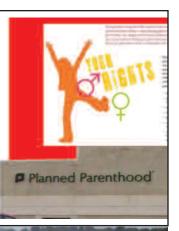




Dyster's Top 10 Accomplishments

is keeping HIV from partner



LSREPORTER

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VOL. 16, NO. 50

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Niagara Falls Government Tops (per capita) in...





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The Top #10 Stories of The Dyster **Administration in 2015**

Anna Howard

(Ed note: 2016 is here and, like many publications, the Niagara Falls Reporter wishes to recap the year just gone by. Since Mayor Paul Dyster is likely to be around for another four years, we might just as well look at his accomplishments in the past year. This story and the 10 selections contained in it were written by everyone's favorite critic of Mayor Dyster -- Anna Howard.)

#10 - The roof caves in on the Dyster administration's housing rehabilitation program

The Isaiah 61 housing rehab program, supported with casino revenue dollars and planned to be headquartered in a condemned fire hall, that's administered by Mayor Dyster's fair haired favorite bureaucrat, Seth Piccirillo, literally brought the roof down by "accidentally" demolishing a home on Centre Avenue that they were supposedly rehabilitating. No lives were lost when the home came tumbling down, but

the reputation of the Isaiah 61 program was pronounced DOA upon the building's collapse. No matter, the mayor continues to use taxpayer dollars to support this nontransparent government/not for profit hybrid program.

#9 - City's plan to build a cricket field bugs Little League parents

While the city's debt and deficit soared to frightening new heights in 2015, and as Little League parents lobbied Dyster for better maintained baseball diamonds in Hyde Park, His Honor ignored the needs of youth baseball and their parents' respectful wishes by insisting on constructing a cricket field in LaSalle for a small group of wealthy and influential professionals of Indian descent. The cricket aficionados were largely from the greater Buffalo area but had somehow gained Mayor Dyster's ear as the mayor sought re-election. Dyster rebutted critics by saying he supported diversity.

#8 Mayor Dyster refuses to take his failed trash plan to the curb

Paul Dyster launched a costly, poorly planned, and horribly coordinated trash and



More garbage on the streets, more cost was the result of the new trash plan.

recycling program in spring of 2014. His Fichte, it was a smart business move. troubled trash plan actually got worse in 2015 as the mayor added costly additional trash pickup options in a clumsy attempt to silence the complainers. Mr. Dyster then swelled the city employee overhead by hiring his campaign photographer and political operative, Brook D'Angelo, to manage his SWEET trash enforcement program. Blue tote, green tote, Totes McGoat...all of it failed to float the residents' boat.

#7 Poverty pimping and pseudo economic development programming expands

Coming into office in 2008 with high hopes and boisterous promises regarding imminent economic development initiatives Mayor Dyster quickly abandoned his lofty "green economy" campaign promises in favor of moving registered sex offenders into the city, opening homeless shelters, expanding subsidized housing, and cutting the ribbon on heroin addiction treatment centers. Nothing epitomizes this race to the bottom better than how the Fichte Eye Center sold its 24th Street facility to a drug treatment agency while choosing to build their new multi-million-dollar eye center in the Town of Niagara. We don't blame

#6 Dyster-DeSantis train station breaks ground while going off the rails

The mayor, to great fanfare, broke ground on his \$45 million train station that has yet to establish a source for its annual operating budget even though the facility will open its doors in 2016. No operating budget and no visible means of support but none of that matters as this 19th century mode of transportation boondoggle prepares to support Dyster-DeSantis, along with their consultant and engineering friends, in the style they've grown accustomed to. All aboard as the residents are taken for a costly ride.

#5 Hamister Hotel project is deader than dead 26 months after contract was inked

It's the development project that never was and never will be that was supposed to have been more than two years ago. The would-be development project lumbered to life through a murky selection process that saw mayor and USA Niagara gift a \$1.5 million piece of downtown property to Dyster and Cuomo supporter, Mark Hamister. It was a stacked deck that drove councilman Sam Fruscione, who had the nerve to ques-



The roof collapsed on a home under the supervision of Isaiah 61, a not for profit under the shepherding of the Mayor.

NIAGARA FALLS REPORTER

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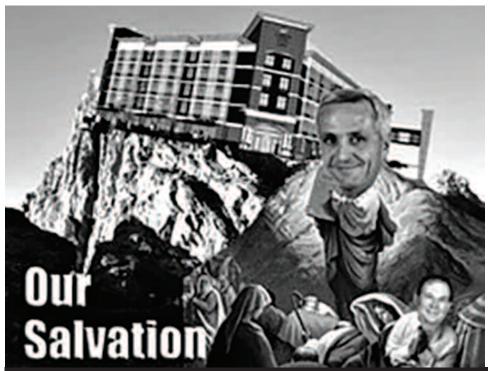
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The Reporter found this Dyster-look alike to show the elegance of Dyster's new plan to revive a 19th century mode of travel.

A track record unequalled



This is an artist depiction of the as yet to be built Hamister Hotel which was described at the time of its proposal as the salvation of Niagara Falls. The artist shows the Hamister Hotel atop the Biblical Mount Sinai, with elected officials in prayerful worship of Hamister and his doings.

tion the project, from office. The project planning went forward and set records for non-transparent contractual clauses that continue to cost the city taxpayers more than two years later.

#4 Candidate Dyster limps to a third term with a flaccid 47% of the vote

Two termer Mayor Dyster nearly had his political career nixed by councilman Glenn Choolokian as the council member came within 65 votes of winning the mayoral primary. Things took a very strange turn in the general election however as Choolokian's insistence on staying in the race as a write-in candidate drew 1300 votes and cost John Accardo the mayor's office. Dyster - due to accident or designowes his political life to Choolokian, an elected official he has never had a single good word to say about...until election night. Hmm.



Let the good times roll on...
Mayor Paul Dyster was reelected
with 47 percent of the vote. More
than half the voters rejected him
but he won reelection oddly due
to the write in campaign of his
harshest critic, Glenn
Choolokian, who split the antiDyster vote between him and Republican challenger John

Accardo.

#3 City hall gives 72nd St. residents cold shoulder for second straight year

After allowing the residents of 72nd Street to suffer through two winters of frozen water lines, the mayor presented himself in 2015 as the savior of the neighborhood. This after he had cruelly ignored their plight for two and half years as residents had to flush their toilets using buckets of water hauled from the fire hall down the street. His Honor's repair job rose in cost from \$300,000 to \$650,000 to a current (and growing) cool \$1,000,000. The news of the waterless neighborhood gained state wide exposure in the summer of 2015 as well it should have. The news coverage failed to redden Dyster's face.

#2 Debt and deficit grow as city finances confound the Financial Advisory Panel

With a shocking debt of more than \$63 million and an inexplicably fluctuating 2015 budget deficit of \$7.6 million Mayor Dyster and the city council essentially told

their own Financial Advisory Panel to stick their fiscal management recommendations where the calculator don't shine. Mayor and council then approved the 2016 budget after tacking on seven secretive budget amendments while no one was looking on November 17. And, incredibly enough, this all went down totally unnoticed and completely unremarked upon save for the Reporter.

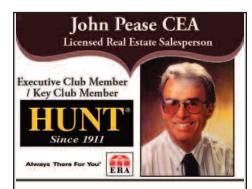
#1 Dyster administration continues to stonewall the State Comptroller's findings

The NYS Controller performed a fivemonth audit of city finances and then released a lengthy report in June 2013. That audit discovered: millions of dollars inside the budget that were improperly concealed from the mayor and council; more than \$1 million of taxpayer cash that couldn't be found; and, casino money repeatedly misused to improperly close the city's strangely recurring budget deficit. Why there hasn't been a thorough state investigation into the disturbing audit findings as revealed by the State Comptroller's 2013 report is an unsolved mystery.





This photo was taken in 2014, of 72nd St. when the water lines first froze. Residents were treated to another year, 2015, of frozen pipes, But happily during the election season, Mayor Dyster got the will to fix the problem.



TOWN OF LEWISTON

5235 Paddock Ln \$139,000 SOLD 4769 Lower River Rd. \$399,000 4 fireplaces 700 Mountain View Dr. Marble Foyer. \$375,000

TOWN & CITY OF LOCKPORT

8 Bewley Pkwy, 2 family \$59,900 39 Elmwood Ave., \$89,900 7809 Lincoln Avenue Ext \$150,000. 62 Acres. House and Barns are FREE. 17 Lewis St \$34,900 275 Genesee St \$24,900. Possible owner finance 6 Ashley Pl \$19,900. Possible owner finance. SOLD 77 Outwater Dr. \$59,900 7076 Northview Dr. SOLD

TOWN OF HARTLAND

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7256 Ridge. Large pond plus acreage. \$149,900 SOLD

TOWN OF PENDLETON

6755 Aiken Rd. \$300,000

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9792 Chestnut Ridge Rd. Ranch w/ in law apt \$99,900 REDUCED DRASTICALLY 8709 Slayton Settlement Rd. 100' from Erie Canal. \$44,900 Royalton Center / Mountain Rd. Vacant Land \$24,900 7673 Highland Dr., Vacant Land. \$28,900

WILSON

4489 E. Lake Rd., New Waterfront \$595,000.

LANCASTER

5226 Genesee St. \$133,000



City Taxpayers Footing Bill for Scores of \$100,000 Salaries Here

Mike Hudson

One hundred thousand dollars.

It's a lot of money anywhere, but in a place like Niagara Falls, where money's tight and jobs are scarce, it can be considered a fortune.

In a city where the per capita income for all residents is just \$20,327 and the average household scrapes by on \$31,531, according to the website City-Data.com, \$100,000 is the stuff that dreams are made out of

A report by the New York State Financial Restructuring Board for Local Governments shows Niagara Falls to be the most highly taxed municipality in New York State in proportion to the value of the property being taxed.

According to WalletHub, New York ranks as the worst state in America for tax-payers.

Therefore, sadly for its residents, the City of Niagara Falls is arguably the highest taxed municipality in the highest taxed state.

A portion of that local tax burden goes to help pay the salaries of 69 city employees who make \$100,000 or more a year, according to the public service website SeethroughNY.net.

Indeed, the impoverished City of Niagara Falls is rich with top earners, most of them with the police and fire departments.

With 49,468 residents as of the 2013 US census estimate, the proportion is high compared to other cities. F0r every 717 city residents, there is one city employee who earns more than \$100,000.

Looking at similarly sized municipalities around, Binghamton, with 47,376 residents, has only seven \$100,00 plus city



employees. Or one out of every 6,768 residents.

Troy, with 50,129 residents, has 34 city workers making more than \$100,000. Or one out of 1,474.

Utica, with a population of 62,235, has only 19 earning more than \$100,000. This translates to one city worker earning more than \$100,000 for every 3,275 residents – about five times lower than Niagara Falls.

Schenectady, with a population of 66,135, has 70, only one more than Niagara Falls. With 17,000 more people, the city comes in at one out of 945, compared to Niagara Falls' one out of 717.

Albany, the state's capitol, with almost twice the population, at 97,856, has only 81 city employees earning more than \$100,000 or one out of 1,208.

Buffalo, at more than five times the population of Niagara Falls (261,000), has 180, or one out of 1451. In other words, Niagara Falls has about twice the number of \$100,000 city workers per capita than Buffalo

Of the 69 city employees earning more than \$100,000 per year, 66 work for the po-



Gender Factoid: Some 56 of the 90 Niagara Falls School District employees earning more than \$100,000 are women. Conversely only two of the 69 city wage earners exceeding \$100,000 are women.

lice and fire departments and three work at city hall.

Of course a big chunk of property taxes here, go toward the support of the Niagara Falls City School District and, there again, those making \$100,000 or more a year are plentiful compared to other cities.

According to seethrroughny.net, 90 school district employees earn more than \$100,000 a year, despite the fact that the district is among the poorest in the state.

Comparatively, again, Niagara Falls is head and shoulder above other cities.

Like Niagara Falls, the Albany City School District also 90 school district employees making more than \$100,000 but with a much larger district.

And Buffalo with five times the population also has 90 school district employees earning more than \$100,000.

Utica has only 14 school district employees earning more than \$100,000 per year despite the fact that it has almost 10,000 students – compared to 7,000 in the Niagara Falls School District.

Niagara Falls is rich with top earners while its ever poorer residents are paying

higher and higher taxes.

Much of the inequity between what public sector employees make compared to their private sector counterparts is attributable to the rise in unionism among teachers, police officers and fire department personnel and its decline everywhere else.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the tipping point occurred in 2009, when the number of unionized public sector workers – 7.9 million at the time – became greater than the 7.4 million private sector union members.

That gap has continued to widen, to the point where relatively few private sector workers in Niagara Falls are unionized as opposed to public sector employees, who are virtually 100 percent union members.

While city, county, state and federal employees enjoy good pay, great benefits and job security, those in the private sector face cutthroat competition, layoffs and increased income inequality.

In Niagara Falls, one needs look no further than the DuPont Chemours plant here, where an announced closing will cost more than 200 unionized workers their jobs, which paid an average of \$60,000 to \$70,000 a year.

And to make matters worse, a large percentage of those earning the big bucks working for the city don't even live in the city. There is no residency law for firefighters and many police officers chose not to live in the city despite residency requirements.

All that money leaving Niagara Falls every payday goes to help make Lewiston, Youngstown, Wheatfield, the Town of Niagara and Grand Island the beautiful places they are.

FDR's View of Public Service Unions Differs Vastly From What They Are Today

President Franklin Roosevelt, a friend of private-sector unionism, drew a line when it came to government workers.

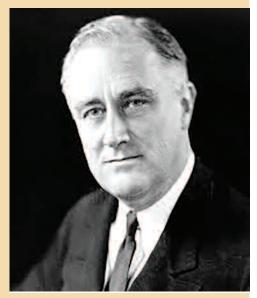
"Meticulous attention should be paid to the special relations and obligations of public servants to the public itself and to the Government," he said in 1937. "The process of collective bargaining, as usually understood, cannot be transplanted into the public service."

The first president of the AFL-CIO, George Meany, agreed.

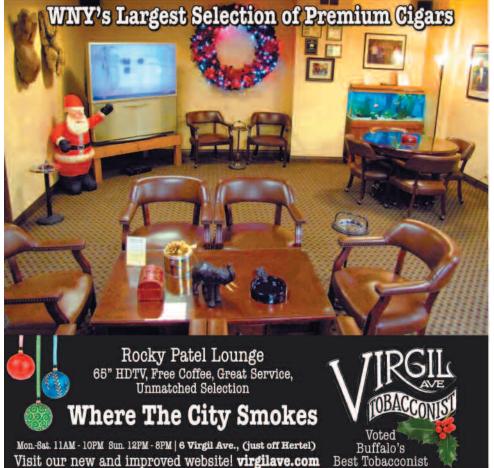
"It is impossible to bargain collectively with the government," he said.

Roosevelt argued that government workers, sworn to protect the rights of the people they served, had no business putting their own interests ahead of ordinary citizens.

"A strike of public employees manifests nothing less than an intent on their part to obstruct the operations of government until their demands are satisfied," he added. "Such action looking toward the paralysis of government by those who have sworn to support it is unthinkable and intolerable."



FDR would hardly recognize the country today, particularly in a place like Niagara Falls, where even mid-level school teachers, policemen and public works employees can afford a lifestyle far above what their counterparts in the private sector can enjoy.



Dyster Demeans Majority that Voted Against Him Four More Years of More of the Same

James Hufnagel



Tomorrow's the big day.

Mayor Paul Dyster will raise his right hand and take the oath of office for the third time, the first mayor to do so in decades, even though a majority of voters on election day clearly preferred someone else take over leadership of the city of Niagara Falls.

Dyster's meager 47.05% plurality, comprising less than 4500 votes in a city of 50,000, was actually lower than that of loser Mitt Romney, who finished with 48.4% of the 2012 presidential vote.

Was challenger Glenn Choolokian promised some kind of quid pro quo for waging a quixotic write-in campaign that assuredly tilted the election in the incumbent mayor's favor? No one knows for sure.

However, we have reason to assume.

Despite all outward appearances of a typically hard-fought Niagara Falls mayoral primary election, the two men, having served in city government on-and-off together for over two decades, get along just fine.

Witness the moments after the September 2, 2105 debate at Abate school which featured Dyster and Choolokian seated to the left, John Accardo in the middle of the table and two other candidates to their left. As the session ended, Dyster and Choolokian rose from their seats and turned to each other. The Mayor playfully threw a fake body block to his opponent, who reciprocated with a shoulder feint, and both men shared a hearty belly laugh together. Not only was there not the slightest hint of animosity between the two, but they looked like two buddies at the bar sharing a good joke. Which they probably were, the joke being the upcoming election.

So between friends and family, political appointees and other assorted hangers-on, the directors, boards and volunteers who serve the numerous non-profits who depend on hand-outs from the city courtesy of the mayor, and the octogenarians who were cured of catarrh fifty years ago by his father, a retired physician, the mayor managed to cobble together sufficient support to keep his

Fact is, the man has a BA and a masters degree in political science. He knows the formula for building a constituency.

You'd think Dyster's repudiation by a majority of voters, after eight years of seeing the man in action, would have given him pause and engendered some personal reflection on his performance, but as the comedian Steve Martin used to say, "Nah!"

A mere three days after the election, on November 6, an interview with Dyster was published in "City and State", a New York City-based magazine and website closely followed by state politicos. There are two good reasons for Dyster to have granted the interview to City and State. For one thing, not a lot of Niagara Falls residents make a regular habit of reading City and State. Second, Dyster must have thought it necessary to explain to the state political establishment how it happened that he barely squeaked past a democratic primary challenge, then fell short of a majority in the general election as the result of an unlikely write-in campaign, despite eight years of his brilliant leadership.

"AFTER WINNING THIRD TERM, DYSTER DOUBLES DOWN ON ECO-NOMIC DEVELOPMENT," trumpets the City and State headline in caps, going on to state, "Looking ahead, Dyster said he hopes to finish what he started in the economic revitalization in the city... For example, major projects like Mark Hamister's Hyatt Place project, the planned WonderFalls development at a long-defunct mall and the \$40 million train station..."

Of course, the average reader of City and State magazine in Albany, New York City or Schenectady hasn't the slightest knowledge that Hamister is a mirage, Wonderfalls hasn't progressed past the drawing board or the expensive, overbuilt, soon-tobe-underutilized train station is the enduring butt of jokes here.

When asked why so many, in fact, a majority, voted to reject his bid for a third term, Mayor Dyster offered that "Every decision you make, there's going to be someone who doesn't like it... You gradually build up people who on one issue you've upset them during your time in office and they're now going to vote against you every opportunity that they get," attributing his opposition to an "accumulation of grievances".

So if you voted for someone other than Paul Dyster for mayor, according to him, you need to get over it and stop being such a whiner.





Choolokian Had the Right to Try to Win

Niagara Falls – There is a canard around this city that Glenn Choolokian is to blame for Mayor Paul Dyster's reelection.

Choolokian's 1300 plus "write in" votes were more than the difference between Dyster and his main challenger, John Accardo, who were separated by about 700 votes.

People say that, had it not been for Choolokian, the will of the majority would have prevailed.

After all, Accardo and Choolokian together got 53 percent of the votes. Dyster got a minority of votes – 47 percent. But still

Some of that majority of voters, who wanted to see someone other than Dyster as mayor, have less than pleasant feelings towards Choolokian.

But there is one thing, not to be forgotten, that is more important than whether Dyster or Accardo is mayor of this city: Choolokian had the right to run for office.

Even if it did seem hopeless.

Even if the consequences – Dyster's reelection – were something the majority did

Time and again I hear people say, "Choolokian should have known he had no chance to win. He should have stayed out of the race for the good of the city."

But Choolokian wanted to be mayor; and, after he lost by less than 75 votes in the Democratic primary against Dyster - he chose not to give up in the general election.

There have been insinuations that Choolokian stayed in the race – not to win



After losing by less than 75 votes in the primary, Glenn Choolokian decided to stay in the race as a write in candidate.

- but to spoil it for Accardo, and help Dys-

And get a favor in return.

They point to Choolokian as a betrayer. For years, Choolokian labeled Dyster and his pro-Albany, pro-Buffalo, pro-campaign contributor agenda – as the main problem with the city.

Choolokian campaigned that he wanted to put Niagara Falls first. He thought he would be able to rescue this poor city which should be rich with hydropower, tourism, and its casino windfall.

That he split the anti-Dyster vote and handed the man who, in his opinion, hurt the city is one of those bittersweet ironies. In trying to save the city he loved, he handed the city back to its marauder.

Had he stood aside and not vainly tried, today, most likely, the city would be looking forward to a new age of governance under John Accardo.

Until anyone can prove, however, that there was a quid pro quo, that Choolokian had a motive other than doing what he thought was best for the city - hopeless as hindsight knows that effort now to be; until anyone can show he will get a payoff – a better job at city hall or the water board – because he stayed in the race – and handed the election to Dyster - it is unfair to assert he was a spoiler.



Glenn Choolokian ran for mayor and lost. He had the right to try.

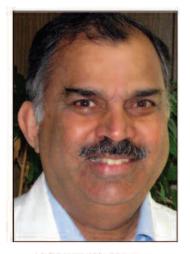
This is the American way.

And a failure is not always a mistake.



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

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What's Really Going on With the Rumored City Hall Personnel Changes?

Anna Howard

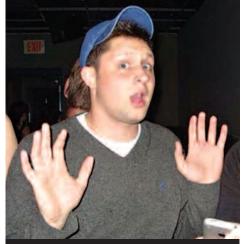
In our last edition, the Reporter explained how the mayor ordered his top personnel to submit updated resumes if they hoped to keep their jobs. Sources told us the mayor was going to rely heavily on the council to review the resumes. The council was to help him decide who had been naughty or nice.

Our column warned that involving the council in personnel matters violated the city charter. It appears the column was read inside city hall because the council has declined to act as Dyster's personnel management flunky.

However, we understand that Mr. Mayor, incapable of making command de-

cisions on his own, has formed a Personnel Retention Committee. The committee is said to be made up of his secretary Nick Melson, a Dyster family member, a female officer from the city democratic committee, and a yet to be identified man. The PRC (no, we won't pronounce this acronym) will review nonunion employees and give a thumbs up or down. This Dyster system is a mixture of the ancient Roman Coliseum and the former Soviet Politburo. Such is the mayor's understanding of personnel management.

Just as we advised the council against becoming involved in the mayor's personnel gamesmanship, so too do we advise against the civilian members of the Personnel Retention Committee becoming en-



Nick Melson is said to have an increasingly powerful role in the Dyster administration.

meshed in the mayor's personnel prob-

City employees who are fired or demoted due to the behavior of the PRC could take legal action. If so the PRC members would find themselves as defendants in court. If the mayor or city administrator were to recommend dismissal or demotion that would be one thing, but delegating those duties to the civilian sector is to invite lawsuits.

The mayor should do what he was elected to do: command city government and personally make the difficult decisions...such as removing inadequate employees. But that raises a key question: is the mayor interested in better government or government he can better manipulate?

No Limits Poker Tournament to be Held in Niagara for Diabetes Research

A poker tournament on January 9 will benefit the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation of Western New York.

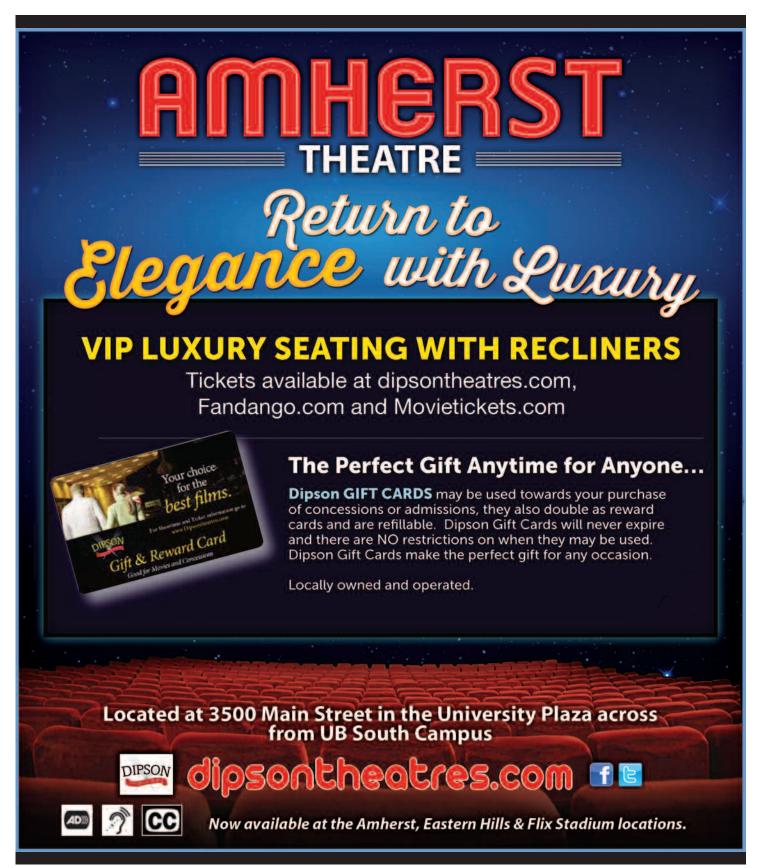
"Team In For a Penny" will host the event at 5 p.m., Jan. 9 at the Town of Niagara Community Center, Lockport Road, Town of Niagara.

The event is being hosted by the JDRF fundraising team that's named for Niagara Falls resident Penny Lane, a juvenile diabetes patient.

The event will be a no-limit hold 'em tournament, with half the winnings being split among the winners and JDRF getting the other half. Blinds will double on a regular basis until a winner is crowned. Pizza will be provided for free; alcohol will be sold.

For more information, e-mail pjl-news@ymail.com or look up "In For a Penny" on Facebook.





Planned Parenthood Says Hiding HIV From Sex Partners Is A 'Right'

International Planned Parenthood Federation, of which Planned Parenthood Federation of America is an official affiliate, maintains it is a person's "human right" not to tell their sexual partners they are HIV positive if they don't want to.

The International Planned Parenthood Federation's booklet for HIV-positive youth entitled "Healthy, Happy and Hot" says, "Young people living with HIV have the right to decide if, when, and how to disclose their HIV status... Sharing your HIV status is called disclosure. Your decision about whether to disclose may change with different people and situations. You have the right to decide if, when, and how to disclose your HIV status."

In 35 states if you or someone who is HIV positive have sex with someone else without divulging it, you can be charged with a crime.

International Planned Parenthood Federation is working to change that.

"Healthy, Happy and Hot" explains, "Some countries have laws that say people living with HIV must tell their sexual partner(s) about their status before having sex, even if they use condoms or only engage in sexual activity with a low risk of giving HIV to someone else. These laws violate the rights of people living with HIV by forcing them to disclose or face the possibility of criminal charges."



The pamphlet gives tips to protect oneself from criminalization, but does say that the best way to protect yourself is to tell your partner that you are infected before you have

This section ends with the statement, "Get involved in advocacy to change laws that violate your rights." It appears that, according to Planned Parenthood, Sheen's right to have sex trumps his partners' right to live. That should give him some peace of mind.

Planned Parenthood's booklet says, "There are lot's (sic) of people who don't mind whether their partner(s) is HIV negative or positive," that it's your right to "ex-

perience sexual pleasure" and that "you've done nothing wrong."

Here is the "Healthy, Happy and Hot" advice on alcohol and drug consumption for

HIV-positive youth: "Some people have sex when they have been drinking alcohol or using drugs. This is your choice. Being drunk or high can affect the decisions you might make about sex and safer sex. If you want to have sex and think you might get drunk or high, plan ahead by bringing condoms and lube or putting them close to where you usually have sex."

"It's not okay to have sex with someone who is so drunk or high that they are staggering, incoherent or have passed out."

The above post was excerpted from information made available on a post in the federalist.com by Kimberly Ells of the Utah Chapter of Family Watch International



"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



Anti-SAFE Act Organization, SCOPE, Sues US Atty General, FBI and ATF on Gun Background Check Disclosures

Rochester, NY – the anti-SAFE Act defense of the Second Amendment. group is fighting back.

This time they are going after the federal government's use of information collected during background checks of gun purchasers.

Activists from across the State of New York filed a civil rights case against the U.S. Attorney General, the FBI, the ATF, and the Terrorist Screening Center. The name of the case is Pratt vs. Lynch, and it details how the conduct of several federal agencies has been both unconstitutional and illegal.

The lawsuit seeks a permanent injunction barring the Defendants from using any information collected in a background check for any other purpose than those defined by law.

A limitation was placed upon the use of background check information in 1993 when Congress passed the so-called Brady Bill.

For more than 10 years confidential information about gun owners has been breached by the U.S. Attorney General, the FBI, the ATF, and the Terrorist Screening Center.

The lead Plaintiff in the lawsuit is Larry Pratt, who is also the Executive Director of Gun Owners of America, a national organization dedicated to the

Pratt said, "At Thanksgiving, President Obama asked Americans to think about gun control. We did. ...(W)e're asking Americans to talk about freedom and civil liberties and how we will restore our Bill of Rights."

Stephen J. Aldstadt is a co-plaintiff in the lawsuit. He is also the President of the Shooters Committee on

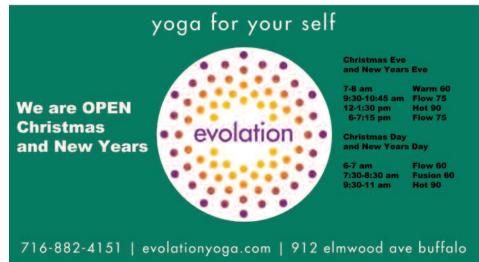
Political Education, based in New York. SCOPE is heading up the "Stop the Secrecy!" campaign associated with this lawsuit, whereby gun owners around the country are being asking to submit a Freedom of Information request to the FBI to discover what information has been kept from their ATF Form 4473s. "The ATF is under a legal obligation to protect our personal information when we go to a dealer to purchase a firearm and to purge that information after the background check is completed. Instead, the ATF, the FBI, and the TSC have been freely sharing the information for more than ten years, including with foreign governments and private contractors."

The lawsuit also seeks a release of any and all information that the federal government has collected on each of the coplaintiffs, who are prominent Second Amendment activists and leaders of Second Amendment groups.

Go ahead and contact the people involved if you are interested and want to help: Paloma Capanna

Attorney & Policy Analyst, 633 Lake Rd., Webster, New York 14580, (585) 377-7260, paloma@law-policy.com; Stephen J. Aldstadt, President Larry Pratt, Executive Director; Shooters Committee on Political Education Gun Owners of America; 8316 Colden Road 8001 Forbes Place, Suite 102, Colden, New York 14033-9777 Springfield, Virginia 22151, (716) 941-(703)321-8585, saldstadt@scopeny.org





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King con Shmuel Shmueli Challenges Israeli National Hero

Frank Parlato

This week in our series on that fascinating conman, Shmuel Shmueli, we go to Shmueli's native country Israel.

Shmueli, who by our calculation has sued or was sued about two dozen times, finds it easy to participate in litigation, for win or lose he rarely pays attorneys.

Shmueli formed a weekly Brooklyn Hebrew newspaper – Israel Shelanu (Our Israel) and "lifted" stories from other newspapers, who sued him and shut him down.

And last week we mentioned how Shmueli retained the law offices of Lorenzo and Cohen which became HoganWillig and the law firm of Zdarsky Sawicki and Agostinelli. We do not have space to get into how Shmueli hired more law firms – with the intent of suing my partner, Larry Reger and I.

We won't detail his deceptively named shell company, "Trump State Equities Inc.," whose purpose was to raise money for litigation and give haircuts to lawyers so Shmueli could pocket the difference.

We also hate to mention Shmueli had more than 500 unpaid billable hours for work done by HoganWillig owing them legal fees of \$114,712.92, which they won a judgment for but settled for only \$54,597. Shmueli tendered two Trump State Equities checks totaling \$54,597 only to stop payment on the checks.

HoganWillig had to sue Shmueli again.

We're loathe to tell you Shmueli retained the law firm of Anderson & Anderson in China, or Jaeckle Fleishmann in Buffalo and then stiffed them.

Delicacy prevents us from posting all the dunning emails from Anderson and Anderson such as one on 7-29, 2010, that reads "Dear Mr. Shmueli, Re: Outstanding Bills of US\$57,047.75 (HK\$444,972.45) We have not received payment for the above outstanding bills. We are shocked by your unethical behavior, we will take legal action against you immediately, unless payment in full is received this week."

We'd like to hide the Aug. 16, 2010 hearing held by State Supreme Court Justice Judge Frank Caruso on Zdarsky Sawicki and Agostinelli's unpaid bill Shmueli owed the firm for \$141,000.

Or we could impugn dark motives when Shmueli entered into a retainer agreement with Andrew Lavoot Bluestone of NYC, to handle "a matter of legal malpractice and to defend an attorney fee dispute."

Actually we could go on and on... and on, but we don't want our readers to get the idea that Mr. Shmueli is a bit of a cad.

Instead we will talk about his patriotism



and piety.

While Shmueli was in the US suing and being sued, back in Israel, a national leader, Rabbi Shalom Dov Ber Wolpo, established a new political party called 'Eretz Israel Shelanu' or Our Land of Israel.

Readers may recall that Shmueli's defunct newspaper was called Israel Shelanu or Our Israel

Shmueli now claimed the name.

On Dec. 7 2008, Shmueli sent a letter to Rabbi Dov Ber Wolpe demanding he stop using the name 'Eretz Israel Shelanu' for his political party, since he, Shmueli, had been operating an organization in Israel for 17 years under the same name.

While there is no known record of Shmueli operating any organization with that name or any name, Shmueli, as mentioned above, did publish Israel Shelanu (Our Israel) from 1979 until it ceased publishing in 1998 after being sued for copyright infringement.

Shmueli wrote to Rabbi Dov Wolpo, "To my surprise, you are acting in a way that will purposely destroy the work of the organization with the same name, that was established in (1991) by the Rebbe's order to myself, which I have been operating since.

"We spend time, money and effort on advertising and doing work under the name 'Eretz Israel Shelanu,' and hundreds of the readers of our publications may mistake our agenda with yours. You (Volpo's organization) have lots of opposition in many segments of the community, and this confusion can mean a disaster for our work.

"If you will not listen to my request (don't mistake the friendly tone, to undermine the seriousness of this request) I will be forced to use my alternative options, according to Torah and the law in a case such as this, including advertising this letter in the media, and an official complaint sent to Kenesset officials, for using

a confusing name."

This was classic Shmueli. He speaks of the Torah, and can quote from it too.

Readers might care to know that Shmueli attended the Wisconsin Institute of Torah Studies. They might not want to know that he stiffed the school on their tuition. Indeed Shmueli discharged a \$3,128 bad debt to the Wisconsin School of Torah Studies in his bankruptcy.

To give an idea of the validity of Shmueli's claims in his letter to Dov Wolpo, let us compare the two men:

Rabbi Shalom Dov Ber Wolpe, (b 1948) is a rabbi, an Israeli political activist and author of more than 40 books. Through his various political organizations like SOS Israel—he has run press and billboard campaigns promoting the belief that to surrender parts of the Land of Israel is prohibited by the idea of "Greater Israel"

Shmuel M. Shmueli (b 1951) has written no books but his newspaper was closed down after three newspaper sued him for plagiarizing their work, winning a \$24 million judgment against him. Shmueli was not known to publish anything since that time.

After the Second Lebanon War, Rabbi Dov Wolpo organized a publicity campaign with the slogan "We Told You So" that distributed over a million brochures. He was responsible for a poster campaign promising that those responsible for Israel's actions during the war would be "punished from heaven".

Around that time Shmueli was sued by his employees, a printer and graphics company for not paying them and they said Shmueli's actions would be punished in court, but they were wrong

In 1979, on the instructions of Reb Menachem Schneerson also known as the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Dov Wolpo published his first book Da'at Torah a polemic against returning lands captured by Israel. He was active in the protests that surrounded the forced eviction of Yamit as per the Rebbe's instructions to him

Shmueli was evicted by federal marshals from a home he bought in 1979.

In 1982, Dov Wolpo published the book Shalom, Shalom, Ve'ain Shalom that argued that peace with Arabs was impossible, and no discussions concerning concessions may be held

In 1982 Shmueli transferred his house back and forth to his wife and daughter and back again to commit apparent bank fraud, and, according to several ex-employees of his Our Israel newspaper, cheated them out of payment for their work.

In 1984 Rabbi Dov Wolpo wrote a book proclaiming the Lubavitcher Rebbe, (Rabbi Schneerson) was the Messiah. The book was published in 1991 with Rabbi Schneerson's blessings.

In 1991 Shmueli asked the Rebbe Schneerson if he could write an article about

him. The Rebbe answered: (your, Shmueli's) recent writings and publications have aroused new opposition that drive people away According to the prevailing situation, it seems more reasonable to halt [such activities] for the time being."

In 2003 Dov Wolpo founded SOS Israel—a grassroots action group uniting a broad spectrum of the religious right in Israel behind extensive poster campaigns and mass protests against giving parts of the Holy Land away to Israel's enemies. Dov Wolpo offered monetary rewards "to those who take out and neutralize terrorists attacking Jews."

In 2003, Shmueli could offer no one any money but was willing to receive it. Coming off bankruptcy, he told the administrator he was living off charity – as he had no income – and lived in poverty in Brooklyn on \$1000 per month.

In 2005, Dov Wolpo was active in the protest movement that fought the disengagement from Gaza. Following the failure of that campaign he organized a rabbinical conference entitled "We shall never forget and we shall never forgive". Thousands of supporters joined

Shmueli is not known to have any supporters and he asked his lawyers to forgive and/or forget any debts.

In January 2006 Dov Wolpo wrote a letter to Prime Minister Ehud Olmert warning him that if he ever gave up even "a tiny parcel" of the Land of Israel he would suffer from a bitter fate. He called for Olmert to be "brought to trial and punished."

Shmueli is not known to have sent any letters other than to his attorneys.

Dov Wolpo, addressing a demonstration against the Olmert government's peace moves with the Palestinian Authority, said the prime minister, Vice Premier Chaim Ramon, Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni and Defense Minister Ehud Barak would be "hung from the gallows" were Israel run properly.

He released a film under the SOS Israel name entitled "there is judgement and there is a judge". Maariv reported that two million copies of the film were to be distributed.

Shmueli has made no films but says he plans to make a film in the future.

In 2007, Dov Wolpo started a political campaign under the slogan "if anyone comes to remove me from my home, I will chop off their hands" to protest the removal of Jewish settlers from their West Bank homes.

In 2007. Shmueli was appointed by David Ho, to begin litigation to chop off my management of One Niagara, a business I was running.

In December 2007, Dov Wolpo stated that his followers will secede from Israel if the Israeli government withdraws from the West Bank

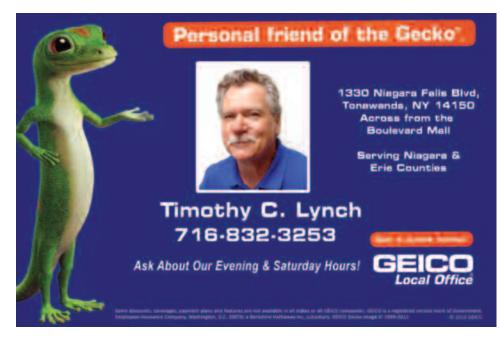
In December 2007 Shmueli launched a plan to get his lawyers to secede after not paying them and at least two landlords – in Brooklyn and one in China demanded that he secede from the premises after they evicted him.

And, on 11, November, 2008 Dov Wolpo founded his new party, Eretz Yisrael Shelanu.

It allied with the Jewish National Front, and ran in the 2009 Knesset elections as part of the National Union alliance. Eretz Yisrael Shelanu took one of the party's four seats, taken by Michael Ben-Ari.

And Shmueli sent his letter threatening Rabbi Dov Wolpo

While Shmueli is lucky that Dov Wolpo chose not to hang him from the gallows, this episode and one we will relate next week that also occurred in Israel will bring great joy to those who follow the adventures of Shmueli, and need reinforcement that he is indeed a conman of unusual proportions.



Is the Constitution, and specifically the Second Amendment, more applicable to some and less applicable to others based upon in-

come, social standing, or political office? No.

Not at all. My home, your loved ones, our

neighbor's small business, and all of of our in-

dividual personal property is every bit as de-

serving of protection by firearm as that of the

wealthiest and most influential among us.

More money or more influence is not trans-

nowhere is this truth more evident than

through an historically accurate interpretation

of the Second Amendment of the Constitu-

In America everyone is equal. And

latable into more constitutional rights.

Second Amendment Watch: We Need Guns and Armed Guards, You Don't, Say the Wealthy and Politically Connected

Anna Howard

What do presidential candidate Hillary Clinton and President Obama have in common? And what do President Obama and Hillary have in common with Michael Bloomberg, the billionaire former mayor of New York City? All three of these famous individuals have around the clock armed guards guaranteeing their personal security and protecting their property.

The similarities of this renown American trio doesn't end with the commonality of their particular security details. These three folks all have a well-publicized desire to limit the average American's access to the Second Amendment: in other words, this renown trio is in favor of stringent gun control. In fact, President Obama has recently gone so far as to make it known that he now plans to use an executive order, if need be, to institute the tougher gun laws that he's been unable to move through Congress in the last seven years.

Since the recent extremist Islamic terrorist attacks in Paris and San Bernardino, California, gun sales and gun permit applications are at all-time highs. Why is that? It's due to the average American's sincere belief that their city streets, shopping malls, schools, and social venues have grown increasingly vulnerable to terrorists of every stripe, and especially attractive to extremist Islamic terrorists.

To these Americans – who feel abandoned by the government they rightfully expect to protect them – it's time to take matters of self-defense into their own hands, like never before. Critics of the Second Amendment may call it paranoia or exaggerated fear for personal safety – this desire to arm oneself – but the drive to protect oneself, one's loved ones, and one's property is as old as time and as elemental to survival as fresh air.

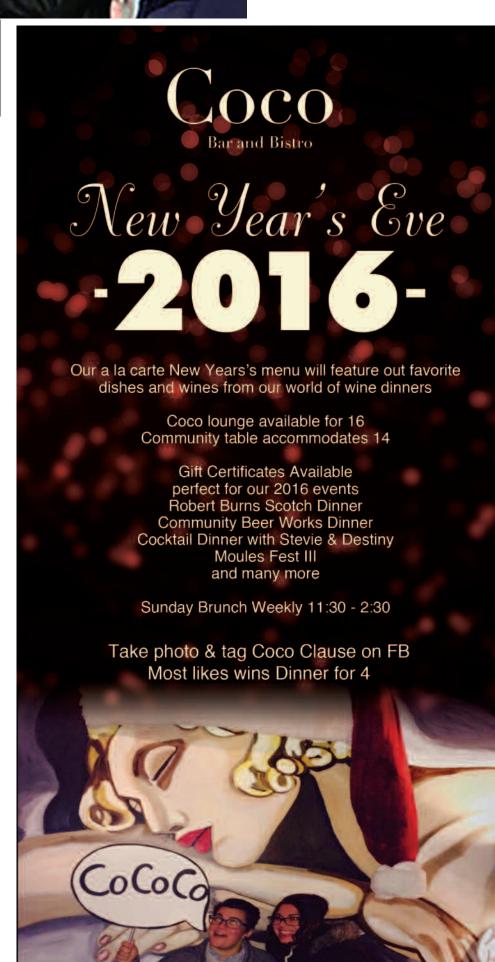
That President Obama, Hillary Clinton, and Michael Bloomberg want to curtail, if not outright repeal the Second Amendment, is



Michael Bloomberg, Barrack Obama and Hilary Clinton all enjoy the Second Amendment while fervently desiring that you

hypocrisy of astounding magnitude. Their gun control philosophy could be summarized as, "We're important and wealthy Americans. We deserve and need firearms and armed guards in order to protect ourselves, our loved ones, and our property, but the rest of America shouldn't have these same rights of personal protection."

Oh, really? The Second Amendment has no income test. It wasn't written with the upper class or those of vast wealth specifically in mind. Quite the contrary it was written for all Americans as was the Constitution. Is the Clinton compound in Chappaqua, NY more important than your modest homestead? Does Michael Bloomberg deserve special rights to personal protection because he lives in an exclusive penthouse and owns a fleet of jet helicopters that he enjoys flying as a hobby? Because Barack Obama lives in the nation's White House is his house more sacrosanct than your house?





Cult of NXIVM Part 6: Raniere and The Bronfmans Try to Buy The Dalai Lama

Frank Parlato

During my tenure as a press consultant for purported cult leader, Keith Raniere, and his benefactors, Clare and Sara Bronfman (heiresses of the Seagram's liquor fortune), I was tasked with improving Raniere's public image and that of his company, NXIVM, which critics say is a "cult."

During my tenure, Raniere enjoyed a rare respite from negative press, something he had not seen before or after I left the organization.

GETTING THE DALAI LAMA

The slight improvement in their press coverage under my guidance may have encouraged Raniere to seek what many commercial operations seek — a celebrity endorsement. In the past he had used the late actor Eddie Albert. He tried for Goldie Hawn once — but failed. This time he wanted a "higher powered" endorsement.

One day, I got an enthusiastic call from one of Raniere's inner circle.

"What would you say if we got the Dalai Lama to come to Albany and announce that Keith's teachings are the solution to the world's problems?" she asked.

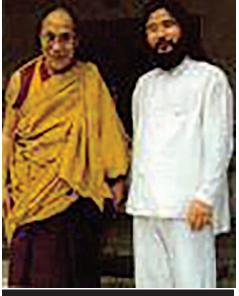
I asked, "Does The Dalai Lama know Keith?"

"No. But Sara and Clare are ready to donate a million to the Dalai Lama. One of the Dalai Lama's assistants, a monk is here in Albany and Sara is showing him everything. If the Dalai Lama... endorses Keith, the press will not say we are a cult; we are cutting edge."

I told her that a slow and steady transparency with the press would be more effective and less costly not that I didn't think they could secure the services of the Dalai Lama.

While little is known about the Dalai Lama's personal wealth or his Tibetan government-in-exile's finances – their published budget for 2002-03 amounted to \$22 million – I believed that if the donation was large enough, the Dalai Lama would come.

But I advised Raniere that I doubted this would spin well in the press. This was the



The Dalai Lama with another cult leader, Shoko Asahara who masterminded the subway poison gas attack on a Japanese subway that killed 13 and injured more than 6,000. He is said to have donated \$1.2 million to the Dalai Lama.

last time I was asked to advise or help on press matters.

KEITH RANIERE, HE'S AS SMART AS IT BETS

Keith Raniere in his online bio claims he is a "scientist, mathematician, philosopher, entrepreneur, educator, inventor and author". He also claims he has one of the highest IQs in the world - with an estimated problem-solving ability that only one in 425 million people can equal.

If this is true, in a world with seven billion people, there are less than 20 who can match wits with him.

THE DALAI LAMA HAS ACCOMPLISHMENTS TOO

Since 1950, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso has been the spiritual and secular leader of Tibet. Since 1959, he has been a refugee living in India having escaped the repression of Tibetans under the Chinese government.

The Dalai Lama has established monas-



His Holiness the Dalai Lama with Venerable Lama Tenzin, who had a special relationship with Sara Bronfman.

teries and schools for Tibetans in India, lectured in more than 60 countries, and authored or co-authored more than 100 books.

Along the way, The Dalai Lama met Pope Paul VI, Pope John Paul II, the Chief Rabbi of Israel, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Now he was to meet Keith Raniere, genius, and founder of NXIM.

GETTING READY

The Bronfman sisters worked for more than a year organizing his visit. Sara, in particular, worked hand in hand with the Venerable Lama Tenzin Dhonden, a special emissary of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The title venerable is given to Buddhist monks who take a vow of celibacy and poverty.

The two had met in Idaho and Sara told Lama Tenzin that the Dalai Lama might find NXIVM's tools useful (and their money the Dalai Lama might also find useful.)

Tenzin visited Sara in Albany and met NXIVM members. Despite the allegations that NXIVM was a cult, Tenzin said, "I have my own intellectual resource, capacity, to know persons, to feel persons. I can pick up like that, very easily."



Clare and Sara Bronfman paid plenty to sit on stage with the Dalai Lama. But did they get their money's worth? Some say yes, since they did not earn any money, do not know the value of money, and any money they lose which does not go into the vengeful hands of Keith Raniere is that much better for the sisters and their guru swindler? leader.

Thanks to Lama Tenzin, Sara and Clare Bronfman and Nancy Salzman, president of NXIVM, were granted an audience with the Dalai Lama in India. There they expressed their desire to invite His Holiness to Albany to meet Raniere, and offered to make a suitable, Bronfman-style contribution to the Dalai Lama's causes.

The Dalai Lama agreed.

Back in Albany, an excited Clare told the Albany Times Union that she had a vision of "bringing His Holiness together with Keith, believing that we may have certain tools that His Holiness would think would be good and beneficial for humanity."

Venerable Lama Tenzin Dhonden lent his voice, as well, announcing, "With the ethical tools developed by Keith Raniere, and the presence, wisdom and guidance of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, we have the essential ingredients to transform our society."

FIG LEAVES FALLING

In the sex charged society of the love cult of Raniere, it wasn't long before the Venerable Lama Tenzin Dhonden was transformed by Raniere's ethical tools. One night, Sara's mother's friend found Sara and Lama Tenzin in the hot tub cuddling amorously, or, as NXIVM inner circle member, Kristin Keeffe, called it, "canoodling."

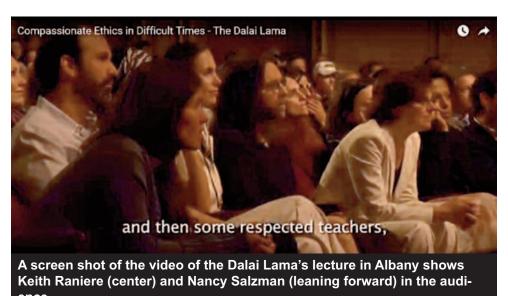


The Dalai Lama places a scarf of purity on love cult leader Keith Raniere. Getting the Dalai Lama to put the scarf on harem-keeping, vengeful-to-enemies Raniere –wound up costing the Bronfman sisters a reported \$1-\$2 million.



The Dalai Lama on stage with Bishop Howard Hubbard, Clare Bronfman, Sara Bronfman and Albany Mayor Jerry Jennings.

Dalai Lama says 'investigate'



Barbara Bouchey, another inner circle member, said, "Yeah, they weren't having sex, but they were in the hot tub in a hotnecking embrace."

A celibate monk in a hot tub with heiresses? The Venerable Lama Tenzin was inches away from a torrid affair.

The Dalai Lama teaches that sex offers fleeting satisfaction and leads to trouble later, while chastity required of a monk offers a better life and "more independence, more freedom".

How much trouble Lama Tenzin got into, is unknown. From the hot tub it was a few paces to the bedroom.

Bouchey said, "I've showed up to her house a couple of times and the two of them come out of that bedroom."

Keeffe said, "I've seen him come out of the f--g bedroom. It wasn't even a secret."

Raniere knew. He used to say to Sara in front of other people, referring to Lama Tenzin, 'how's your husband?'"

Helping him dispense with the monk's second vow – of poverty – Sara Bronfman purchased a home for her lover Lama in Half Moon, a suburb of Albany.

BAD PRESS DAYS

While things were hot with lover Lama and Sara, her sister, Clare, announced to the media that the Dalai Lama was to appear for four days of talks and meetings, capped by an appearance on Sunday, April 19, 2009, at the Albany Times Union Center, where His Holiness would give an address on compassion and ethics – a lecture sponsored by Clare, Sara and Raniere's new organization, The World Ethical Foundations Consortium.

Tickets were priced at \$52, \$82 and \$112 and, with a seating capacity of 17,500, that could pull in a million dollars for the Dalai Lama.

Instead of receiving the tidings with joy, there was an outburst of shock that the Dalai Lama would associate himself with the "cult-like" NXIVM.

The Albany Times-Union reported that despite the Dalai Lama's stature as a religious leader and Nobel Peace Prize winner, no school was willing to lend its name as an official host for an event associated with Raniere.

Skidmore College and Rensselaer Polytechnic, declined to host the event.

The University of Albany agreed to rent out an arena but with the condition that "NXIVM and the organization were not going to have any part with dealing with our students, or advertising or recruiting," according to U Albany's vice president for development, Fardin Sanai.

Stories in the Times Union, the Albany Student Press, The Daily Gazette, and Albany Metroland captured people's astonishment at the coupling of the Dalai Lama with the Bronfman-funded Raniere cult.

Typical of this was what Daniel Weaver wrote in the Schenectady Gazette, "Keith Raniere has been involved in controversy for the last 20 years. He's been the subject of lawsuits and investigations. He has initiated numerous lawsuits (which) harasses people.... He is hardly a poster boy for humanitarianism, peace and ethics; and his invitation to the Dalai Lama to speak makes one question the motive of the invitation....

. In 2003, Keith Raniere roped actress Goldie Hawn into speaking.... When Hawn learned about the controversies surrounding Raniere ... she canceled her appearance. If Goldie Hawn has the sense not to appear at an event sponsored by Keith Raniere, then cancellation by the Dalai Lama, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, should be a no-brainer."

LIKE GOLDIE, THE DALAI LAMA CANCELS

With the spate of negative publicity, the Dalai Lama canceled his appearance.

Times Union Publisher George Hearst, who spoke with a representative of the Dalai Lama, said, "there's enough stuff out there that (they) don't need to expose His Holiness to this kind of risk."

This was a PR nightmare for NXIVM. If the Dalai Lama did not appear he was all but saying NXIVM was a cult. Raniere instructed top assistant, Nancy Salzman, to rush to India to see the Dalai Lama and bring Sara and Clare and their checkbook.

They were persuasive.

While the Dalai Lama would not consent to a four day Albany visit, he agreed to deliver a single lecture in Albany –during a 24-hour visit. He was coming to the US anyway for a Harvard University sponsored engagement

Perhaps not coincidentally, "The Dalai Lama Trust," was registered in New York State, just two days before the Dalai Lama's rescheduled appearance in Albany. I was told by reliable sources at NXIVM that the Bronfmans donated \$1 million to the Dalai Lama.

SO HE'S BAAAAACK

The press that jubilantly announced the



cancelation now announced the rescheduling, noting that the Dalai Lama event moved from the 17,500 seat Albany Times-Union Center to the much smaller, 2,800 seat Albany Palace Theater. Ticket prices dropped to \$55 to \$85 per person which meant a gross of less than \$250,000.

Critics took shots at the Dalai Lama. It was widely assumed that Bronfman money changed his mind.

When questioned about financial incentives from the Bronfmans connected to his visit to Albany, Lobsang Nyandak, representative of the Dalai Lama to the Americas, told the Times Union that the Dalai Lama would not receive money for his trip. When pressed for clarification, however, he said that whatever money was received would be "used for charitable and other purposes as per His Holiness' guidance."

THE DALAI LAMA ARRIVES AND EXPLAINS

On May 6, 2009, the Dalai Lama arrived to speak at Albany's Palace Theatre to a near capacity crowd of about 2600. Sara and Clare were seated onstage with him.

At the beginning of his talk, the Dalai Lama presented Sara and Clare with white silk scarves, called "kataks," which, according to Tibetan culture, symbolize purity.

The Dalai Lama, seated cross legged on an oversized chair, addressed the audience on the topic of compassion for about an hour. When the time came for questions, the Dalai Lama was asked about his canceled then rescheduled visit.

"Firstly I received an invitation that, in principle, I accepted," The Dalai Lama said, "Because this is controversial, some allegations, then we carry further investigations. Then finally this organization's teacher (Salzman) and some friend(s) (Bronfman sisters) came to see me in Dharmasala I told them very friendly, very openly, 'as far your sort of work for promotion of ethics I fully support.... but at the same time If you have done something wrong, you must accept, you must admit, change, make correction. If you have not done (anything wrong), make clear all these allegations (are untrue), truthfully, honestly, openly, transparently."

Covering his bases, the Dalai Lama asked the press to investigate – everything – to have the long nose of the elephant – and smell the truth from the front and behind.

At the event's conclusion, the Dalai Lama called Raniere – who was in the audience – on stage and placed a katak around his neck.

A LESSON FOR BRONFMANS

The day after the event, Sara wrote on her blog, "As we stood in the rain to say

goodbye to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, he touched each of our cheeks and held our faces next to his with the words 'thank you' and 'see you again.' Tears started running uncontrollably down my cheeks.... his visit was a privilege we fought for..... It was a long road, and one paved with hardship, adversity, and tremendous growth. The highly paid media campaign designed to destroy our company, or any person or entity related to it, reared its ugly head at the news of his visit. We had naively believed people would be excited about his visit and that our community would put their pettiness aside to unite for this momentous occasion. We were wrong. His visit was met with fear and cynicism and some of our local media sources worked ardently to destroy the honor faster than we could build it....

"In the end the truth prevailed, but in the process we lost participants, money and good faith.... It was a victory for us, for this region and for humanity. I feel proud to have been a part of this great feat."

Clare wrote on her blog, "Due to the ongoing struggle.... how we have been portrayed in the media – his visiting and message was particularly moving. His coming brought about a certain contradiction: what is written about NXIVM, Keith, Sara and myself in the press – being labeled as a cult – and a world leader showing his support for us after thorough investigation."

And reportedly a donation of one million dollars.

After the Dalai Lama's visit – the honor that Raniere and the Bronfmans sought from the endorsement eluded them.

My exposure of a \$26 million Los Angeles real estate scam guided by Raniere using Bronfman money led to my being fired. This leaked out to the press and coupled with the Bronfmans \$65 million in commodities losses – also guided by Raniere dwarfed a single lecture by the Dalai Lama.

And the onslaught of negative publicity has rained down on them ever since.



On May 6, the Dalai Lama arrived to speak at Albany's Palace Theatre to a near capacity crowd of about 2600. Sara and Clare were seated onstage with him.

The Eyes Have it as the Reporter Launches Dyster Watch 2016

Anna Howard

We're looking, we're listening, we're paying attention. The Reporter is watching the moves of Mayor Dyster as his re-election fades in the rear view mirror and the post-election city hall gears get greased with quid pro deals that were made pre-election.

The mayor cobbled together a clumsy but ultimately effective political campaign as his witches brew of support gave him a third term with a mere 47% of the vote. That John Ac-

cardo would be getting sworn in as the new mayor next month, had Glenn Choolokian not engaged in a doomed from the start write-in campaign, is beyond doubt.

To vacuum up that paltry 47% Dyster had to wheedle and cajole and turn campaign carnival barker as he pledged, promised, and pleaded his way to a third term win. We know of some of the pre-election promises and commitments he made. People have told us. We're already seeing preferred, influential, city employees benefitting from the mayor's win. Fortunately for them they had pre-election trinkets

to trade with the mayor, such as the endorsement by unions and management employee groups. Woe unto those employees who had only their commitment to the city and the sweat of their brow to offer His Honor.

The Reporter will be paying careful attention as to how the pork in what should be a pork free city budget is divvied up. We'll be watching the Third Street loans and grants, the consulting contracts, the legal fees, the raises, stipends, promotions, special overtime arrangements, the use of the dwindling casino cash, the business of the train station, nonstop ice pavil-

ion renovation, Sal Maglie Stadium, convenient purchasing agreements, and the musical chairs of Dyster's "cabinet level positions."

That 47% – as weak as it was – didn't happen by accident. It was built by the Dyster Machine one campaign promise at a time to unions, key department heads, not for profits, and friendly businesses with all of it coming at tremendous eventual cost to the taxpayers.

As Robert DeNiro said to his future son in law, played by Ben Stiller, in the hit comedy Meet the Flockers, "I'm keeping an eye on you."

Ricky's Corner: Happy New Year From the Maker of the Best Pizza in the World!



Happy New Year!!

Hope everyone is safe and enjoying The Holidays.

We have been busy at The Nifty the last few weeks. The crowds are getting bigger and good times are being had by our customers and

We are truly appreciative of the wonderful support our friends, family & local community have shown.

We strive to make each and everyone of

In the time of your life, live—so that in that wondrous time you shall not

add to the misery and sorrow of the

world, but shall smile to the infinite

— William Saroyan, The Time Of

delight and mystery of it."

Your Life

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Our great tasting food, our commitment to top notch service combined with our nostal-gic 50'style dining room make for a one of a kind dinning destination in Western New York.

In addition to always making you feel welcome, our bar manager Liz has done an incredible job of making The Nifty the place to be when the sun has set. Currently we offer Thursday open mic, Friday Karaoke & Saturday band night. Early next year we will start trivia leagues, paint parties and kids' night.

Let's face it folks, winters in Western New York can make you feel downright blue.

Come down to The Nifty and please allow us the chance to help you kick your winter cabin fever to the curb. An oasis of great food & fun awaits you. My staff and I welcome you all. Hope to see you And one last thing: I want to remind everybody to make strong New Year's resolu-

And if I may so bold I would advise everyone to put "eating more pizza in 2016" at or near the top of their list.

Since we make the best pizza in the world, we will be pleased to help you fulfill your New Year's resolution with gusto.



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Did Kennedy Play Duplicitous Role in Cuomo Child Support Settlement?

According to the New York Post, two anonymous sources said that Gov. Andrew Cuomo, 58, has been battling his ex-wife Kerry Kennedy, 56, for 2.5 years over child support payments for their three daughters and possibly over alimony.

The Reporter surmises that one of the Post's anonymous sources may have been Kennedy herself.

On the record, Kennedy and Cuomo issued joint statements denying they had financial disputes over the support of their children.

Statements released by Cuomo and Kennedy read in part. "The Post hearing rumors of discord, they are just that, unfounded and untrue gossip, and as such their publication would be hurtful and inaccurate."

A second statement said, "Kerry speaks for herself and only she would know the

truth.'

But anonymous source(s) – which the Post identified only as "close" to the Kennedy family – and "well known" – say Cuomo "didn't pay child support or alimony for the past 2½ years until a few weeks ago."

It is not clear why Cuomo would have to pay the purportedly wealthy Kennedy alimony.

Kennedy is the daughter of former Sen. Robert F. Kennedy.

The anonymous source(s) told Fred Dicker of The Post that Kerry agreed to issue the "no problems" statements because Cuomo finally agreed to financial terms for the children.

Allegedly, disputes over costs of education for Cuomo/Kennedy children, Cara, 20, attending Harvard, Mariah, 20, attending Brown U., and Michaela, 18, recently graduated from high school, came an end, per-

haps not coincidentally, just after Dicker – who has been a critic of Cuomo – began making inquiries into the matter.

Cuomo is paid \$179,000 a year as governor.

Cuomo and Kennedy had an unpleasant, very public divorce battle in 2003 following revelations that Kennedy was having an affair with a married, wealthy family friend, Bruce Colley.

The conflicting statements between the anonymous sources "close to the Kennedys" and the public statement of Kerry Kennedy has raised the question in our minds: Was Kerry Kennedy one of the unnamed sources?

If not, did she encourage a relative (who she armed with her version of the child dispute facts) to contact Dicker?

Did she successfully use the press to embarrass Cuomo into settling?

Did Kennedy lie to Cuomo about who

the anonymous sources were for the Post?

Did Cuomo agree to disadvantageous terms to halt unfavorable press?

After she got the agreement from Cuomo, did Kennedy agree to join Cuomo in 'lying' to the Post about their dispute?

If Kennedy was the anonymous source, then this cynical ploy was transparent to Dicker of the Post.

He has an obligation to protect his sources, but also to report the truth.

Dicker wrote, "One of The Post's sources said Kennedy agreed to sign on to the joint statement with Cuomo because 'he finally agreed to make the payments he hadn't been making' and 'out of a desire to shield her daughters from as much of this as possible."

Sal Maglie Stadium 'Management' Up for Bids – Said not to be a 'cash-cow' like Ice Pavilion!?!?

The City of Niagara Falls Division of Purchasing issued a Request for Proposals for a "License to Operate and Manage Sal Maglie Stadium."

The successful proposer will have exclusive rights to sell food, alcohol and other beverages at the 2500 seat capacity stadium located in Hyde Park in the center of the city.

The stadium is being offered in "as-is" condition – sort of – and permits an operator to stage events that could generate ticket revenue in addition to food and beverage sales.

Sal Maglie Stadium is presently maintained by the Department of Public Works.

It has not been in regular use since 2014.

The Niagara Power baseball team stop using the stadium amid complaints that it could not get core maintenance issues addressed by the city while at the same time the city refused to let the team make its own repairs or needed maintenance.

The city cited union issues prevented the team from doing common maintenance items like changing the light bulbs.

Explaining why the management of the stadium is being put out to bid, Niagara Falls Mayor Paul Dyster told the Niagara Gazette, "We don't regard the direct operation of Sal Maglie as a cash cow. It doesn't have the same income possibilities as something like the (Hyde Park) ice pavilion."

The city invested \$13 million into the Ice Pavilion – bonding some of the cost – since Dyster has been mayor and collects an annual rent of about \$200 per year from the operator who won a bid in 2014.

At the present rent, it will take 55 years to recoup the \$13 million investment of the so-called "cash cow" not counting interest on the bond.

Besides the bleachers and a regulation sized baseball field which is in disrepair, amenities at Sal Maglie include parking lots, a small concession area, ticket booths, two elevators, locker rooms and bathrooms.

Sealed proposals will be received by the City Purchasing Division at City Hall, Room 17, 745 Main Street, Niagara Falls, New



Sal Maglie Stadium playing field.

York, 14302, no later than February 1, 2016 at 11:00 A.M.

The length of the license term shall be

for a minimum of three (3) years commencing on April 1, 2016 (or sooner), with a maximum term of five (5) years.



The city is putting out the operation of Sal Maglie Stadium to bid.

The deal may not – much like the Ice Pavilion make money for the city given the deferred maintenance and the terms of the RFP.

While the proposal is to include rent paid to the City and offers an option to pay in one lump sum or monthly, the city will be responsible for repairs of the stadium facility structure and its fixtures such as the elevator, electrical system, plumbing and lighting system and parking lot

Routine maintenance (i.e. replacement of light bulbs, winterizing the stadium facility,) are the responsibility of the operator and, evidently, if the operator wants to fix the scoreboard or improve the condition of the playing field he or she may do so at their own expense.

The city estimates it will cost an operator \$149,183.32 to maintain the stadium annually and will make periodic inspections to insure the facility is being maintained and operated in a satisfactory condition.

Highest bidder may not necessarily be chosen.

Among the items to be considered in making its selection determination, the City will, among other things, take into consideration rental payments, but also the uses proposed, as well as the business background, experience and qualifications of the licensee/staff.

The amateur New York Collegiate Baseball League Niagara Power played 23 games at Sal Maglie each summer, and the stadium also hosted high school sporting events until recently.

Niagara Gazette sportswriter Doug Smith estimated that about 1,193 professional baseball games were played since the stadium opened as Hyde Park Stadium in 1939 and that about 1.2 million people attended games played by the various minor league Rainbows, Citizens, Bisons, Rapids, and Mallards.

Ice Boom Installation Complete, Along With Our Fleecing

Frank Parlato

The New York Power Authority (NYPA) successfully installed the three remaining floating sections of the Lake Erie-Niagara River ice boom on December 28, completing the work for the 2015-2016 season.

The official Lake Erie water temperature on December 28 was 42 degrees F.

The ice boom is a steel pontoon structure that keeps the Niagara River free of large chunks of ice.

It was installed in the mid 1960's and is owned by NYPA.

The main purpose of the ice boom is to enrich NYPA since it allows for millions of dollars of additional hydroelectric power generation every year since the river is not obstructed by large chunks of ice.

NYPA's overall profits are largely dependent on the profit it makes from control of the hydropower generated by the Niagara River – which has exceeded \$230 million per year.

NYPA's control of hydropower in the Niagara Region has been criticized by this writer as having a negative impact on the wealth of the region since the inexpensive hydropower produced locally is not used by local residents, who pay among the highest electrical rates in the nation and who get their electrical power mainly from burning



ity's "JonCaire" Tug towing a span of the Lake Erie-Niagara River Ice Boom from the Buffalo River shore to begin preparations for installation across Lake Erie.

coal and other inefficient methods by National Grid – a company owned by investors in England. (Ironic we have the richest nat-

ural source of hydropower in the world and we have to buy our power from a company owned by investors in Great Britain.)

Meantime, NYPA delivers our locally produced hydropower to New York City and eight other states.

That is right. NYPA controls our locally generated hydropower while local residents get little use of the power.

In 1957, this region, represented by local elected officials, signed a 50-year license with NYPA and then renewed the license in 2007 for another 50 years – a century without control of our hydropower – which gave NYPA control of the hydropower generated on the US side of the Niagara River.

In return NYPA gives a pittance (less than 5% of its profits from the Niagara [Robert Moses] power plant) back to the region in annual payments to several municipalities and grants through its Greenway fund

To use an analogy to explain the arrangement: Suppose a region grew marvelous apples – red and delicious; they were famous for it. They could get rich from the sale, and healthy from eating these apples – but the people and their children – for 50 years – never tasted the apples or profited from them (unless, of course, they moved away – which many did).

Then these people of this apple growing region and their uniquely inept leaders re-

newed the license of the "Apple Authority" to have dominion over their apples, and, for another 50 years, they imported far more expensive, but inferior apples, or went without apples, though the orchards were all around them.

And the people remained dead broke.

You'd call these people insane, wouldn't

You'd call these people insane, wouldn't you?

Meantime the ice boom is in and the people of NYC and eight other states are grateful for our insanity.

American Cruelty: L.A. County Jail's 'Potty Watch' Policy Comes Under Scrutiny

Los Angeles Times | December 29, 2015

Dozens of partially or fully naked inmates at a Los Angeles County jail were chained to a wall with their hands behind their backs for hours as officials waited for them to expel contraband from their bodies.

The Sheriff's Department has stopped the "potty watch" practice and referred 24 cases to prosecutors.

Tired of battling obesity?

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Monday, Jan. 18 at 5:30 p.m. Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center 621 10th St., Niagara Falls

Thursday, Jan. 26 at 6 p.m.
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The Right Side: What Is Religion in The First Amendment?!



J. Gary **DiLaura**

The Right Side

"Congress shall

make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances."

According to uscourts.gov; "The First Amendment has two provisions concerning religion: the Establishment Clause and the Free Exercise Clause. The Establishment clause prohibits the government from "establishing" a religion. The precise definition of "establishment" is unclear. Historically, it meant prohibiting state-sponsored churches,

such as the Church of England. '(and ISLAM?) '.

Today, what constitutes an "establishment of religion" is often governed under the three-part test set forth by the U.S. Supreme Court in Lemon v. Kurtzman, 403 U.S. 602 (1971). Under the "Lemon" test, government can assist religion only if (1) the primary purpose of the assistance is secular, (2) the assistance must neither promote nor inhibit religion, and (3) there is no excessive entanglement between church and state. (that means ... NO Islam and NO Ayatollah)

The Free Exercise Clause protects citizens' right to practice their religion as they please, so long as the practice does not run afoul of a "public morals" or a "compelling" governmental interest. For instance, in Prince v. Massachusetts, 321 U.S. 158 (1944), the Supreme Court held that a state could force the inoculation of children whose parents would not allow such action for religious reasons. The Court held that the state had an overriding interest in protecting public health and safety."

It would seem fair to say then that if a Book of Faith called for the murder, assault, stoning, beheading of anyone who doesn't believe in their religion and the believers follow that path, it must be in violation of the 1st Amendment and our Rule of Law, or am I wrong? I need some help here! What do you think? This is all a "no brainer" to me!

Obviously a Religion that denounces the First Amendment (separation of Church and State) does not even allow Debbie

Wasserman Schultz wiggle room to spin that one into allowable, unless, of course, she too wants to eliminate our Constitution... OMG... is that what she and the Democrat Party are up to... you know Bernie Sanders and Hillary, along with Obama?!! The Democrat leaders, want to do away with the Constitution! That's why they are working on the First and Second Amendments. If you are a Democrat and want to save our Constitution, you may well have to vote for whoever the Republican candidate is, just to save your freedom. Think about that for a while!

It follows that if a book of faith professes acts of violence that are contrary to our Rule of Law but those acts are NOT practiced nor preached and only peaceful assembly is practiced and preached within our Rule of Law, then it's a Religion and not a group of thugs. However, I feel there must be open access to all religious service to insure that it is a peaceful assembly!

It MUST then also follow that if those people who have a book of faith that specifies violence, in direct contradiction to our Rule of Law, and if those same people "preach and practice" such acts, like 57 Islamic Muslim Nations do, they can and MUST be prohibited by our Constitution AND OUR FREAKING RULE OF LAW, from practicing those beliefs here!!!!

So, it seems to me, those who are Muslims and cling to the Koran as their book of faith, need to do some soul searching and decide if they want to assimilate to the American Freedom of Religion beliefs and our Rule of Law OR use our freedom of religion AGAINST us, like Valerie Jarrett said she wants to do. If you don't assimilate and we won't "submit" and America doesn't lose, what do you think is going to happen?!

Write a "modified" Koran without beheading and stoning infidels or go back to Saudi Arabia, Iran, Sudan, etc. and cut off all the infidel heads you can find!

I don't buy the argument that I have to make concessions for, nor allow people who want to kill me; to practice their unlawful beliefs in my Country, in the name of Islam. Valerie Jarrett, Barack Obama, Bernie



Strength, therefore, is the one thing needful. Strength is the medicine for the world's disease. Strength is the medicine which the poor must have when tyrannized over by the rich. Strength is the medicine that the ignorant must have when oppressed by the learned; and it is the medicine that sinners must have when tyrannized over by other sinners.

Swami Vivekananda

Sanders, Hillary 'Rotten" Clinton and anyone else who wants to destroy America and my Constitution can all go to Hell, Iran, Saudi Arabia, or Russia (in the case of Clinton and Sanders) if they love Allah or communism so much because I don't, nor do most Americans!

If you are a Democrat, especially those fought for the right to be a Democrat, you had better pull your head out of that dark place you have it stuck, so at least your ears clear! You are going to lose you Constitution and your Country if you vote for the crap the Democrat party is offering! Obama has brought us to the brink!!! Clinton or Sanders will push us over!!!

America, created by geniuses and run by idiots!



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Buffalo Army National Guard Unit Honored for Unit Video by New **York's Adjutant General**

A video produced by Buffalo's 152nd York National Guard's YouTube Channel: Engineer Company has been named winner of the New York National Guard's first unit video contest.

New York Army National Guard 2nd Lt. Erin a video competition in order to capture the Morris, a platoon leader in the 152nd Engi- varied missions and activities across the neer Company, from video and photographs she took as well as those provided by other unit members.

The video recounts the highlights of the company's training and operations during federal fiscal year 2015, which includes the unit's response to the "Snovember" November 2014 snowstorm in Erie County, the company's annual training, and its annual "engineer rodeo."

The video can be seen here on the New

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R6t TZNk3s7M

Major General Patrick Murphy, the Ad-The 10-minute video was produced by jutant General of New York, decided to hold 16,000 members of the New York Army and

> Air National Guard. The 152nd Engineer Company video is an excellent introduction into what one Army National Guard unit accomplishment in a year, he said.

> The unit and 2nd Lt. Morris, a Buffalo resident, works in the marketing department of the Buffalo News, will receive Adjutant General awards for their effort.

Only in North Tonawanda: Tale of Two Ends of Northeast Ave.



Sweeney Payne

Oliver Street actually doesn't look bad if it weren't for trash, litter and too conspicuous and generally always overflowing garbage totes at some rental properties.

The few facades between Schenck and Wheatfield that got attention with the grant program do look "nice" on the outside.

Oliver still looks like the Oliver of old. It just doesn't have small business owners residing in their buildings with their families. That is what made it what most of us remember it as.

Also gone are Buffalo Bolt, Auto Wheel Coaster, Bennett Lumber, the Main Street, River Road and Tonawanda Island industries and their combined thousands of employees to patronize the bars, restaurants, diners, small shops and service businesses on Oliver.

Privately owned resident-occupied homes and buildings converted from store-fronts to residences look fine on the outside and are generally taken care of inside and out. Oliver isn't going to look like Wurlitzer Park neighborhoods. Those from the west end of NT wouldn't want them to! It's not

Wurlitzer Park. It's Oliver Street, with all the character and charm of its history and current residents.

From the Town of Wheatfield border where it's Ward Road to Walck Road/9th Avenue, it's pretty well maintained, with just an occasional rental property like 970 Oliver spoiling the view. Except for the section with a number of properties owned by the planning board member who got most of the grant funding for façade renovations, some ignored sections, like from 1st to 9th Avenues and from Mechanic to Schenck, could use some of those grants.

A few places seriously in need of attention include the old Hungarian Orthodox Church at First Avenue, the old Mirror Room at 728, the Rainbow Sports building, the house at 341 that had a bad fire and is still boarded up, the Bestaste Mini Market at 653 Oliver. There are more than a dozen vacant storefronts that could use business occupants. The block on the east side of Oliver between Walck and 8th is sitting vacant, waiting for a business to replace Twin-Ton Auto Sales before it deteriorates.

NT has known for at least most of the last decade that non-resident property owners with drug-addicted and alcoholic tenants with no respect for their neighbors are a serious problem. Perhaps in 2016, they can make a plan to remediate that problem.

Mayor Pappas re-appointed Joseph Sikora, Robert Frank, Anthony DiBernardo, Mark Anastasi, Mark Lemke, Edward Smolinski, and Arthur Vater to the Traffic Safety Committee for a two-year term beginning January 1. They have all been on that committee for the last two years at least.

There is also a DPW Advisor on the committee.

The Committee should tour both legs of Northeast Avenue. None of them live there.

The north leg, from where Carr Street joins 19th Avenue, has six apartment buildings and three single family homes. On 19th between Carr and Payne, there are four apartment buildings and three private residences, the Gibbons Court apartment complex with two entrance drives, and two entrance drives into Bishop Gibbons Apartments, which fronts on Payne. Most access is from 19th. There's also the busy Walgreens' parking lot entrance/exit on 19th.

There's NO stop sign for those exiting the south leg of Northeast onto either 19th or Carr. There's NO stop sign for traffic going west on 19th into the south leg of Northeast nor for those turning left onto Carr.

Fortunately, there is a stop sign at the 19th/Northeast end of Carr.

The south leg of Northeast is actually a street that begins at 17th Avenue in the middle of the block and runs in a semi-circle over to Gilmore Avenue. Cut off from the other end of Northeast by a large stretch of vacant lots for whatever reason, this parklike south leg has houses on each corner of 17th, one house on the west side, several vacant lots reputedly owned by the homeowner of the first house, two more houses, five garages from homes on 17th, and an apart-

ment building. They have a stop sign at both the exit onto 17th where it is still Northeast and on the Gilmore end where it also joins 17th.

If the south leg has two stop signs for that small number of occupants and vehicles, why can't the Committee figure out there are hundreds of seniors, youngsters, dogs, motorcycles, cars, trucks, occasional RVs and boats, and the vehicles coming and going from the Walgreens parking lot, on that north leg of Northeast?

The corner of Northeast where it runs into 19th should have a stop sign for vehicles heading west onto Northeast and one on Northeast heading east onto 19th at Carr.





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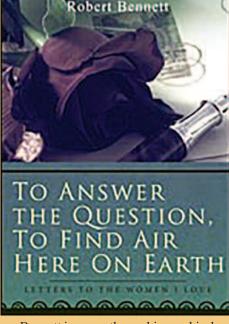
Niagara Falls Man Writes Book About How Women Think NIAGARA FALLS, N.Y. — This week marks the nationwide release of "To Answer

marks the nationwide release of "To Answer the Question, to Find Air Here on Earth," a book, written by a man, that explores the psyche of women.

Authored by Niagara University and Niagara County Community College adjunct professor, Robert Bennett; he was formerly the program director of Fellowship House Inc. Madonna House facility, which is an intensive residential treatment center for women with children who are recovering from substance abuse disorders.

"To Answer the Question, to Find Air Here on Earth" is, according to a statement from the author's publicist, Michelle Whitman, announcing the release of the book, "a compelling journey into a woman's psyche, which is written from a male perspective! Come and take an exciting journey into the author's world. This book presents a powerful side of women rarely explored by men. The readers will laugh and maybe shed some tears. The author hopes that by the end of this book, his readers will find it to be inspirational."

Published by Tate Publishing and Enterprises, the book is available through bookstores, from the publisher atwww.tatepublishing.com/bookstore, or by visiting barnesandnoble.com or amazon.com.



Bennett is currently working on his doctorate in counselor education and supervision. He has a master's degree in mental health counseling and is an internationally certified alcohol and substance abuse counselor. Through six of his 20 years of substance abuse treatment counseling, Bennett focused primarily on women services and, according to Whitman, "strived to enhance the delivery of overall treatment interventions for women who are recovering from substance use disorders."





Omnibus Spending Bill Includes Laborer-Friendly Provisions

Congress has displayed a great example of true bipartisanship.... Let's hope this spirit of patriotic teamwork continues into the New Year. LIUNA wants to commend Senators and Representatives of both political parties for rolling up their sleeves and passing the Fiscal Year 2016 Omnibus Appropriations Act. We are particularly pleased that Congress chose to include five important provisions in the bill: postponing implementation of the ACA's so-called "Cadillac Tax"; reauthorizing the James Zadroga Act to help the heroes and victims of 9/11; lifting the oil export ban; extending solar and wind tax credits; and giving federal employees and military personnel a pay raise.

LIUNA is just one of many labor, employer, health policy, and other groups opposed to this indefensible, misguided, and regressive 40-percent middle-class excise tax known as the Cadillac Tax. Congressional action, while not the hoped-for outright repeal, is a big step in the right direction, and signals a recognition that the tax is deeply flawed. We hope that in the additional two years provided by this delay, Congress and the next President will, once and for all, repeal the deceptively named "Cadillac Tax."

Reauthorizing the James Zadroga Act enables the World Trade Center Health Program to provide services for injured and ill 9/11 responders and survivors for the rest of their lives, and extends the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund for five more years with additional funding. LIUNA will always be proud that our members worked side-by-side with emergency personnel, and our brothers and sisters from other construction crafts, sifting through a toxic mix of debris to recover and clean up the Ground Zero site. These heroes' selfless devotion to that job cost many of them their health, and, tragically, some of them their lives.

Congress extended Investment Tax Credits and Production Tax Credits for wind and solar. LIUNA is proud to represent safe, skilled, responsible construction and maintenance workers in every sector of the energy industry, from oil and gas, to solar and wind, to nuclear and hydropower.

Finally, Congress ended a three-year federal pay freeze by approving the President's requested package of well-deserved cost-of-living pay increases for civilian federal employees and military personnel. Although not enough to keep pace with 3 years' worth of inflation, these increases are a long-overdue step in the right direction, and we hope that they will be followed by additional pay bumps. LIUNA is proud to count among our members many federal civilian and dual-status employees.

With this action, Congress has displayed a great example of true bipartisanship: the leaders of our country coming together, resolving their differences, and getting the important work of governing done. Let's hope this spirit of patriotic teamwork continues into the New Year, as Congress grapples with a wide range of other important issues.

DiPizio Construction Co. Wins Major Appellate Court Ruling on Canalside Suit



The local construction company suing the state over its termination as the Canalside contractor in July of 2013 has won a major victory in the Appellate Division of State Supreme Court.

In a unanimous ruling handed down last week, the court reinstated DiPizio Construction's claim that the president of the state's Erie Canal Harbor Development Corporation (ECHDC) may have lacked the legal authority to terminate DiPizio from the \$20 million replica canal project without authorization in the form of a vote from the Board of Directors, something DiPizio's lawyers contend never happened.

"The court's decision calls into question whether the termination by ECHDC President Dee was valid or not," said Michael Ferdman, the attorney who argued the appeal for the DiPizio firm. "We're very pleased with this decision, we won."

Dee had notified DiPizio by letter in May of 2013 that ECHDC intended to remove the company from the job, which it did in July, because it was falling behind construction schedule and not meeting its obligations on materials and with coordinating work with subcontractors.

Ferdman called the termination notice a political document issued to cover up "the bad faith administration of the construction agreement" that forced long delays and drove up "not just DiPizio Construction Co.'s costs, but taxpayers' costs."

In addition to construction costs, the state has been paying millions of taxpayer dollars in legal fees to the Phillips Lytle law firm to defend itself against the lawsuit by the local contractor which maintains it has been severely damaged by the negative publicity it received as a result of its termination that was well promulgated by ECHDC at the time which was trying to blame DiPizio for falling behind the schedule laid out by Albany for the replica canal project.

The appellate court ruling in favor of DiPizio sets aside the summary judgment issued by State Supreme Court Justice Timothy Walker in January of 2014 in favor of ECHDC.

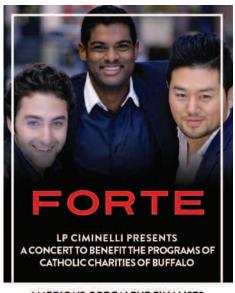
Walker had basically decided that the Board of Trustees had ratified the termination (without a vote), ruling they had been notified and had sufficient information from Dee and understood the issues. After that decision, Ferdman took depositions from board members—in a related action— and found "they did not know there were design changes and design errors" by ECHDC and had only heard from Dee that problems and delays were all DiPizio's fault.

The latest ruling, says Ferdman, means the court decided there are triable issues of what the board understood and calls into question whether the termination by Dee was valid or not

In its ruling, the Appellate Division said despite ECHDC's bylaws and the presumption that the board's president had the authority to enter into and terminate contracts in the ordinary course of business and that no formal vote was required, "there are triable issues of fact whether a formal vote of the Board was required."

Now that DiPizio's complaint has been reinstated in front of Walker, Ferdman is hoping the case will eventually go in front of jury that will have the opportunity to hear all the evidence and decide whether the termination of the construction firm with a solid 37-year history of satisfactory work was properly authorized or not.

The costs to taxpayers for the legal battle are soaring, and the construction company is also paying plenty to defend itself and try to recover its reputation through the courts. Veteran court observers suggest the Appellate Division ruling in favor of DiPizio could help boost the possibility of a settlement, but no word yet from ECHDC on the ruling or possible settlement efforts.



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NEWS OF THE WEIRD

Chuck Shephard

ARE WE SAFE?

•As if 2015 weren't bad enough for the Department of Homeland Security (e.g., in June, internal DHS tests revealed that its Transportation Security Administration failed to stop 67 of 70 guns passing through airport screeners), a U.S. congressman revealed in December that, based on a congressional staff investigation, 72 DHS employees currently appear on the FBI's terrorist watch list. He admitted to Boston Public Radio that DHS's record makes him squeamish about our ability to vet Syrian refugees. (Being on the FBI list is not a prohibited category for buying guns, either, and in fact, the Government Accountability Office reported that 91 percent of listees' attempts to purchase guns in the last 10 years succeeded.)

THE CONTINUING CRISIS

•The vice president of human resources at the Washington Post issued a formal memo in December to reassure female employees in its sleek new office building that people in the seventh floor's central "hub" could definitely not see up their skirts as they walked on the indoor eighth-floor balcony overhang, even through the clear glass barriers. The memo cited HR's "multiple" futile attempts, from many viewing angles, to see no-no's, and thus concluded that the ladies are safe. Nonetheless, the memo encouraged all employees, when in the seventh floor "hub," not to look up.

LEADING ECONOMIC INDICATORS

•Dr. Raymond Schinazi was a federal government employee when he led the team that discovered sofosbuvir, which completely cures hepatitis C patients with an 84-pill regimen, but, as he recently told CBS News, he only worked for the government "7/8th's" of the time—and, conveniently, it was during the other 1/8th that he found sofosbuvir. He admits now that he made \$400 million selling his sofosbuvir company in



2012 to Gilead Sciences, which famously set sofosbuvir's price for 84 pills to \$84,000. Now, the Department of Veterans Affairs, with 233,000 war vets with hep-C, tells Congress that it needs much more money, even though Gilead has "cut" the VA's price in half (to \$42,000 per treatment, or \$9.66 billion). (In a 2013 medical journal, Dr. Schinazi revealed that sofosbuvir could be manufactured for about \$17 a pill, or \$1,400 for an entire treatment.)

•Famously, of course, no central characters from big banks went to jail for crashing the economy and causing thousands to lose their homes and jobs, but the U.S. Justice Department and Securities and Exchange Commission seem rather proud that at least they pressured several banks to pay the government billions of dollars in civil-case settlements. However, the activist group U.S. PIRG revealed in December that of the 10 largest such federal settlements, where banks and corporations paid a total of \$80 billion, more than half was characterized as tax-deductible. (In addition, of course, all of the \$80 billion was ultimately paid by the banks' and corporations' stockholders rather than by wrongdoing employees.)

QUESTIONABLE JUDGMENTS

•"It may be the most confusing traffic light you've ever seen," wrote The Boston Globe in December, describing a pedestrian crossing in Cambridge, Massachusetts. If the three clusters of three lights each are dark, drivers proceed. If a pedestrian comes along, one light will blink yellow, then solid yellow, then two solid yellows, then two reds, until two flashing red lights in each cluster appear — and in Cambridge (and only Cambridge!), flashing red lights mean...go (unless pedestrians are actually present). The city has prepared a 12-diagram pamphlet to explain the whole thing, and officials say they have statistical proof from tests that the system enhances safety.

• It was Nick Silvestri, 19, of Seaford, Long Island, who, seated in the orchestra section of the Broadway comedy Hand to God on July 2, left his seat to plug his iPhone into an "electrical outlet" on the stage set. Actors, patrons, and management went nuts, but Silvestri ultimately was allowed to stay, and the show resumed. The set designer Beowulf Boritt said later he was proud that he had created a stage set so realistic that the electrical outlet (which of course was attached to nothing) looked so authentic.

CLICHE COME TO LIFE

• The Angelina County Sheriff's Office

(Lufkin, Texas) reported responding to a 911 call about shots fired at a home on Nov. 8, but made no arrest. The male resident was sitting in his pickup, admittedly drunk, and having listened to a "sad song" on his favorite station, he of course pulled his .22-caliber pistol and shot the radio. According to the report, "Suspect's wife took possession of the handgun and suspect."

IRONIES

• Sweet: (1) As deputy leader of Scotland's South Lanarkshire Council, Jackie Burns was instrumental in the budgetary closing of all 24 public toilets in the area. In November, Burns was fined (the equivalent of about \$60) after he, out on the town, could hold it in no longer and urinated in the street. (2) Hector Segura, 29, in town for a Washington, D.C., conference on drug policy reform (with most attendees certain that the "war on drugs" has failed) was found by police naked in a flower bed in a neighborhood near his hotel in Arlington, Virginia, with (according to police) "bath salts" the culprit. It required two Taser shots to subdue him as he pounded on a squad car.

Read the full News of the Weird daily at www.weirduniverse.net. or Send items to weirdnews@earthlink.net







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CITY HALL JOKES...

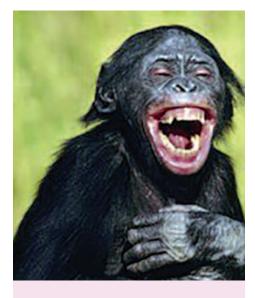












What's the difference between the mayor's annual city hall Christmas party and a funeral? The funeral is more fun.



A Paul Dyster "political equivalent."
In the normal world a job promotion is called a job promotion. In Dyster World a job promotion is called "an administrative thank you."



A thought bubble above the mayor's head: "I wonder if anyone noticed that the election was less than two months ago and I've already handed out big promotions and one special deal for overtime? Nah, no one pays attention to this stuff except that damn Reporter. And no one reads it. Do they?"



The mayor, the council chairman, and a frozen water pipe consultant walk into a bar. The mayor turns to the bartender and says, "Give my consultant friend all the drinks he wants and charge triple the price because the taxpayers are picking up the tab!"



Answer: Super Tramp and Cheap Trick Question: What two famous rock bands were named after city hall employees?

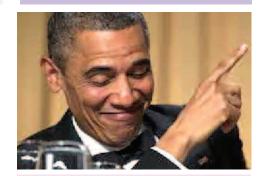
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Less than perfect but perfectly less. While 47% is a failing grade all across the globe, in the recent mayor's race it qualified for a third term.



Inflated Invoice and Wasteful Spending isn't a Dyster approved Buffalo law firm, but it is a much respected city hall management technique.



The phrase "Fourteen hundred and ninety two" refers to:

A) the year Columbus discovered Amer-

B) the number of accounting violations cited in the 2013 State Comptroller's audit of city hall

C) the number of registered sex offenders Mayor Dyster wants to move into the city D) all of the above

716=681=4420



Incense, Candles, Tye Dyes



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

You were the answer to a prayer. Your parents prayed that the world would be made to suffer

and here you came along. When you go to see a haunted house they offer you a job. The only place you're ever invited is outside.



Taurus: (April 20 -May 20):

You will never be able to live down to your reputation! You're so ugly, when you walk into taco

bell, EVERYONE runs for the border! You are very kind to animals so please give that face back to the gorilla. Luckily for you, stupidity isn't painful.



Gemini: (May 21 -June 20):

Your conversation is like the waves of the sea. It makes everyone sick! You were an exceptionally

ugly baby. You had tinted windows on your incubator. You changed your mind! But what did you do with the diaper? What you lack in intelligence, you more than makes up for in stupidity.



Cancer: (June 21 -July 22):

Your family tree is good but you are the sap. You're the best at all you do - and all you do is

make people hate you. Moonlight becomes you - total darkness even more! You are living proof that manure can grow legs and walk.



Leo: (July 23 - August 22):

Your mouth is getting too big for your muzzle. Yours is a prima facie case of ugliness. And your

body is ugly too. No one will ever know that you've had a lobotomy, if you wear a wig to hide to the scars and learn to control the slobbering.



Virgo: (August 23 -September 22):

Your verbosity is exceeded only by your stupidity. Any similarity between you and a human

is purely coincidental! People can't say that you have absolutely nothing! After all, you have inferiority! You are not as bad as people say - you are worse!

Libra: (September 23 - October 22):

You're a habit people like to kick; with both feet. Weds: Excellent time to become a missing person. Some day you will find



yourself - and wish you hadn't. You are the kind of person who, when one first meets you, one doesn't like you. But when one gets to know you better,

one hates you.

Scorpio: (October 23 - November 21):

You're acquitting yourself in a way that no jury ever would. You'd steal the straw from your mother's kennel. Talk is

cheap, but so are you. You grow on people like a wart! You have a face only a mother could love - and she hates it!



Sagittarius: (November 22 - December

You're like one of those "idiot savants," except without the "savant"

part. You have that faraway look. The farther you get, the better you look. There is no vaccine against stupidity. You have a good

weapon against muggers - your face! You have an inferiority complex - and it's fully iustified.



Capricorn: (December 22 - January 19):

You're nobody's fool. Let's see if we can get someone to adopt you. You're the first in your family born without a tail.

Space is a dangerous place . . . especially if it's between your ears! You must have a low opinion of people if you think they're your



Aquarius: (January 20 - February 18):

You're not yourself this week. People notice the improvement immediately. People don't know what makes you so stupid,

but it really works! space is a dangerous place . . . especially if it's between your ears! You started at the bottom - and it's been downhill ever since.



Pisces: (February 19 - March 20):

You're so dumb you thought Taco Bell was a phone company. Don't turn the other cheek. It's

just as ugly. They say truth is stranger than fiction. Look, your mother gave birth to you. You should have been born in the Dark Ages; you look terrible in the light.





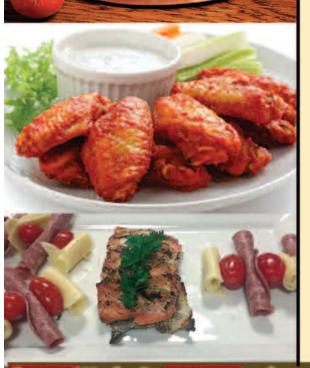


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