sole and exclusive use of the name, four years after he signed a lease with Ontario that stated he did not "claim any interest in or rights in the words 'Maid of the Mist.'"

The Delaware North trademarking case in Yosemite won national attention last week when an article published by Outside magazine prompted the Sierra Club to launch a campaign Friday demanding that DNC withdraw its lawsuit.

The club encouraged its 2.4 million members and supporters to write to Jacobs personally to tell him to drop the litigation, calling the case an instance of corporate greed by a company that is already benefiting from a lucrative public contract.

"These are public assets, names that belong to all Americans," said Dan Chu, a senior director at Sierra Club. "It is petty that having already made billions of dollars from selling food, merchandise, and lodging at our national parks to millions of visitors, Delaware North is essentially extorting taxpayers to allow Americans to keep what we already own."

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# Grandinetti's Bold Commentary On "Rape Culture" Hits Home



Whether you agree with her or not, with Niagara Falls Council member Kristen Grandinetti, at least you know where she stands.

Whether you agree with her or not, you've got to give Niagara Falls City Councilwoman Kristen Grandinetti credit. She speaks her mind, lets the chips fall where they may and apparently doesn't worry about what anyone thinks.

Last week, on her Facebook page, the kindergarten teacher posted a picture of a young woman,



Kristen Grandinetti posted this picture on her Facebook page. The intrepid council woman speaks her mind about women's issues and abortion rights.

naked from the waist up, with a cigarette in her hand. Some white makeup is covering her nipples and the words "STILL NOT ASKING FOR IT" are scrawled across her torso with Magic Marker.

Such demonstrations are a commentary about rape, pointing out the fact that no matter how scantily or seductively a woman is dressed, it is never an invitation for unwanted sexual advances.

"Point proven ..." Grandinetti wrote. "I am saddened and disgusted by the remarks made by men that I know ... some of you have daughters. It is abundantly clear that this issue is still nowhere near being resolved."

Still, some women in Grandinetti's audience missed the point.

"I don't get it!!!" wrote Paula Placek.

A former student of Grandinetti's jumped in to clarify the situation.

"Even though she's not wearing a shirt doesn't mean she's asking for it," wrote April Joyce. "No one ever asks for it no matter what their wearing."

Grandinetti expressed pride in her former pupil's perceptiveness.

"That's my girl April Joyce," she wrote. "You did learn something from me."

The "Still Not Asking For It" meme exploded into prominence after Australian photographer Rory Banwell released a series of powerful black and white photographs by that name. The photos depict both men and women emblazoned with that phrase and others, including "Fashion Is Not An Invitation" and "Alcohol Is Not An Excuse" in what Banwell described as a "commentary on the rape culture."

Banwell says she started the project in 2014, after she found out she and her husband Alex were expecting a baby girl. "Someone actually said to Alex that it was 'time to buy a gun' and we were so

disappointed that people's initial reactions were that we would need to protect her, purely because of her gender," she told Daily Mail Australia.

In Niagara Falls, Banwell's message found an eager audience in Grandinetti, who has never been

shy about sharing her views with the public via Facebook posting. During the runup to the election, the councilwoman abstained from posting her sometimes controversial views at the behest of Niagara Falls Mayor Paul Dyster, who was running for reelection.

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# Council Meeting “Walk On” Resolutions Come In Several Sizes And Shapes

**Anna Howard**

The Reporter was pleased to see freshman council member Ezra Scott decline to support Mayor Dyster’s attempt to walk on a surprise resolution at the recent council meeting. The resolution aimed to tap the city till for up to \$75,000 to support the hosting of a meeting of the Great Lakes Council Initiative. The mayor sits on the board of that organization.

We give high marks to Mr. Scott in recognition of his reluctance to spend taxpayer cash on short notice with insufficient information. That being said we can assure the councilman that this won’t be the last time he’s presented with late or deficient resolutions and requests for expenditures.

The Reporter has been watching this shameful game of late resolutions and last minute cash grabs at the biweekly council meetings for years. The Dyster administration has raised this misleading legislative technique to an art form.

We’ve identified and named the three most common walk on ploys. They’re explained below and we encourage Mr. Scott to be on the lookout for them.

The basic “We couldn’t get our act to-



Ezra Scott balked at mayor’s recent council walk on.

gether on time so we had to walk it on late.” More often than not this walk on results from a bureaucratic screwup or simple laziness of staff. This happens more than it should but is never identified as such.

Usually this walk on gambit is justified with the cover story of “staff was working

really, really hard on this and the lateness couldn’t be avoided.”

The always nefarious “Look over there not over here as we walk this controversial item on in the hope that no one notices.” This is the bread and butter move by confabulating city hall denizens as they present an item as

an unavoidable “walk on” when the reality is that it’s been prepared days if not weeks earlier. By keeping it off the agenda and presenting it as a walk on it skirts any previous scrutiny. Historically these items are the result of a charade orchestrated by the mayor and the council chairman, if not the council majority.

This third scheme, known as the “We had the actual subject item on the agenda all along, we’re just presenting the supporting documentation late” is incredibly crafty and is only used for matters of supreme non transparency...such as the Hamister Hotel project. In November 2013 official approval of the Hamister contract was on the agenda. However the contract wasn’t presented publicly until it was walked on at the council meeting. Yes, it occurred that way. A contract of hundreds of pages with more clauses than a Santa convention was – as mayor and corporation counsel offered the document with straight faces – dropped in front of the council for approval. The council ok’d the document and the rest is history...no hotel, 27 months later.

Councilman Scott saw his first “walk on” resolution two weeks ago. But it won’t be his last. If he keeps his eyes open while relying on common sense blended with a healthy dose of skepticism he should do just fine.

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# New Automated Parking System On Goat Island Stiffs Senior Citizens

**James Hufnagel**

Whether exposing the crooked Glynn Maid of the Mist monopoly, criticizing the Niagara Falls State Park “Landscape Improvements” plan which ruined Three Sisters Islands, sounding the alarm on the Parks Police barracks which was slated for the edge of the scenic Niagara Gorge, rallying the public against the demolition of the 1864 Carriage Barn of DeVeaux Woods State Park, documenting how the south Robert Moses Parkway upgrade serves to further isolate the city from its waterfront and tourist assets, or even complaining about closed restrooms at Whirlpool and Devil’s Hole State Parks during the off-season, the Niagara Falls Reporter has served as the de facto watchdog of State Parks for over a decade.

It’s an important role.

Every year, eight million tourists access Niagara Falls State Park, most driving in from north and south on the Robert Moses Parkway. They park on one of nearly 1500 parking spaces in the park, eat at Top of the Falls restaurant (which resembles more a cafeteria than an actual restaurant) or one of several Delaware North food and ice creams stands scattered around the grounds. They might opt to ride Maid of the Mist or clamber out on the creaky wooden scaffolding of the Cave of the Winds, after which they are herded through one of two gift and souvenir shops. Then, in keeping with the 3-4 hour duration visit that is intrinsic to the park’s business plan (which this newspaper also brought to light) they pile back into the family minivan and leave without having entered or spent any money in the city of Niagara Falls, one of the poorest cities in the entire state.

This evening at the Niagara Falls Conference Center, New York State Parks and the NYS Dept. of Transportation will hold a



Parking lots are big business for Albany on Goat Island in the state-owned and operated Niagara Falls State Park. With approximately 1500 parking spaces at \$10 a shot, and an average visit of 3-4 hours per vehicle, pretty soon we’re talking real money.

“hearing” on what to do about decaying Olmsted-inspired bridges connecting to Goat Island in the park. These bridges were built over a century ago by craftsmen, and the carefully-constructed stoneworks should have lasted a thousand years. Instead, heavy construction equipment, like bulldozers and dump trucks, pounded their way over these bridges over the years en route to construction activities in the park, hastening the deterioration of these stately structures.

If tonight’s session follows the recent pattern, the public will wander among poster boards for an hour, listen to a canned presentation and then submit scribbled comments on little cards, which end up in the round filing cabinet after everyone goes home.

Fact is, we’re hearing more and more complaints about State Parks’ exploitative and corrupt practices in many different venues, from conversations in diners and bars,

comments at public meetings and on social media like Facebook.

For example, Chris Zollman commented, “...all the work that’s been done has taken away from the natural beauty of the place. I’ve walked out in there on the old pathways that hometown people made. Now you can’t with all the wire fences and crap!”

Bob Sitgreaves added, “(I am) originally from the Falls, but live in the Florida panhandle... since retiring from the Navy in 1988; Went home September of 2014 for the 50th Class reunion of NFHS 64... (with regards to) the fencing on Three Sister Islands, extremely disappointed about it being unable visit places I use to love going when I was a kid. Used to go to a boulder overlooking the rapids on the middle Island and just sit there watching the water.”

Recently a gentleman who’s lived here for several years complained to us that his senior pass to park on Goat Island, where he and his wife used to enjoy the occasional stroll, is now virtually worthless, since the parking is handled by automatic ticket dispensers and pay stations which do not afford an opportunity to claim the senior discount. Previously, real human beings in booths handled the transaction, but State Parks has figured out how to screw even more locals out of a job and increase park revenues by means of the new, automated system.

According to the Niagara Falls State Park web site, “Driving to Niagara Falls State Park is a snap, with four parking lots available to easily accommodate park visitors. Each



Mayor Paul Dyster, as Greenway Commission Vice-Chair, presided at the meeting during which the Niagara Falls State Park “Landscape Improvements” Plan was approved, leading to expanded parking lots, fenced-off areas and increased commercialism in the former nature preserve.

lot is connected to the park’s attractions and lookout points via the Niagara Scenic Trolley system — experiencing Niagara Falls does not require long walks...” Especially given that you might accidentally wander into the city and spend of your vacation dollars there instead of Albany’s tourist trap.

Since this is the off-season and the parking lot booths aren’t staffed, “Visitors may also have their ticket validated for these programs at the Main Visitor Center or Cave of the Winds Center during normal operating hours.”

So if you’re retired and on a fixed income and want to get your senior discount, hoof it on over to the “Niagara Falls State Park Visitors Center”, as it’s been rebranded recently, during limited daylight hours to get your ticket validated.



Every vehicle that parks in the Niagara Falls State Park is one less that parks in the city, ensuring that tourist dollars are spent there instead of in the city of Niagara Falls, one of the poorest cities in the state.

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THE WORLD



# Cult Of NXIVM Series Part 10:

## Frank Parlato

When I was hired as a consultant by NXIVM, in September 2007, the company was embroiled in multiple litigations. In addition, reporters were sniffing around and writing stories about the “life coaching” group—mostly bad stories. Critics claimed NXIVM was a cult. One of my tasks was to explore how to stop the negative publicity and reshape it to something more positive.

At that time, students of NXIVM paid monthly membership fees of about \$180 per month, plus another \$2,000 to \$7,000 several times per year for special training seminars called “intensives” that were needed for one to advance in the course (one could also progress by bringing in new students).

Students who achieved success in these courses were given a rank indicated by sashes of various colors—similar to the colored belts in martial arts. Black being the highest; white the lowest. Keith Raniere, NXIVM’s founder and leader, gave himself the only black sash. This indicated to the students that he was the only one who had achieved the highest state of human consciousness, something Raniere called “unification,” a term he invented for himself, implying he was an enlightened human being who had reached the equivalent of Buddhism’s state of Nirvana.



At a secret week long gathering in Necker Island, NXIVM women imbibe liquor and learn the secrets of their master, Keith Raniere. If the two women closest to the camera look familiar it is because you may have seen them on TV; They are actresses Kristin Kreuk and Allison Mack, longtime devotees and purported harem members.

In fact, NXIVM teachers, mostly women, professed that Raniere was like a Buddhist monk living beyond the lust of the senses. Living in near seclusion, he needed nothing. He came out only because he cared about the welfare of his students.

However, as a consultant living in the NXIVM Village, I was close at hand both day and night and I soon discovered that Raniere was anything but a monk. It was apparent that Raniere had something like a harem of a doz-

en or more intelligent, attractive, well dressed, always slender, always vegetarian women, generally with long, lustrous hair. These were consenting women in their late 20’s, 30’s and even 40’s, who evidently knew about each other. Many of the women were the very teachers who were telling NXIVM students that Raniere was like a celibate monk.

It might have been a challenge for me personally to rehabilitate NXIVM and Raniere’s public image after discovering that his students were being lied to. However, any challenge I might have faced became moot after I discovered something far more disturbing than his secret harem.

I discovered that Raniere had “lost” \$65.6 million of the Bronfman sisters’ money gambling in the commodities market. He claimed the money was lost in bad commodity trades. On top of that, Raniere advised the sisters to invest another \$26.3 million in a real estate deal in Los Angeles that he was handling with his friend Yuri Plyam. However, I



Seagram’s heiresses Clare Bronfman and Sara Bronfman onstage promoting the teachings of their master, Keith Raniere. Note Clare is wearing a NXIVM shirt. Raniere has guided the sisters into commodities and real estate ventures where \$100 million mysteriously disappeared. More money - none of it evidently reported to the IRS - has disappeared since the initial \$100 million which came from a trust fund. The Bronfman’s father, Edgar Bronfman Sr. died in 2013 leaving them large additional monies for Raniere’s schemes.

be too many questions. Raniere fired me and went on the attack using the Bronfman millions.

But one of his harem women, Barbara Bouchey was truly devastated by the discovery that the Bronfmans were being swindled. Bouchey was a NXIVM board member. She also owned a financial asset management company and had become the personal financial administrator to the Bronfman sisters. All the checks for all the Bronfman money lost were written by her company. Checks written at the direction of her lover and guru Keith Raniere with his assurances the money was being used wisely. Discovering \$100 million was lost, Bouchey assessed the situation. She was either a check writing scapegoat for Raniere’s thievery or Raniere was insanely reckless with Bronfman money and the sisters were too ignorant to see it or too spellbound with Raniere to care. Bouchey realized she’d been seduced into believing in a high-minded NXIVM Nirvana but it was really just a pedestrian world of ignorance, thievery and sex. She resigned from the board of NXIVM and led eight other women to leave also. All told, nine women – all major players in NXIVM - broke ties.

I was the first to tell the media about Raniere losing, or perhaps swindling, \$100 million belonging to the Bronfmans. Bouchey told it under oath in court proceedings. The Albany Times Union, Vanity Fair, The New York Observer, the New York Post, McLean’s and other media wrote stories about it. With so much press coverage why law enforcement never chose to investigate how \$100 million could simply disappear is a mystery which I am attempting to unravel.

Circling back around to our “unified” celibate monk, what also came out in court proceedings was Raniere’s secret sexual life. The



Sara Bronfman (r) at Necker Island. She rented the entire island for a week to promote the secret teachings of her master, Keith Raniere.

actually went to Los Angeles and discovered that the real estate deal was a scam and that the “friend” had stolen \$10 million from the Bronfmans.

I blew the whistle on the real estate deal; but when I discovered the real estate developer and the Los Angeles broker in Raniere’s commodities losses were the same person, Yuri Plyam, I started asking questions, may-

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# The Love Cult Of El-Sicko



Keith Raniere appears in a 2009 video where he claims he has had people killed.



Keith Raniere, teaching ethics, has an emotive moment on camera.

women who left NXIVM told their stories, then other women came forward. In 2012, Times Union reporter James Odat, wrote an excellent piece titled “In Raniere’s Shadow” (<http://goo.gl/v7FJgm>) where he interviewed a number of women who claim they were more Raniere’s sex victims than sex partners – including some who were under the age of consent at the time Raniere deflowered them.

Testimony in the court case strongly suggest Raniere has a gambling problem (using other people’s money) and that he’s both a sex addict and a sexual predator. And that the adoring harem that services Raniere is not enough for his sexual appetite. In fact, he enlists his harem women to act as wing women – to procure more and more women for his enjoyment.

After my falling out with Raniere he was able to secure an investigation of me by federal authorities. This is a pattern of harassment practiced against all NXIVM enemies. In response I began to investigate him and to also examine his manipulation of women.

When I worked for Raniere back in 2007-2008, I began to suspect that he want-

ed the litigation and the bad press they were getting. It was integral to his relationship with the women around him that there was always an air of sorrow for him and a sense that there were enemies everywhere. The women needed to constantly feel this fragile, beautiful man had to be protected.

Therapist Sandra Knauer writes in her book “Recovering From Sexual Abuse” that “Perpetrators make demands that require their victims to take care of them.” They also make their victims feel guilt and/or shame. Raniere is a master of both of these forms of manipulation.

In this way he drew Clare and Sara Bronfman closer. In fact, he blamed Clare for the \$100 million in “losses” in commodities and real estate that he had handled. Raniere told her that her billionaire father, Edgar Bronfman Sr., crooked the commodities markets against him, bought off judges and the media. Clare was wracked with guilt. She felt she caused the trouble when she unwisely revealed her relationship with Keith to her father and she

wept over how her father was attacking the world’s most ethical teacher. The \$100 million lost was unimportant to her, what was important was her father was preventing the greatest teacher in the world from getting his message out.

Raniere’s harem women would also weep about the injustices they felt Keith was enduring. They had mystical interpretations that some world-shaking consequence was sure to come out his suffering since Raniere was so Christlike, his pain a Crucifixion.

Raniere, in fact, sought to have his harem believe that he was so spiritually sensitive that any bad thoughts or actions from them or attacks by the media might even cause him to die from grief. Fortunately, Raniere’s hyper-vulnerability didn’t prevent his enjoying nights of rollicking sex with one or more of the women.

The harem are only part of the story of Keith Raniere, sexual predator. To be continued.



Take up one idea. Make that one idea your life – think of it, dream of it, live on that idea. Let the brain, muscles, nerves, every part of your body, be full of that idea, and just leave every other idea alone. This is the way to success.

~ Swami Vivekananda



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# ‘The Rat’ Speaks About ‘Molester’ NXIVM Founder, Keith Raniere



A Family Affair: Keith Raniere ha-rem member Mariana Fernandez came from Mexico to Raniere quite young. Sources say for years she stayed as an illegal immigrant. Her sister Camilla and her brother Adrian, “Fluffy”, are current members of the cult. The eldest sister Daniela was imprisoned by Raniere in a NXIVM-owned house for more than a year. She escaped recently and returned to Mexico.

Next week we will feature shocking and lurid tales of people who were inside NXIVM.  
Here is an excerpt from comments one person calling herself “the Rat” made about Keith Raniere, founder of NXIM:  
“By the time they read this, I will have



“Fluffy” is the boy referred to in the story who allegedly filmed his own sisters with Raniere when they were underage.

gone back to Mexico with Edgar. I served as their pawn for too long (like Jim). I see my responsibility in the deaths of [Gina Hutchinson] in the monastery and Esther’s friend in Alaska (Kristen Snyder). ... It was suicide, so it could not be linked to me and Keith. But we still encouraged it to happen.  
At least those who died, had their lives ended. What will come out in the future will be the young girls (who are now women) who were taken advantage of (how old was Angel, Megan, Michelle and Rosie?) I think if someone looks into Kristen’s friend (who was under age,) and those other teenagers.... they will see that Raniere is a molester. That is what bothers me above all. Murder is one thing, their lives are over. When you take advantage of girls who work for you and play



Kristen Snyder committed suicide and left a note saying she was brainwashed by NXIVM. Her last words to her family before she died referenced Keith Raniere.

video games in an empty warehouse after hours (Keith knows what I am talking about) that is sick.  
If this isn’t enough, he did it again with the Fernandez girls. Their parents trusted [ha-



According to multiple sources, Gina Hutchinson was raped by Keith Raniere when she was 15. She committed suicide. Her sister Heidi says Raniere killed her.

rem member and Raniere wing woman] Pam Cafritiz with their care and you (Keith) molested them. What is worse is what you did to their brother. You made him tape it all. Not just what happened with the girls, but also what happen with your girlfriends. No young boy should be exposed to that.  
I am praying for the day that one of these victims comes forward...as they are innocent.... Those in the inner circle will know who wrote this because I will be gone by the time they read it. I thought what I was supporting was humanity...I recently realized it was just the perversion of a sick man.



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# Hearing On Bar Closing Debate Set As Paladino Weighs In

## Tony Farina

The public will finally get a chance to weigh in on the Erie County bar closing debate next Tuesday (Feb. 2) at 5:30 p. m. at a public hearing in the legislative chambers in Old County Hall, 92 Franklin St., Buffalo.

According to Majority Leader Joe Lorigo (C. – West Seneca), a vote on the resolution to close bars at 2 a. m., two hours earlier than the current 4 a. m. closing time, would follow on Thursday, Feb. 4. Lorigo was unable to get the support to bring the measure, sponsored by Ted Morton (R. – Cheektowaga), to a vote last week and scheduled the public hearing for next Tuesday.

A new voice has now entered the debate, and it belongs to none other than Carl Paladino, the Buffalo School Board member and prominent local developer who has distributed a strongly-worded email message urging support of the earlier closing time.

Paladino said there is no place for politics on the vote for the earlier bar closing proposal, saying it is far more than an ordinary, everyday conflict over policy.

“In Toronto, bars close at 1 AM,”

Paladino wrote. “We know it as a clean and wonderful place to visit with a vibrant and thriving bar and restaurant scene. People spend the same number of hours recreating but just go out and come home earlier and get up earlier the next day. They have learned how to make every day count in their lives. Do we think of New York City, New Orleans and Las Vegas the same way?”

Paladino fired a strong salvo at downtown businessman and restaurant owner Mark Croce in his email, describing him as a “greed-driven parasite preying on our community” who therefore is against the earlier closing time for his own interests.

The outspoken Paladino, a former gubernatorial candidate known for his in-your-face style, said the public still doesn’t know where the mayor, county executive, or common council stand on the issue but notes that recent polling shows 69 percent of the community favors the rollback and it also has the support of law enforcement.

“Except for Mark Croce and a few other quick buck in and out business owners, bar owners, responsible bar and restaurant owners will say that after 2 a.m. they deal with loser drunks and drug addicts preying



Carl Paladino  
...favors earlier bar closing times

on good young people who have told their parents that all of their friends are out so they must be out,” Paladino wrote.

Paladino also noted the “horrible pain” inflicted on the community by the current opiate drug epidemic, saying at one point “rolling back the bar closing time will not solve the drug problem but will bring awareness and jump start an effort to address the culture that is so destructive to our community.”

The idea to consider an earlier bar closing time was originally put forward by County Clerk Chris Jacobs who is expected to testify next Tuesday at the public hearing. While Morton introduced his proposal to roll back the hours before the election, not much has happened since and at this point, opponents may outnumber supporters when it comes to a vote. But a strong public showing on Tuesday could change the minds of legislators concerned about their own political future. Like it or not, issues like this usually are decided by politics, and if voters demand a change, it could have an impact.

Members of the public who wish to speak at the public hearing are asked to email Karin McCarthy (clerk) at [Karen.mccarthy@erie.gov](mailto:Karen.mccarthy@erie.gov), with speakers limited to three minutes.

## Closing Bars Earlier May Impact Business, Diminish Freedom Locally Enjoyed

### Frank Parlato

The issue of whether to roll back the bar closing time from 4 a. m. to 2 a. m. in Erie County is certainly a hot-button item right now.

The idea is a bad one – or, at best, hastily conceived.

Forget that this is a perfect example of an attempt by ‘big brother’ enthusiasts to impose their morality and an overreach, this is an attempt to enact a new regulation that would damage existing business and take away the choices people now have, whether they are late-working individuals or people coming from a neighboring community where the closings are earlier to enjoy some late night time with friends.

We should respect their right to make their own choices.

Restaurateur Mark Croce, mentioned in Carl Paladino’s email (see related story), could not be reached for comment. Buffalo Mayor Byron Brown was also not available for comment by press time.

County Executive Mark Poloncarz, through spokesman Peter Anderson, said, “The County Executive does not have an opinion on bar closing times; it is an issue that is up to the Legislature and Liquor Authority.”

Buffalo Councilman Rich Fontana is among those who are willing to speak out on the issue, and he told Artvoice that he favors leaving the closing time at 4 a. m., saying

“Buffalo is a bustling city, hoping to attract visitors from near and far, and I don’t think we should take a step backwards on providing opportunities to enjoy our city. And the rollback would absolutely hurt local businesses, and that’s not something we want to do.”

No matter the different views, informed sources say the measure is unlikely to pass the legislature at this time, with some saying part of the problem is that it was proposed by County Clerk Chris Jacobs with little advance warning and some lawmakers are reportedly miffed at Jacobs for surprising them with the item out of nowhere.

Majority Leader Joe Lorigo is known to be opposed to any rollback, and it appears he has the support to defeat the measure when it comes up for a vote Feb. 4.

That would be a victory for free enterprise, since people should be free to make their own decisions about their lives without crushing government regulation that, in this case, would have a serious negative impact on local businesses.

Consider: a bar owner has operated his business for decades closing at 4 a.m. He or she may actually depend on late business – as in, for example, a bar in Erie County close to the border of Niagara County where bars must close at 2 a.m. weekdays and 3 a.m. weekends.

A 2 a.m. closing in Erie County might mean that, instead of picking up Niagara County business, a Niagara County bar, with its 3 a.m. weekend closing, will now pick up

Erie County late night business.

Has there been a serious impact study – of what this will do to a raft of businesses? Are there other spin off businesses [late night restaurants, taxis, hotels, entertainers, vendors?] that will be impacted by a sudden change after decades of 4 a.m. Erie County bar closings?

Moralists may say this is not about money; this is about bettering society; that people who drink during the hours they oppose get into trouble, hurt society, whatever.

You can apply that same argument to drinking alcohol altogether or apply it to an even earlier hour. If drinking earlier is better, why not close bars at midnight? But suppose someone works until midnight?

The shortening of hours of operation of bars serves to take a freedom long enjoyed in Erie County away. A wild freedom perhaps, but the freedom to go out, say, at 2 a.m. and

go to a bar to meet a friend or perhaps meet someone new.

It may be a freedom you do not care to possess; it may be a freedom you do not wish others to possess. Perhaps you sincerely feel it is bad to have people purchasing drinks in public after the hour you want them to stop drinking.

Yet as you fight for the right and precedent to take away someone else’s freedom, one day they will use that precedent to take away yours.

The fact that this has come up for a vote when there is no known or publicly available peer reviewed local study that proves the urgent need to close bars earlier is outrageous. For a government to presume to dictate to owners of legitimate businesses a sudden change in their hours of operation is not how governments operating in a Republic are supposed to work.



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# Dec Announces Tax-Payer Funded ‘Free’ Fishing Clinics Across New York State

Anglers Encouraged to Safely Enjoy Ice Fishing on New York Waters as Ice Conditions Improve

A series of what the DEC calls “free ice fishing clinics” are scheduled across New York State to educate people about ice fishing and how to safely enjoy time on the ice, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Acting Commissioner Basil Seggos announced.

The clinics, conducted by DEC, and paid for by state taxpayers are part of Governor Andrew Cuomo’s I FISH NY program, which “aims to increase participation and awareness of the outstanding fishing opportunities in New York,” according to a press release issued by the DEC.

“... We are thrilled to provide these free

clinics to introduce residents and visitors to the sport and provide them with tips on how to safely enjoy this winter tradition,” Acting Commissioner Seggos said. “Anglers do need to allow solid ice to set up before venturing out for their fishing trip, and our clinics will provide information on how to check for appropriate conditions.”

While the fishing clinics are not free to taxpayer, participants can attend free of charge.

Governor Cuomo has also designated February 13-14, 2016 as the state’s first free fishing weekend where the requirements for a fishing license has been suspended. Residents and visitors age 16 and older will be able to fish the fresh or marine waters of New York State without a license.

A DEC issued fishing license is not required to participate in the “free” clinics. Children under 16 must be supervised.

Some of the “Free” fishing clinics include taxpayer purchased bait and tackle.

The clinics will be held: Canadarago Lake – Otsego County – January 30; Long Island – Brookhaven Town Beach on Lake Ronkonkoma – February 6; Cazenovia Lake – Madison County – February 6; Otsego Lake

– Otsego County – February 17; Casterline Pond – Cortland County – February 18; Carter’s Pond – Washington County – March 5.

Is government supposed to entertain the governed?

Rome fell. Rome had it’s Circus Maximus to entertain it’s citizens, at the Colosseum with lions and gladiators.

Modern government thinks spending taxpayer \$’s on concerts and subsidizing NFL football teams is appropriate.

Now there are taxpayer funded clinics to promote ice fishing.

Is this government’s domain? Is government supposed to care and tend to the entertainment of the governed?



## Ice Fish Without A Fishing License Feb. 13–14 In Nys

NYS Governor Andrew Cuomo designated February 13-14, 2016 as the state’s first weekend where the requirements for a fishing license has been suspended.

Residents and visitors age 16 and older will be able to fish the fresh or marine waters of New York State without a license.

The DEC wishes to remind anglers that four inches of ice is usually safe for accessing

ice on foot. Double that thickness for traveling on white ice. Ice thickness can vary on every body of water or within the same body of water. Anglers should be wary of areas of moving water. The presence of snowmobile tracks or footprints on ice should not be taken as evidence of safe ice conditions. Testing thickness of ice can be done with an auger or ice spud at various spots.

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thickness of ice can be done with an auger or ice spud at various spots.



## Second Amendment Watch: SCOPE, Sen. Ortt decry Orwellian ‘Terrorist Watch List’ Deprivation of Liberty, 2nd, 5th Amendments!

A joint statement from SCOPE and NYS Senator Robert Ortt regarding the “Terrorist Watch List” was released last week:

New York State Senator Jefery Klein and Assemblyman Thomas Abinanti have introduced legislation that, “Prohibits persons named on the ‘consolidated terrorist watch list’ from obtaining or renewing a license to carry, possess, repair and dispose of firearms.”

The Terrorist Watch List and its derivatives do not meet any reasonable standard for the deprivation of an individual’s rights. Individuals are placed on the list from within an unidentified bureaucracy based on vaguely defined and highly flexible standards of “reasonable suspicion.” It is a clear violation of the 5th Amendment’s guarantee of due process before depriving one of “life, liberty or property.”

We strongly oppose these legislative proposals. We believe that moving to deprive individuals of their most basic rights without any semblance of prior due process is so fundamentally wrong as to make a travesty of the legislative process. And to establish this deprivation on a system based on bureaucratic whim often devoid of articulable facts or

credible evidence compounds the problem.

When the government infringes upon the rights of its citizens it must be for an offense or action clearly provided for in law. With respect to firearms acquisition and possession, this is the National Instant Check System (NICS). NICS decisions are based on rules established by federal law, information in public records and judicial review. Individuals denied their right to a firearm know why and a clear process of appeal is provided.

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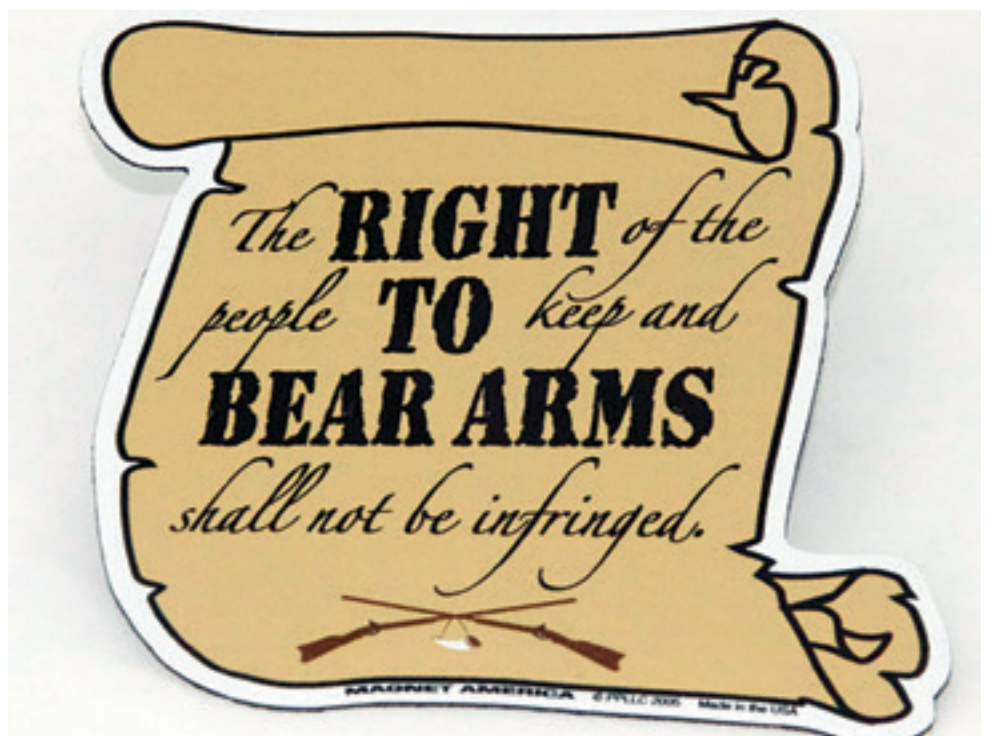
“When a citizen’s fundamental constitutionally guaranteed right to keep and bear arms can be infringed on mere suspicion, and inclusion on a secret government list, then none of our civil liberties are safe”, said Stephen J. Aldstadt, SCOPE president.

Senator Robert Ortt, NY 62nd Senate District said:

“As a combat veteran, there’s no one more committed to preventing terrorists from acquiring firearms or committed to protecting Americans. Any legislation or proposal attempting to tie the federal no-fly list to state firearm licenses will be impractical, ineffective, and most importantly, unconstitutional. The no-fly list, composed of notable ‘suspect-

ed terrorists’ like Ted Kennedy, Cat Stevens, or the former President of Bolivia, is widely known to be secretive and inaccurate. Citizens have no notice and limited recourse if they are improperly placed on the list. It’s annoying to be told you’re unable to enter an aircraft because your name is on a federal no-fly list managed by Washington bureaucrats;

and it appears unconstitutional for state police to show up at your house to confiscate your weapons because your name appears on such a list. The right to due process and the right to bear arms were the cornerstone of our founding. They still mean a great deal to me and a great deal to the law-abiding citizens of this country.”





## Emergency Preparedness Training At Lockport Library Saturday, Jan. 30

LOCKPORT, NY — New York National Guard troops, in conjunction with the New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services, will be presenting a two-hour disaster preparedness class at the Lockport Public Library, at 23 East Avenue, Lockport, at 11 am, on Saturday, Jan. 30. There is no charge for admittance.

The event is opened to everyone. No sign-up in advance is required.

The event is part of a state taxpayer funded Citizen Preparedness Corps Training Program. The class purports to show citizens what knowledge and tools they need to prepare for emergencies and disasters, to respond accordingly, and recover as quickly as possible to pre-disaster conditions.

The New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (DHSES), local emergency management personnel, and troops are conducting these training events across the state. Since February 2014, troops have held more than 600 events statewide; reportedly 54,000 people have attended.

The program covers a range of topics, like developing a family emergency plan, stocking up on supplies, and registering for NY-Alert, the statewide emergency alert system.

For more information on the program and emergency preparedness, visit: [www.prepare.ny.gov](http://www.prepare.ny.gov)

## Genesee Community College Offers Free-Admittance Seminar: Picking The Us President; Meant To Explain Caucuses And Primaries

BATAVIA, NY – Genesee Community College will host a free seminar: “Picking the United States President, Making Sense of the Caucuses and Primaries” to explain the process of nominating a candidate for president.

Questions such as “What is the difference between a caucus and a primary?” “Why is it important?” “How long will it take for each party to choose its nomi-

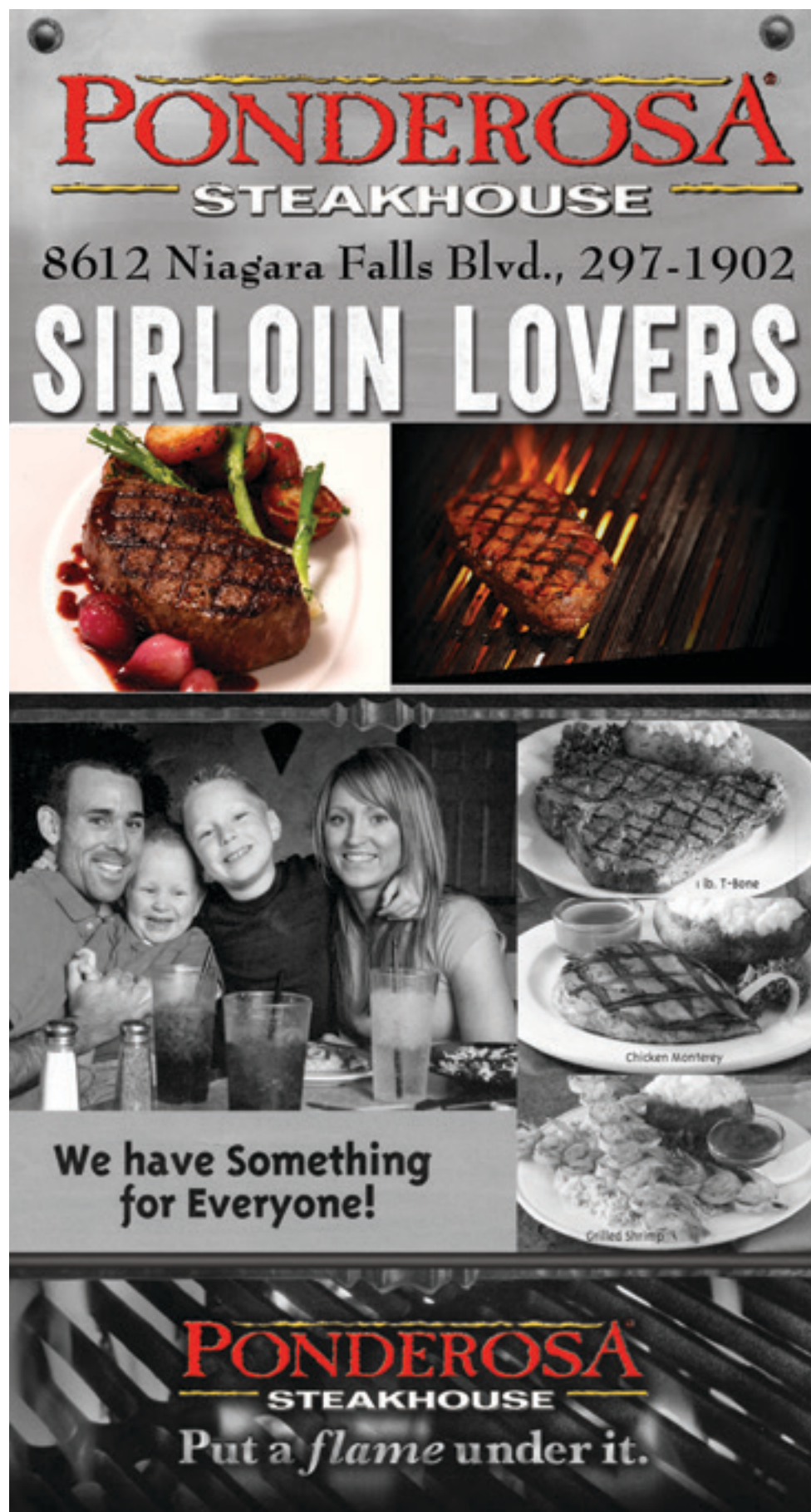
nee?” will be addressed by GCC Associate Professor Derek Maxfield, at 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, February 9 – the day of the New Hampshire Primary.

This presentation will be held in T102 of the Conable Technology Building and is FREE and open to the public.

The presentation will feature a discussion of how nominees accumulate delegates, the role of the media in the

nominating process, and what happens if no one has enough delegates to claim the nomination before the party conventions this summer.

The first official nominating contest for the president of the USA will be the Iowa Caucuses on February 1, 2016 followed by the New Hampshire Primary on February 9, 2016.



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

St Francis of Assisi



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# Only In NT: City Of North Tonawanda Website Could Use A Facelift



**Sweeney Payne**

North Tonawanda is nicknamed “The Lumber City” after its most prominent industry of the past. The legacy of the lumber companies is seen in historic mansions built by and owned by some prominent executives of lumber companies.

The most prominent legacy of the lumber days however is the environmental one, especially from arsenic used in the treating process of lumber. Between the mid-19th century and the 1970s, more than 150 companies produced lumber and wood products in NT.

The Herschell-Spillman Company manufactured carousels and amusement park rides until the 1950s after beginning as a producer of engines. An offshoot of that company, North Tonawanda Barrel Organ, acquired by the Rudolph Wurlitzer Manufacturing Company in 1909, became a world-famous manufacturer of organs, jukeboxes and other musical instruments.

Like many cities in the northern “rust belt” area, manufacturing declined in the late 20th century.

NT’s long history of manufacturing and construction put it in a high-risk category for asbestos exposure. Workers exposed to asbestos were at risk for mesothelioma cancer. A number of NT jobsites identified as harboring asbestos containing materials are known to have exposed a variety of tradesmen to asbestos.

Some of the more publicly recognized sites which left behind them environmental problems, including mesothelioma from asbestos exposure, are the former sites of American District Steam Company (455 Bryant), the City Market area and neighboring Robinson) and Tonawanda Iron & Steel / American Standard site—which actually included all of the waterfront along the Niagara



1917 Herschell-Spillman Company Ad. Established in 1872 in its earliest form; it was officially established in 1915 in North Tonawanda, NY, employing 300 artisans who handcrafted more than 3,000 wooden carousels. Technically, it moved out of New York when it was sold in 1972 to an amusement ride maker in Kansas and didn't return until 1997. It was the fourth in a series of companies in the community which manufactured carousels and other amusement park rides. The original 24,000 square foot factory building on Thompson Street is now the home of the Herschell Carousel Factory Museum. The Museum's main attraction is a 1916 wooden carousel with 36 horses.

River from Wheatfield Street to the Town of Wheatfield line. This area, originally the site of lumber operations which had caused environmental damage as well, was for 99 years home to Tonawanda Iron. It owned the entire waterfront in that area.

Listed on several websites as a site is AP Green Refractories, a national operation. AP Green Refractories made several types of products that contained asbestos including cements, adhesives, coatings and refractory products. Refractory products must be able to withstand intense heat. Early on in the company history, products were made with a naturally-occurring mineral that proved to be very heat and fire resistant.

These were often used in very high heat applications including boilers, ovens and furnaces. As a result, boilermakers, boiler tenders and steamfitters were likely to be exposed to asbestos from AP Green products. This mineral was asbestos. It wasn't until years later that it was found to be a poisonous material. American District Steam, Tonawanda Iron, and Buffalo Bolt, among others, were significant users of AP Green products during their years in operation.

A frightening site is Degraff Memorial Hospital, to which people and families have

entrusted their healthcare since 1914. Degraff endangered many longtime employees and patients whose conditions made them susceptible to asbestos exposure.

Donner Steel Company and Roblin Industries are listed as sites which most locals know as the now capped-over Buffalo Bolt plant site NT has been trying to market as a business park for more than a decade.

Durez Plastic & Chemicals (whose drainage passed through the City from Walck Road and Erie to the Niagara River) and its other names, the original General Plastics Company, later Hooker Chemical Corp, and Occidental Chemical is reputedly, as Occidental, still working on a cleanup of the site. Plastics Drive is used as an example in local TV ads by a law firm focusing on mesothelioma cases. A representative of the law firm indicated in the past that, although they didn't

have asbestos in their plant operations, employees of National Grinding Wheel who had to enter and leave the plant from outside were exposed to discharges from smokestacks at Durez. They are potential or active mesothelioma victims, especially if they worked for National Grinding Wheel for many years. That would have posed the same danger to residents of the area.

On Tonawanda Island, in addition to contamination from lumber industries that occupied the island for more than 150 years, the International Paper Company site exposed its workers to asbestos.

The Remington Rand plant, and its predecessor occupants, Armitage Herschell, Herschell Spillman, the IRC trolley barn and early lumber operations, covering a block along the Erie Canal between Sweeney/Tremont/Marion/Oliver Streets and the Rudolph Wurlitzer Manufacturing Company on Niagara Falls Boulevard also exposed workers and nearby neighborhoods to asbestos.

For those concerned about environmental messes left behind by NT's former industrial past, additional information can be found on the following websites, focusing on mesothelioma cancer caused by asbestos exposure:

<http://www.mesothelioma.com/asbestos-exposure/states/new-york/north-tonawanda/#ixzz3VsiVSkH0>


[www.mesothelioma.com/asbestos-exposure/states/new-york/north-tonawanda](http://www.mesothelioma.com/asbestos-exposure/states/new-york/north-tonawanda)

[www.mesothelioma.com/search.asp?q=AP+Green&page=4](http://www.mesothelioma.com/search.asp?q=AP+Green&page=4)


<http://www.mesothelioma.com/asbestos-exposure/companies/ap-green-industries.htm#ixzz3y5cpAjWd>

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NT has an excessive number of MS, Parkinson's and other types of cancer no doubt a legacy of its industrial past.



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## Local 91 Laborer Apprenticeship

The US and New York State Departments of Labor recognize and monitor registered skilled apprenticeship programs in NYS and throughout the United States. The Laborers' International Union of North America publicly promotes our successful model of labor-management registered apprenticeship programs to combat the growing emphasis on employer programs supported by taxpayers.

### What is Registered Apprenticeship?

It's a job. Apprentices start working from day one with incremental wage increases as they become more proficient. It's on-the-job learning and education. Registered Apprenticeship includes on-the-job learning from an assigned mentor combined with technical training provided by apprenticeship training centers, technical schools, community colleges, and institutions employing distance and computer-based learning systems. It's a credential. At the end of the apprenticeship, all apprentices receive a nationally recognized credential. Some apprenticeship programs offer interim credentials as apprentices achieve important milestones during their apprenticeship.

### 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.

# Lockport Author Deroll Barrett's New Novel Published This Week

LOCKPORT, N.Y. — Author Deroll Barrett has recently published a new Two-part novel, "Pastor Mann: (Part II) Sister Patrice in the Valley of Despair."

This book of fiction will be available nationwide this week.

"Pastor Mann" is a novel about the life of Ezekiel Mann in rural Jamaica from the 1960s to 1990s.

In the second installment of the novel, "Sister Patrice in the Valley of Despair," the author introduces Patrice, a meddlesome woman, whom people are trying to avoid.

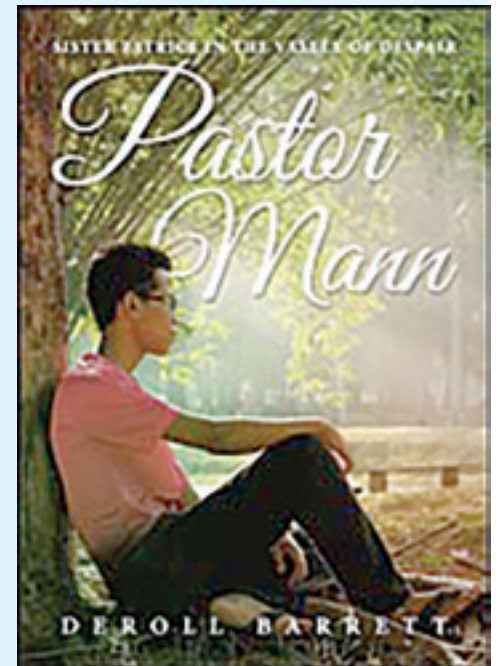
"Pastor Mann will keep readers laughing and learning from the journey of the characters," said the author's publicist Michelle Whitman.

Published by Tate Publishing and Enterprises, the book is available through bookstores nationwide, from the publisher at [www.tatepublishing.com/bookstore](http://www.tatepublishing.com/bookstore), or by visiting [barnesandnoble.com](http://barnesandnoble.com) or [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).

From Lockport, Barrett is an educator who has been writing since his teenage years.

"He strongly believes in helping others to become their best self," said Whitman.

"This enlightening book of fiction [will] will delight readers with humor, [and] life lessons. 'Pastor Mann' is a novel about the challenging and interesting life of Ezekiel Mann, who endures with the support of family and friends."



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# NEWS OF THE WEIRD

## Chuck Shephard

### STREAMING NEWS

The “public art” statues unveiled in January by Fort Myers, Florida, Mayor Randy Henderson included a metal structure by sculptor Edugardo Carmona of a man walking a dog, with the dog “lifting his leg” beside a pole. Only after inspecting the piece more closely did many observers realize that the man, too, was relieving himself against the pole. Carmona described the work as commentary on man and dog “marking their territory.” (2) A recent anonymously authored “confidential” book by a National Football League player reported that “linemen, especially,” have taken to relieving themselves inside their uniforms during games, “a sign that you’re so into the game” that you “won’t pause (even) to use the toilet.”

### CAN’T POSSIBLY BE TRUE

The popular Nell’s Country Kitchen in Winter Haven, Florida, was shut down again (for “remodeling,” the owner said) in December after a health inspector found that it had been operating for two weeks without its own running water—with only a garden hose connection, across its parking lot, to a neighbor’s spigot. It had also closed for a day earlier in 2015 because of mold, roach activity and rodent droppings (although management insisted that business had immediately picked up the day they

reopened).

Weird News One Can Actually Use: In November, a perhaps-exasperated Centers for Disease Control attempted once again to tout a startlingly effective anti-HIV drug—after a recent survey revealed that a third of primary-care doctors said they had never heard of it. So, FYI: Truvada, taken once a day, said the CDC, gives “better than 90 percent” protection from risky gay sex and better than 70 percent protection from HIV acquired from the sharing of needles. Truvada is the only FDA-approved retroviral drug for retarding HIV (but its maker, Gilead Sciences, has declined to advertise it for that purpose).

Oklahoma Justice: In 2004, abusive boyfriend Robert Braxton Jr. was charged with badly beating up the three children of girlfriend Tondalo Hall, 20, with injuries ranging from bruises to fractured legs, ribs and a toe. Braxton got a deal from Oklahoma City prosecutors, pleaded guilty, served two years in prison, and was released in 2006. Hall’s plea “bargain” resulted in a 30-year sentence for having failed to protect her kids from Braxton, and she’s still in prison—and in September 2015 (following a rejected appeal and a rejected sentence modification), the Pardon and Parole Board refused, 5-0, even to commute her sentence to a time-served 10 years.

### GREAT ART!

Mike Wolfe, 35, of Nampa, Idaho, finally brought his dream to life for 2016—a calendar of photographs of “artistic”

designs made by shaving images into his back hair. He said it took him about four months each for enough hair to grow back to give his designer-friend Tyler Harding enough to work with. (January, for instance, features “New Year” in lettering, with two champagne glasses; July’s is a flag-like waving stripes with a single star in the upper left.) “Calend-hairs” cost \$20 each (with proceeds, Wolfe said, going to an orphanage connected to his church).

### UNCLEAR ON THE CONCEPT

Jamie, 29, and Abbie Hort, 21, an unemployed couple drawing housing and other government benefits, won a United Kingdom lottery prize in December 2014 worth about \$72,000, promptly spent it all (including “some” on “silly” stuff, Abbie admitted), and according to a January press report, are angry now that the government will not immediately re-institute their benefits. Abbie said, as lottery winners, she and Jamie “deserved to buy some nice stuff” and go on holiday, but that now, except for the large-screen TV and Jamie’s Ralph Lauren clothes, the winnings are gone. Said Jamie, this past Christmas was just “the worst ever.”

Public relations spokesman Phil Frame, 61, was arrested in Shelby Township, Michigan, after a Jan. 1 Sheriff’s Office search of his computer and paper files turned up child pornography. The Detroit News reported that Frame had already been questioned about child pornography,

in September, by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and for some reason apparently was not intimidated enough (or was too lazy) to clear out his files. (The Homeland Security investigation is still ongoing.)

### WRONG PLACE, WRONG TIME

Neighbors in Inola, Oklahoma, complained in December and January about a Union Pacific train that had been parked “for weeks” while tracks up ahead were under repair. Not only does the train block a traffic intersection, it triggers the ringing of the crossing signal. “It’s annoying, yeah,” said one resident, apparently a master of understatement. (2) At a ski resort in western Vorarlberg, Austria, recently, as the ski lift was temporarily stopped (to address a problem elsewhere on the lift), one occupied lift basket came to rest directly in front of the industrial-strength artificial-snowmaking machine, drenching the two passengers in a several-minutes-long blizzard (of which, yes, Internet video exists).

### WAIT, WHAT?

Fort Worth, Texas, firefighters, responding to a suspected blaze in January at a grain elevator, encountered smoke on the structure’s eighth floor—along with a man “juggling flaming batons.” No explanation was reported (except that the man “did not belong there”). A department spokesman said his firefighters “put (the man’s) torches out.”

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# CITY HALL JOKES...



How non transparent was the city’s sale of the Chilton Avenue house? It was so non transparent that even Mark Hamister complained about it.



There’s no truth to the rumor that Dyster and Piccirillo wrote the legal notice for the sale of the Chilton Avenue house using invisible ink.



Mayor Dyster bristled at the suggestions that the Chilton Avenue sale was anything less than completely transparent, saying, “I want everyone to know that we conducted that sale just like we’ve conducted all of our administration business since 2008.” Exactly Mr. Mayor, exactly.



What’s the first thing Mayor Dyster said when he was told the city now owned Dr. Mehta’s five downtown buildings? “Seth, get the Gazette on the phone! We have to place five postage stamp sized announcements for bidders.”



Andy, we hardly know you but we didn’t forget you.  
Question: What’s Andy Touma’s favorite song?  
Answer: “‘Walk on’ by” by Dionne Warwick.



Political dictionary  
RFP - known as a request for proposal in the real world it’s a properly announced call for offers to be made on public property or projects. In the Dyster administration an RFP is something to be kept virtually secret for fear it will attract attention from the general public. City hall insiders say that a Dyster RFP stands for Rewarding Friendly People.



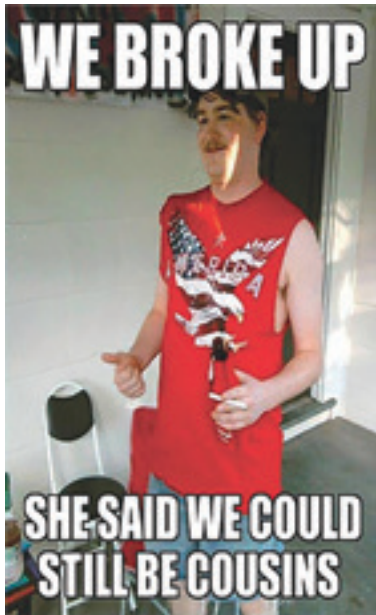
Seth Piccirillo’s new theme for the marketing of distressed city houses was borrowed from the NYS Lottery’s “A Dollar and a Dream” campaign. Seth’s calling his “Five hundred dollars and a scheme.”



Go figure. In Paul Dyster’s city hall \$500 can get you 90 minutes with the mayor’s favorite law firm, Hodgson and Russ, or a Chilton Avenue home worth \$48,000. Take your pick.



Question: How are the Dyster administration fair bidding process and Sasquatch alike?  
Answer: Neither one has ever been seen.



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**Aries: (March 21 - April 19)**

There are only two things people dislike about you - your face. There is no vaccine against stupidity. You are so ugly when you were born the doctor said, 'I'm gonna drop it, if it falls it's a rat, if it flies it's a bat.'



**Cancer: (June 21 - July 22)**

At least you are not obnoxious like so many other people - you are obnoxious in a different and worse way! Place signs on both ears saying 'Space for Rent. You are always helpful when people don't need you to be. What died on your neck? Oh, it's your head.'



**Libra: (September 23 - October 22)**

They say truth is stranger than fiction. Look, your mother gave birth to you. An attractive member of the opposite sex is secretly laughing at you. Go to a bar, drink a lot, then get tattoo. Mirrors can't talk and lucky for you they can't laugh either!



**Capricorn: (December 22 - January 19)**

You are quite ugly! But you were even uglier when younger. That is putting it tenderly. Laser hair removal may help distinguish your back from your hair. Don't know why you bother with makeup, nothing could fix that mess. You were so ugly as a kid your parents had put a pork chop round your neck so the dog would play with you.



**Taurus: (April 20 - May 20)**

Skeletor called, he wants his face back. The sign of the bull quite literally describes you since you are literally full of bull. To put it in a nutshell, people think you're nuts. There was an accident years ago. The accident wasn't on a highway, but in your mom's bedroom.



**Leo: (July 23 - August 22)**

Your head whistles in a cross wind. Romance is in the air today, just over the north of France. Turn a blind eye and a deaf ear to people's red eyes and constant laughter. People think your parents are the best comedy team? ....they made the biggest joke!



**Scorpio: (October 23 - November 21)**

Don't feel bad. A lot of people have no talent! What you lack in intelligence, you more than make up for in stupidity. Don't inhale. Not marijuana, but air. By some strange chance, are your parents cousins? You're the reason God created the middle finger.



**Aquarius: (January 20 - February 18)**

You're not as stupid as you look. Nobody could be! Forget about dieting. Face, ears, ALL need to be hatcheted off your body before anyone will care whether you are skinny or fat. If you're so attractive, why does everyone run away from you yelling 'It's a yeti!'



**Gemini: (May 21 - June 20)**

You overhear people say while looking at you 'Someone please kill this thing with fire.' Love is in the air this weekend. Buy an air freshener. You are paralyzed from the neck up. Place warning label on your forehead. Your mom sent you back to the hospital for a refund.



**Virgo: (August 23 - September 22)**

Is that your nose or are you eating a banana? They say that two heads are better than one. In your case, one would have been better than none. Wear ugly sweaters to distract people from seeing your face. You lied, you said you were ugly, you're not, you're hideous.



**Sagittarius: (November 22 - December 21)**

Don't turn the other cheek. It's just as ugly. In the dictionary under your picture is a new word, 'vomitrocious.' Your halitosis improves. Safely move within 16 feet when speaking to people. If stupidity was a disease, you would be dead right now. Can you turn around people would like to see your face... wait, that's not your ass?



**Pisces: (February 19 - March 20)**

People worship the ground that awaits you. While you don't believe you have the face of a horse, how is it that people keep holding sugar cubes in front of you? You learn that being mean is what makes you happy. People want to help you out, but they can't figure out which way you came in.

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