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NIAGARA FALLS REPORTER

THE TRUTH IS ALWAYS FAIR

FREE

AUG 31, 2017 - SEP 6, 2017

VOL. 18, NO. 27

FREE

**In New York, it is not what you do,
but who does it, that constitutes the crime**



**Exclusive: State's
Draft Audit spans
Mayor, Council**

red ink

Mayor Dyster, do-nothing Council to thank for City of Niagara Falls' Looming Fiscal Nightmare

James Hufnagel

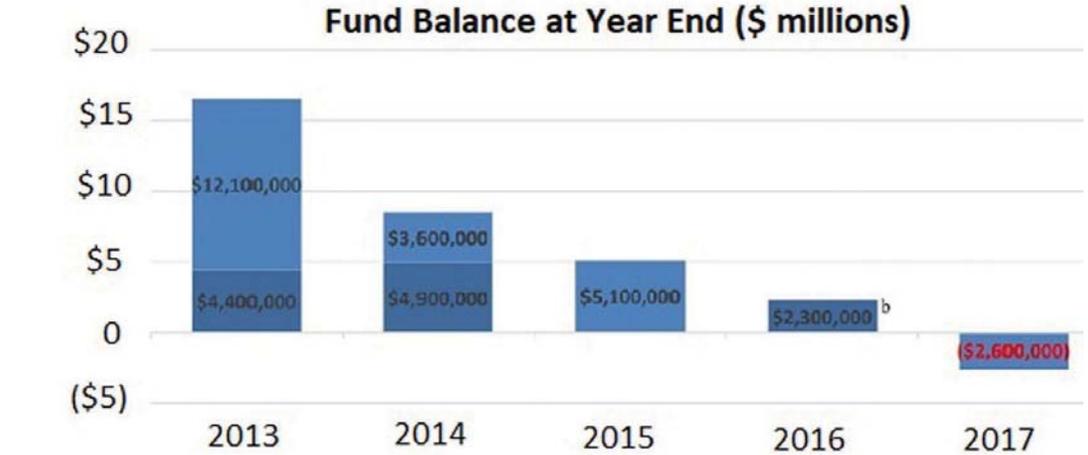
It hit us right between the eyes the instant we pulled it up on the computer. The as yet-unreleased New York State Comptroller's draft audit, or "Report of Examination - City of Niagara Falls Financial Condition" for the period from January, 2015 to late June of this year, admonishes at the bottom of each and every page, in bold capital letters:

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"CONTAINS NON-FINAL, INTRA- AND/OR INTER-AGENCY MATERIALS THAT MAY BE EXEMPT FROM DISCLOSURE UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION LAW."

Despite this stern warning, Buffalo's WGRZ-TV broke the story last week that the city of Niagara Falls is most certainly on course for more and worsening budget shortfalls and depletion of its reserve fund balance, quoting extensively from the state document that was apparently leaked to the local news outlet. It is generally known that the progressive-leaning WGRZ is frequently out in front on news stories that focus on Niagara Falls and City Hall.

Having obtained a copy of the draft audit (now available at our website NiagaraFallsReporter.com), which is not available on state or city government websites, or anywhere else on the internet, we bring some of the highlights to you.

"A top priority of the Office of the



Unrestricted and Appropriated fund balances projected to go negative by the end of this year (Source: NYS Office of State Comptroller).

State Comptroller is to help local government officials manage government resources efficiently and effectively and, by so doing, provide accountability for tax dollars spent to support government operations," the cover letter, addressed "Dear City Officials," reads. "This audit's results and recommendations are resources for local government officials to use in effectively managing operations and in meeting the expectations of their constituents."

Recently, State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli said in an interview that, "Our charge is not to look at an agency (or city) and then be a mouthpiece to say how wonderful everything is. Nor is it our role to go out of our way to find things that are

wrong when they're not there. Our charge is really to be fair, and to be objective, and to be reasoned."

He was responding to a question posed to him as to whether or not he had been picking on Gov. Andrew Cuomo. Mr. DiNapoli, the state's chief financial

watchdog, had performed audits that shone a decidedly negative spotlight on the governor's flagship Excelsior Tax Credit, Recharge NY and Start-Up NY economic development programs. There are further audits of Empire State Development in the offing. Although both are

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Roscetti Addresses Mental Health Court

Alan James Roscetti

The Niagara Falls City Court offers additional "Quality of Life" courts. I'd like to provide an overview of each one in the upcoming weeks to give our citizens some insight and understanding of the system. The first court I'd like to address is Mental Health Court.

In many instances, a defendant who is facing criminal charges may have committed the alleged crime due to their current mental health status or due to substance abuse issues. After evaluating the mitigating circumstances to the situation at hand, it is the judge's responsibility to decipher whether or not incarceration is a suitable punishment for the safety, security, and well being of the defendant coinciding with society's best interest or whether an alternative to incarceration will be more appropriate. This would not only be for the safety, welfare, and security for the defendant, but also for the law-abiding citizens of New York State.

One of the alternative programs to incarceration at our current Niagara Falls City Court is Mental Health Court. This program offers mental health therapeutic

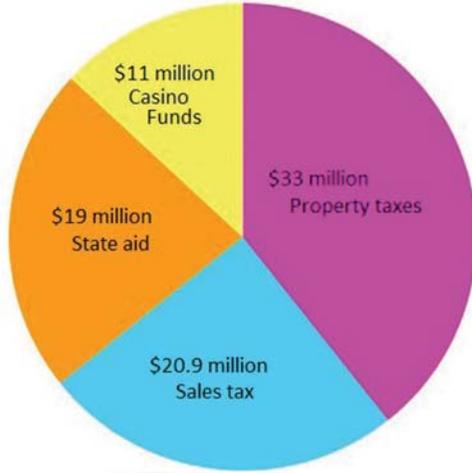
counseling for the defendant to address their mental issues so that the problems are identified and do not negatively resurface, provoking the issues to foster into criminal behaviors. This program will ensure that the defendant is given the attention, surveillance, and support that they need to overcome their obstacles so that they may live a productive law-abiding life in the future.

As citizens, we need to recognize and distinguish the difference between punitively disciplining an individual for their recklessness, as oppose to correctively reforming oneself to prevent future recidivism. Being vigilant that there are other alternatives to incarceration will benefit society by saving taxpayers money, as well as protecting society from potential imminent danger due to the benefits of what the mental health court program has to offer to the defendants who may be of need of it.

For more information, feel free to contact me at 716.308.1433

Alan James Roscetti is a candidate for Niagara Falls City Court Judge. For more information on his campaign, please visit www.voteroscetti.com or go to www.facebook.com/VoteRoscetti

2017 Niagara Falls budget



According to the state's Draft Audit report, "The City's adopted general fund budget for 2017 was approximately \$93 million." With casino revenue going away, it's about to hit the fan, and we don't mean this pie.

Democrats, Mr. DiNapoli is seen as more of an adversary than a political ally of the governor.

Therefore, the dry-eyed assessment of the status quo with regards to the discontinuation of casino funds, on page 4 of the draft audit, is greatly dissimilar from anything we have seen or are likely to see in press releases from Gov. Cuomo's office or Niagara Falls City Hall.

"In 2013, the compact was extended to 2023. However, the compact's section concerning the revenue sharing requirements was left unchanged. In 2017, the Nation announced that it would no longer make casino revenue payments to the State... While the Governor's office contends that the Nation has a financial obligation to continue making these payments, an agreement has not been reached... The City's casino revenue is an unreliable financing source."

"As of May 31, 2017, the City had \$25.4 million of casino revenue available... We estimate that by December 31, 2017, the City will have \$11 million of casino revenue remaining. City officials do not anticipate receiving any additional money under the current compact."

"(The city) will nearly deplete the remaining casino revenue by the end of the 2018 fiscal year."

Bam. Any questions?

"City officials have not developed

a plan to transition away from using casino revenue to balance the budget," the draft audit continues, "In fact, instead of cutting back, City officials increased the amounts of casino revenue to balance the budgets in recent years."

And next, an excerpt from the draft audit that is seeing the light of day for the first time, not quoted by any other news source. A stunning indictment of the leadership of Mayor Dyster and the City Council, using blunt language rarely encountered in bureaucratic documents.

"City officials did not develop a multi-year financial plan. Had such plans been developed, City officials would have had a valuable resource that would have allowed them to make more informed financial decisions. For example, such a plan would have shown the magnitude of the impact of the loss of the casino revenue and provided a tool to assess the impact of different approaches to using the balance of the funds on hand."

"This may have mitigated the City's declining financial condition."

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Financial Pro Amber Hill States her case for Council

Amber Hill-Donhauser

My name is Amber Hill-Donhauser, and I am running on the Democratic line for Niagara Falls City Council. I wish to take one of the three spots that are available in this election, preferably the position to be left open by a retiring council member.

I grew up in Niagara Falls between MontEagle Ridge Estates and Packard Court, and then moved to the Tuscarora Reservation at the age of 10. I graduated with an Advanced Regents Diploma from Niagara Wheatfield, where I participated in many sports and extracurricular activities. I attended Syracuse University and received my degree in Political Science from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Policy, with a minor in Legal Studies and Native Studies, while also playing Division 1 lacrosse and holding a full-time Student Supervisor position with the Department of Public Safety on campus. I returned home to raise my daughter and reintegrate back into our community.

I have been a Financial Advisor since 2012, most recently with New York Life, and now as the President of The Hill Financial Group. I also work as the Administrative Manager for the Plasterer's



Four generations support Amber Hill-Donhauser for City Council

Union Local #9, and the Buffalo and Niagara Building Trades.

I volunteer in my capacities as a Financial Advisor wherever I can, most recently teaching Financial Literacy classes at Carolyn's House on 6th Street to domestic abuse survivors, and to the appren-

tice classes at the Ironworkers Local #9 hall on 39th Street.

I also thoroughly enjoy coaching lacrosse to children both on and off the reservation to grow the game in our area. I recently returned from London, England from playing in my fourth World Cup

with the Haudenosaunee Nationals – a program that I have been the Captain of since its inception in 2006, while also participating on the Board of Directors as a member and Public Relations Advisor. I also participate in the Ontario Women's Box Lacrosse League (the highest level for female box lacrosse players at this time) as a member of the Grand River Attack – a team that not only won the regular season, but were presented with gold medals after defeating Whitby 4-2 this past month.

As I went house to house for the petitioning process, residents had many questions for me, such as – what were my qualifications, what was the reasoning behind my choice to run, and most frequently – what was I going to do about their darn trees! I want to say first off that I believe our entire city is jaded by our politicians, the political process, and the ridiculous amount of dismal news about Niagara Falls that smacks them in the face over their morning coffee every day. Niagara Falls has all the potential in the world to be great, but we can't quite make it up over that perpetual mountain because we're too covered in elusive red tape for development and our inability to manage our budgetary commitments. Much of the news is discouraging, and the ranting and distorted raving on social media creates an echo chamber of helplessness and anger in our city.

This level of pessimism within the city limits is one of the reasons I decided to run. We need to learn to lift each other up; learn to care about our neighbors and our community again; learn to be proud of our City, all the while making an effort to get Niagara Falls back on the right track both fiscally and internally. I know that with my financial background, my insatiable thirst for knowledge, my fortitude and high-minded moral compass, coupled with my positive leadership abilities, I am the right candidate for one of those three positions available on our City Council. Our city needs people whose only agenda is to do what's best for the residents that they work for, not what is profitable for those outside of our city; a candidate that is steadfast and bold, but understands that this level of government is about being an effective part of a team, and should stop being about individual politicians that promise the world to us but deliver nothing while sitting behind the bench.

I will not make any empty promises to you, Niagara Falls – I can simply say that I was raised by a third generation Ironworker and a homemaker, so I know the importance of family and the sheer definition of hard work, and I live in the heart of Niagara Falls, so when I hear that water outside of my window every morning I get inspired to get this city back on track. We have a natural wonder of the world and a beautiful environment right in front of us, so let's keep striving to be better citizens, and inspire and empower those around us to be the change that our community needs as a whole. As your #NotPoliticsAsUsual candidate, I respectfully ask for your vote on Primary Day, Tuesday, September 12th.

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Power Authority Relicensing Proceeds' Tortured Trail to your pocket



Paulette Glasgow

Information is power. The more information you know, the more you are educated on the facts.

Recently, I received a flyer referring to the \$153 debit card Lewiston residents were receiving, and I wondered if those receiving the debit cards knew all the facts. In order to know the facts you must travel back to 2005. At that time the New York State Power Authority was obligated to re-file with the federal government for relicensing to operate the Niagara Power Project.

Since a large portion of the authority's tax exempt property was located within Lewiston, the town board felt residents had been impacted the most and consideration needed to be given to compensate for the authority not paying any taxes.

Prior to the authority filing for relicensing, Lewiston was approached to become a member of a group of stakeholders "hosting"

an authority facility within their municipality. This group of seven members consisting of the Towns of Lewiston and Niagara, City of Niagara Falls and the Lewiston Porter, Niagara Wheatfield and City of Niagara Falls School Districts was called the Niagara Power Coalition. Lewiston's representative on the Coalition was then Supervisor Fred Newlin. This group of seven would become the negotiating agents for how a 50-year, \$1 billion deal would be settled.

Each member had legitimate reasons for why they needed and deserved something from the relicensing but no member had more reason than Lewiston. Prior to the authority re-filing, each coalition member was given a proffer, or offer of settlement, so the authority could secure its license.

The offer extended to Lewiston was the following: \$25.5 million for recreational programs over the next 50 years, amounting to \$510,000 per year to be used for such projects as the Lewiston waterfront, Sanborn Farm Museum and park development; \$42.5 million for the next 50 years, amounting to \$850,000 per year to be used for anything Lewiston wanted such as fighting hazardous waste, lowering taxes, funding the library or improving drainage and finally, a block of 25 megawatts of power to be divided equally with each member receiving approximately 3.5 megawatts.

Although this offer may seem to some to be generous, had Lewiston accepted it for the next 50 years residents would be forfeiting millions of dollars. So in the words of Tim "the tool man" Taylor, Newlin felt Lewiston deserved more power, and he negotiated a separate contract with the Power Authority that gave Lewiston an additional block of

power. Under the terms of that contract the additional megawatts of power were to be "distributed to all electricity users in Lewiston" as an electric credit amounting to a 15-20% savings.

For nearly three years residents received this credit until the 2010 Town Board took it away, selling the power on the open market and stockpiling the revenue into a special interest, accumulating, power allocation account. These funds sat in this account for years until former Supervisor Dennis Brochey approached the Power Authority with a plan that would use the revenue from the sale as an energy savings that would benefit both the town and residents. According to this plan some revenue would be used to make town facilities energy efficient and the remainder would be applied as a credit on residential electric bills or as a yearly rebate check.

On November 16, 2015, after Brochey left town service, the town board, without explaining why, changed the benefactor of the entire 6.5 megawatt block of power to itself and special districts, and any hope residents would receive anything from the sale of this power ended that night.

But, what became of the revenue from the sale of this power? Well, it was deposited into a special power allocation account. And sat there until this year when resident Rosemary Warren began to inquire about its whereabouts. And at every meeting since, Warren has inquired why this money hasn't been returned to the residents as rebate checks. Finally, at a July meeting the town board decided to return this money being held hostage as a "one time only" debit card. But instead of sending \$177, each household was sent \$153 because \$24 was used to process the

debit card. In the letter to each resident there's the following: "the town board along with myself determined that the best use of these funds was to return them to the residents."

Best use, oh really, maybe the best use should be as it was originally intended as a cost savings on residential electric bills. Success, it's said, has many fathers but failure is an orphan, it seems this town board wishes to take credit for something it had nothing to do with, and if hadn't been for one individual, residents never would have received their money.

But there are questions that need to be answered involving accountability and transparency.

Why were the inquiries of a resident ignored regarding disbursement of this money?

Why was the original 2007 agreement changed, and why hasn't the town explained the reasoning behind that change?

Why did the town make itself the benefactor of the revenue generated from the sale of this power and not the public?

Why is the revenue from the sale being stockpiled into the town's general fund to be used in special districts such as French Landing?

Why did the town state that the disbursement was a "one-time" only occurrence when there's 40 years remaining on the agreement?

To quote John Adams "Facts are stubborn things, and whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictates of our passion, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence."

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Bid Rigging at Niagara Falls State Park

Granite Gate again exposed and again ignored?

Frank Parlato

A case of apparent bid rigging at the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, seems to have gone largely unnoticed. It occurred as part of Gov. Andrew Cuomo's \$50 million Niagara Falls State Park Landscape Improvements plan.

The time was 2013. The place was Saratoga Springs, near Albany. The players are a husband and wife, a father and daughter, and the taxpayers of New York State.

The husband is Stephen McCorkell, a landscape architect and project manager for NY State Parks. His job is to select companies to design, plan and oversee state park improvements. Mr. McCorkell is paid \$115,000 per year. He lives in Saratoga Springs.

His wife, Lisa Tonneson-McCorkell, is also a landscape architect. She works for the LA Group, of Saratoga Springs. The firm designs, plans and oversees park improvements for government agencies.

Mrs. McCorkell's boss was S. Jeffrey Anthony, co-founder of The LA Group. He is the father of Kirsten Anthony. She worked for Champlain Stone, another Saratoga Company with quarries in the Adirondacks. She was responsible for making spec sheets which described the type of stone Champlain sold and handled marketing for the company.

Mr. McCorkell was project manager for



(Above: Prospect Point, paved with Champlain Stone's substandard granite.)

the Niagara Falls State Park improvement plan. He sat on the committee that awarded a \$4.5 million contract to his wife's company, LA Group.

The plans called for new railings, landscaping, park benches, cutting down 100-year-old trees, and replacing them with pavement. The preliminary plans suggested the use of limestone pavers. Limestone was cheap and available near the job site.

The LA Group chose to use granite. This

would raise the price of the work since granite might cost \$20 per square foot. Although Uni-Lock offered concrete unity pavers that mimic granite, surpassing it in durability and strength, that cost \$10 per square foot.

The LA Group designed plans specifying the color and type of the granite that they wanted used in the park.

According to the bid specs, it must be "70% Hudson River blue with a mixture of green, black, pink, brown, burgundy, and white. A small percentage shall have black speckles throughout consisting of red and black garnet inclusions and quartz crystals."

It had a name. It was called "Corinthian Granite". There was only place in the world where it could be purchased - at a quarry in the Adirondacks, owned by Champlain Stone, where LA Group's owner, Mr. Anthony's daughter, Kirsten worked.

Since there was only one place where it could be purchased, Champlain Stone could name their own price. The company chose to sell Corinthian Granite at \$60 per square foot.

All the contractors who bid on the jobs knew in advance, from looking at the specs, that granite had to be purchased from Champlain Stone. Contractors bid jobs factoring in their cost of \$60 per square foot for granite from Champlain Stone.

Acres of the expensive, peculiar-colored granite was used by contractors all over the park, including Prospect Point, and the Plaza Area at the Cave of the Winds on Goat Island.

The low bid, for example, for the Prospect Point section, was approximately \$4 million. The winning bidder was Scott Lawn Yard. More than \$1 million worth of Corinthian Granite pavers were needed. The extra cost of the Corinthian granite may have jacked up the price by as much as \$600,000.

"Someone is getting a free cottage on the lake for this one" said a contractor at the time.

Another contractor, referring to the high-priced granite, added, "They're paving the park with gold, and there are potholes all over the city. What a waste."

The Champlain Stone granite proved to be a disaster.

Parks workers say a worse choice could not have been made. Corinthian granite has a glossy, glasslike surface that is slippery when wet and it is often wet due to mist from Niagara Falls. People everywhere would slip and fall.

Limestone found in natural rock formations in and around Niagara Falls, makes an excellent paver. Limestone is porous



(Lisa Tonneson-McCorkell is an Associate Principal, Landscape Architect for The LA Group who specializes in, among other things, historic landscape restoration.)



(The above is a recent photo of the cracked granite at the Niagara Falls State Park. The LA Group won the ASLA award for its work done on the Terrapin Point Reconstruction Project.)



(From the reconstructed Niagara Falls State Park, Pictured above, "70 percent Hudson River blue...with red and black garnet inclusions.")

and rough textured, making it slip resistant. Granite also cracks easily. The granite pavers have been in place a few years. Throughout the park there are many cracked granite pavers. More are cracking every day. What they will look like 20 years from now?

Shortly after the work was completed in Niagara Falls, Mr. Anthony retired from The LA Group and co-founded with his daughter Kirsten, Studio A Landscape Design in Saratoga Springs.

Mrs. Tonneson-McCorkell was promoted to partner at the LA Group.

Mr. McCorkell got several raises at State Parks where he continues to get his wife's company work.



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Why I'm running, where I stand

Chris Voccio

On May 12th of this year I turned 50 and I retired from the newspaper industry, where I spent 30 years. Late that afternoon I also announced my candidacy for Niagara Falls City Council. That wasn't originally part of the plan.

Retiring at 50 was a goal I set years ago as I began to embrace minimalism and simple living, reducing my expenses and building my savings. When I moved to Niagara Falls to turnaround the finances of the Niagara Gazette, I knew I would be retiring soon, and Niagara Falls' low housing costs along with its great quality of life, especially for people who like the outdoors, made it a good prospect for my retirement.

I didn't have to retire here. My options were plentiful. But I like living here and chose to stay here. Retirement living would be good. Lots of hiking at the Gorge, some volunteer work and lots of travel.

Early this year, after I announced my retirement date to my staff and my employer, I began to consider that I could offer something more to my adopted city than the volunteer work I anticipated. My background, my skill sets and talents and my interest in government put me in a good position to make a difference in Niagara Falls.

As I looked at the other candidates entering the city council race, I began to think I could offer voters a different sort of candidacy. So I made my plans and on my 50th birthday I jumped in the race.

Since my May 12th announcement, a lot has happened:

* I've walked the entire city, knocking on the doors of almost 7,000 likely voters. I've heard the concerns of the voters from all parts of the city.

* I've talked tirelessly about the three most pressing issues facing the city: Fiscal responsibility, public safety and economic development.

* I put forth my 10-5 Plan, calling for a 10 percent pay cut for all elected officials and asking city employees to generate ideas to trim an additional 5 percent from the budget. (Whether my 10-5 Plan is adopted or not, I

will take a 10% pay cut on day one.)

* I proposed a War on Blight in the form of a modern-day Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), an army of Niagara Falls' youth that would tackle the city's blight each summer. (This was derived from a Bob Confer column in the Niagara Gazette.)

* I've been endorsed by both the Conservative Party and the Independence Party.

* As the Buffalo News reported, I was the target of an effort to take down my only political sign, which hung from a fence on my property, because it violated a city ordinance that the New York Civil Liberties Union and I both believe is unconstitutional.

It's been a fun campaign so far. As I write this column, the primary election is two weeks away. Here's my case for why you should consider voting for me:

* 30 years of private-sector experience, the last 15 years being a newspaper publisher, the top position, at newspapers across the country.

* Served on the boards of the Niagara USA Chamber of Commerce and the United Way of Greater Niagara. I've served on various boards in cities across the country, gaining a diverse perspective.

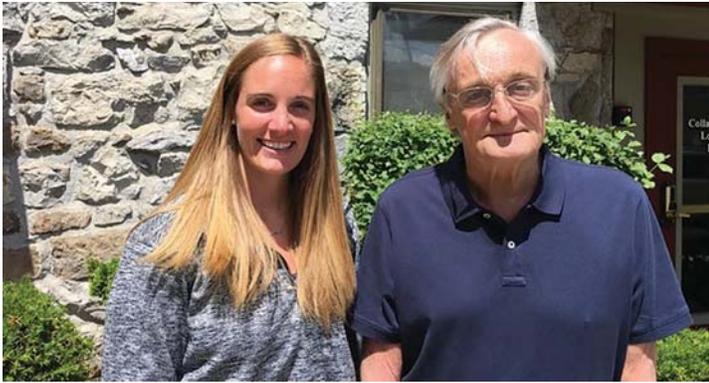
* I hold a bachelor's degree in business administration from Bryant University in Rhode Island and I earned an MBA (Master's in Business Administration) from the Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

* Under my leadership, the Niagara Gazette was named Business of the Year by the Niagara Street Area Business Association and Organization of the Year by Leadership Niagara.

* I am a principled conservative and I've been a Republican my entire adult life. I haven't switched back and forth for political expediency. I'm a principled guy who has core values that mean something.

* If elected, I will be a champion for limited government, fiscal sanity, individual responsibility, free enterprise and the rule of law.

For more information about my candidacy, visit my campaign Facebook page at www.ChrisVoccio.net or email me at chrisvoccio@gmail.com.



(Jeffrey Anthony and daughter, Kirsten Anthony Catalier.)

The LA Group won the Built Design Merit Award from the New York Upstate Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects for its design work at Terrapin Point Reconstruction Project at Niagara Falls State Park.

Ironically, Terrapin Point was one of the few locales in the state park where they did not use Champlain stone granite. They used concrete, slip resistant and much less expensive Unilock.

In New York State, if you are well connected, you can pave the road to heaven with your bad intentions.

Mr. McCorkell declined to comment for this story referring the Reporter to the Public Relations Dept. of the NY State Parks. A spokesman for the LA Group declined to comment for this story.

Food Hall Concept Expected to Open in Niagara Falls, N.Y. Chef driven food hall now accepting merchant applications



Mercado Development today announced plans to develop a "chef driven" food hall at the Fashion Outlets of Niagara Falls, USA. The food hall – which is called "HIP CITY" – is expected to be open for business in the spring of 2018.

At 16,000 square-feet, the food hall has capacity to feature up to 24 merchants. Dan Vecchies, president of Mercado Development, says the company plans to include a mix of local, and regional chefs, even a few celebrity chefs have shown interest in the concept. In addition to the food merchants, the food hall will be anchored by a craft beer and spirits bar featuring up to 50 craft beers on tap, small batch bourbon, whiskeys and craft cocktails and a menu featuring local flavors such as chicken wings and beef on weck.

The space will be located along Military Road, with floor to ceiling glass and patio-style seating around the building's perimeter. There will also be an area in the space dedicated to live entertainment, cooking classes, wine tastings, and more. The food

hall concept allows customers to order from their desired merchant(s), find their seat, and have their food and drinks delivered by one of the food hall servers.

While Mercado Development has already signed several merchants, there is still space available for interested chefs and restaurants. Mercado Development will build out each of the merchant's space, to include hoods, sinks, counters, LED menu boards and will provide amenities which include a prep kitchen, storage, refrigeration, food hall servers, and marketing.

A food hall is the perfect platform for new and up and coming chefs to get into their own restaurant at a very affordable cost. Mercado Development will also entertain partnerships with chefs for certain food concepts.

Those interested can visit www.mercadodevelopment.com to fill out a merchant application, or contact Dan Vecchies at 1-888-668-6462 ext. 4 or email at dan@mercadodevelopment.com.

Taking A Toll on Toll Takers

When Governor Andrew Cuomo announced that cashless tolls would be coming to Grand Island, many people hailed it as a long overdue change. It also, however, highlights one of the most obsolete jobs in the world, the toll collector. A human being sits in a booth, breathes exhaust fumes all day and handles cash and coin.

It is definitely not a glamorous profession. Arguably, is it really a profession? I don't know of any children aspiring to be a toll taker. There aren't schools for it, and I can't imagine the training being overly difficult. Still, it is a paying job, and there's always dignity in work, there is some

honor in taking tolls.

Soon they will join the ranks of blacksmiths, milkmen and lamplighters.

The problem isn't the toll takers.

Governor Cuomo's announcement wasn't aimed at making them unemployed; it supposedly will ease congestion, speed up traffic and make the air a little cleaner. Cashless tolls are a small step, but

they only solve half of the problem. People are still paying tolls, which is a subversive tax on people to use the road.

If the Governor comes to town to announce the elimination of tolls, period, that would be something to celebrate.



Council Candidate Pascoal Opposes Reassessment

Robert Pascoal

There is a fundamental difference between policy and politics. Politics is when what you do is motivated by how you can better the members of your party. Policy is when you are motivated to improve the general good of people regardless of party. I've always believed in policy over politics. Policy that benefits all people.

That leads me to the subject of reassessment. Is reassessment policy or politics? Some would have you believe expressing your opinion to City Council against reassessment is political. One councilmember referred to my opinion as "vengeful desires." I disagree. Reassessment and how it is implemented is public policy because it affects everyone in the city. It affects property owners, business owners, and renters.

I would like there to be no confusion as to where I stand on the policy of reassessment, so I submit to you, the residents and taxpayers of Niagara Falls, the following comments I made in open Council on September 6, 2016, which appear on the public record.

Real property assessment is New York State law. But I am vehemently against the reassessment this administration is proposing.

Most people are against this reassessment because they already pay an outrageous amount in taxes compared to the value of their property. And they're right.

I am against reassessment because I don't



trust the true intentions of this administration. Reassessment is an extremely powerful process. Reassessment, in the right hands could easily increase the value of every piece of property in this city. In the wrong hands, we could see property taxes soar, property values plummet and families selling off their homes, as homeowners get fed up and move away.

There is uncertainty under the current system. That's because we have two variables. There's assessed value, then there's the tax rate. Adjust this one up. Do a little math over here. It's a juggling act and we don't know if and when the city is going to change one of the balls midstream.

Uncertainty is not good for markets. Uncertainty scares away potential buyers because people don't like for their capital to be at risk. The result is flat or decreasing property values.

If the intention of this administration is to establish the assessed value of a piece of property based on what that property actually

sold for, AND with its next breath would drastically reduce the tax rate, the result would be an incredible increase in property value. This would trigger a bidding war for Niagara Falls real estate, resulting in higher revenues based on higher property value.

Our housing stock is crumbling all around us. It will take new construction to replace it. Not the affordable housing type that pays no taxes yet demands all city services. We need new private construction and that won't make any financial sense until we fix our property tax structure.

Sadly, I fear the intention of this administration is to use this powerful tool to plug serious budget gaps, which it alone has created and expects all of us to cure.

Will you vote to increase taxes, making it harder for new home buyers to afford a decent home in a decent neighborhood?

I'd like to close with a quote I came across just yesterday. It's by astronomer, astrophysicist, skeptic and critical thinker, Carl Sagan. Remember how he used to say "Billions and Billions"?

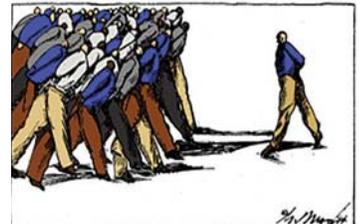
"One of the saddest lessons of history is this: If we've been bamboozled long enough, we tend to reject any evidence of the bamboozle. We're no longer interested in finding out the truth. The bamboozler has captured us. It's simply too painful to acknowledge, even to ourselves, that we've been taken. Once you give a charlatan power over you, you almost never get it back."

I have been bamboozled many times by this administration. I believe reassessment is

nothing more than a money grab. I urge you to stand with us against this scheme until it is clear what the administration's true intentions are.

In closing, I'd like to add that reassessment is policy. And policy drives behavior. Under our current system, you get punished for improving your property. When you get reassessed because you fixed your place up by adding siding, a roof, some windows or a new driveway, you get punished for it. The only time your property should go up is if you add new square footage and a little bump each year to deal with inflation. That's it. We don't need to pay an out-of-town, mathematical magician \$800,000 out of our budget to tell us what our houses are worth. You, a ready, willing, and able buyer, and free market forces will figure out what your house is worth when an offer to buy is accepted.

Robert Pascoal is a candidate for Niagara Falls City Council



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HEY... CONGRESS!...WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU?



J. Gary DiLaura **The Right Side**

IF THE REPUBLICANS IN THE HOUSE AND SENATE DON'T PULL THEIR HEADS OUT OF THAT DARK PLACE THEY HAVE THEM STUCK AND BACK UP THEIR PRESIDENT...THEY WON'T HAVE TO WORRY WHAT THEIR CONSTITUENTS THINK!!!

BEFORE:

Even if, in the last 8 years, you never attended a House or Senate session, never read anything, nor watched TV or listened to the radio, unless you are blind, deaf and dumb as a brick, you have to know that for the past 8 years we had a President who did all he could to CHANGE your Constitutional Republic and Free Enterprise form of government into a Socialist, Islamic Nation and he almost succeeded! If you haven't noticed... he hasn't given up! He raised millions of dollars (\$40 million), established 250 offices manned by 33,000 "volunteers" and is openly telling people to organize to oppose this President in many ways, some of which may well be criminal! Can you think of ANY patriotic reasons why ANY former President would do that? Since when is overthrowing our Rule of Law and Bill of Rights, a patriotic ACT?

AFTER:

You FINALLY have control of the House, the Senate and a Patriot for Presidency who is rebuilding what was almost totally dismantled. You have over half the States AND you can't accomplish ANYTHING! You are worse than Pelosi, Clinton, Sanders, Waters, Schultz, Schumer, Harry Reid, Al Freakin' Franken, Hillary and all the other Democrat clowns that you laugh at!

You can't get a new Health Care Bill passed after 7 years of bitching?? You can't garner ONE vote more to dump Obama Care? THAT'S MORE THAN NUTS, THAT IS SHAMEFUL!!!! Let's see how badly you can screw up Tax Reform and a new Budget.

You leave your President hanging on a limb when he's trying to STOP Islamist terrorists from coming into your country to KILL you and you sit idly by while the 9th "Circus" delays the laws that you, Congress, passed to give your President the ability to overcome the cumbersome Judicial delays! AND you did nothing...no hue and cry, no emergency legislation...NOTHING!

Dismantle the 9th Circus like the Supreme Court has recommended "several" times! You should have called the obstructionist Judges to the Hill, directed them to stop making law and obey the Rule of Law and if they didn't you should have defunded their office, staff, utilities, etc! Congress does have that power but not the guts!

The President draws you together, helps some of you get elected to help him and you desert him!

ANARCHY IGNORED!

You are blind to what the left is doing to your country by disobeying our Rule of Law and you do NOTHING. You see

anarchy taking place by destruction of public property; statues that were erected by the left wing party of slavery, which created the KKK and now clubs their members and tears down the statues they demanded erected?! Violence is leading to deaths while you enjoy "summer break" while we see double digit increases promised again this year to our Federal Health Care Plans and... anarchy rages! How's your summer going? Oh, that's right, you don't have to worry about "your" government health, you have an exempt plan, fully funded, no co-pays, unlike ours.

Premium co-pays this year are \$700/month and up, for 2 people! NEXT year it will be \$800/month for 2 people and up, with large co-pays for scripts, doctor visits, hospital and tests!!! That's how you provide Government Health Care for Federal Retirees with decades of service! In the state of New York... State, Local and County Retirees pay NOTHING in premiums and co-pays!

TAKE ACTION NOW

"What Can I do," you say? Do your job! How about a law that makes it a Federal Felony for ANY Municipal Executive who directs law enforcement to stand down and NOT enforce the law (Federal, State or Local)! Make it a Federal Felony to wear a mask/face covering at a rally, protest, public gathering of ANY type. Want to wear a mask...do it at a Halloween Party...but NOT on public streets! "What about Islamists?" What about them? If they want to wear masks they should have stayed where they were... the security of this Nation supersedes ANY religious claims. Assimilate or LEAVE!

SPECIAL PROSECUTOR MY BIG ...FOOT!

Put an END to the Special Prosecutor and his "conflict of interest brigade" NOW! Unless you are deaf and dumb you MUST know that the FBI with hundreds of Agents, 10 months and millions spent, found nothing!

It is an obvious and intentional attempt to unseat a duly elected President because he fired an agenda fueled, "former" FBI Director who used and leaked Official FBI information for personal gain! If you want a legit investigation, open a RICO case against Barack Obama, George Soros, Hillary Clinton, et al! There's a litany of predicate crimes to choose from!

QUIT HIDING!

When the left wing party and their Pravda Press, allows Maxine Waters to go after President Trump, you dive for the covers and hide you heads... looking out only to see if she's gone! You make Maxine look smarter than any of you. I'm afraid that if Maxine Waters actually could bring impeachment to the floor (I'll bet she can't spell the word) some of you will actually back her up!

Pitiful, I say you are all pitiful!

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Friday, September 8

5:00 8:00 **Youth Football, Town and
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9:00 11:00 **The Tim Britt Band**
10:00 **Fireworks**

Saturday, September 9

9:00 **5k Run**
11:00 **Parade**
1:00 2:00 **Units from Parade**
2:00 4:00 **Peach Blossom Contest**
4:00 5:00 **Peach Shortcake Eating contest**
5:00 6:00 **Peach Taste-Off**
6:00 7:00 **Peach Queen Contest Semi Finals**
8:00 11:00 **Fashion Show on stage**
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Sunday, September 10

12:00 3:00 **Dance Showcase**
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8:00 11:00 **Peach Queen Contest Finals**

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Niagara Falls Jokes



A city worker walks into the Third Street Tap Room and says, "Bartender, a round for everyone, on me!"

The bartender says, "Well, seems you're in a really good mood tonight, hmm?"

"Oh, you can bet on it! I just got hired by the city to go around and remove all the money from parking meters. I start tomorrow!"

The bartender congratulates the man and proceeds to pour the round. The next night the same man walks back in, "Bartender, TWO rounds for everyone, on me!"

The bartender says, "If you're so happy just over having this new job, I can just imagine how happy you'll be when you get your paycheck!"

With a surprised look on his face, the man pulls out a handful of quarters from his pocket and says, "You mean they PAY me too?"

A man dressed in hunting clothes and carrying a shotgun was arrested for stalking tourists in Niagara Falls State Park. When asked what he thought he was doing, he stated, "It's tourist season, isn't it?"

Mayor Dyster found out that the city comptroller has scammed the city out of \$2 million. The comptroller happens to be deaf. Dyster had previously hired him because a deaf comptroller would not be able to hear anything he'd ever have to testify about in court.

When the mayor questions the comptroller about the missing \$2 million, he brings along Seth Piccirillo, who knows sign language. The mayor asks the comptroller: "Where is the \$2 million you embezzled?" Piccirillo, using sign language, asks the

comptroller where the \$2 million dollars is hidden.

The comptroller signs back: "I don't know what you are talking about." Seth Piccirillo tells the mayor: "He says he doesn't know what you're talking about."

That's when Mayor Dyster pulls out a 9 mm pistol, puts it to the comptroller's temple, cocks it, and says: "Ask him again!" Piccirillo signs to the underling: "He'll kill you for sure if you don't tell him!"

The comptroller signs back: "OK! You win! The money is in a brown briefcase, buried behind my cousin Patrick's house in DeVeaux!" The mayor asks Seth Piccirillo: "Well, what'd he say?"

Piccirillo replies: "He says you don't have the guts to pull the trigger."

A Niagara Falls Police officer recently stopped a tourist for exceeding the posted speed limit. He asked the driver her name.

She said, "I'm Mrs. Chadivaler Zuminskagia Ragretumunga from the Republic of Uzbekistan visiting my daughter."

As she finished speaking the cop paused for a moment and then put away his summons book and pen, and said, "Well... OK... this time you get a warning."

A Niagara Falls Police officer was covering a quiet beat when he was amazed to find a former police captain on the police force doing the same.

He stopped the car and asked, "Why, captain, this wouldn't be your new beat out here on the streets, would it?"

"That it is," the captain replied grimly, "ever since I arrested the judge on his way to the masquerade ball."

"You mean you pinched his honor?" asked the patrol officer.

"How was I to know that his convict suit was only a costume?" demanded the captain.

"Well," mused the cop, "there's a lesson in this somewhere."

"That there is," replied the captain.... "You should never book a judge by his cover."



Labor Day is next Monday. For most, it marks the sad conclusion to our summer - the last chance to enjoy a final summer cookout, roller coaster ride or day at the beach. Political speeches have become an integral part of the holiday marking the time when much of the public usually starts to pay attention to the campaigns. But more importantly it is a time Americans think about the sacrifices unions have made, as it relates to wages and safety issues. This national holiday, celebrated every first Monday in September, arose as a tribute to the greatest of all things - the American worker. The first Labor Day holiday was celebrated on Tuesday, September 5, 1882, in New York City, in accordance with the plans of the Central Labor Union. In 1884 the first Monday in September was selected as the holiday, and the Central Labor Union urged similar organizations in other cities to follow the example of New York and celebrate a "workingmen's holiday" on that date. The idea spread with the growth of labor organizations, and in 1885 Labor Day was celebrated in many industrial centers of the country. Despite the celebrations every year, Labor Day actually ascended from a tragic conclusion to a labor strike. President Cleveland and Congress unanimously created the nationally recognized holiday in 1894 after intervening in the Pullman Strike that resulted in the death of numerous workers at the hands of the U.S. military and U.S. Marshals. Labor Day stands as a creation of the labor movement and is dedicated to the social and economic achievements of American workers. It constitutes a yearly national tribute to the contributions workers have made to the strength, prosperity, and well-being of our country. The vital force of labor added materially to the highest standard of living and the greatest production the world has ever known and has brought us closer to the realization of our traditional ideals of economic and political democracy. It is appropriate, therefore, that the nation pays tribute on Labor Day to the creator of so much of the nation's strength, freedom, and leadership - the American worker. Today, all U.S. states, the District of Columbia, and the territories have made it a statutory holiday.

Happy Labor Day!



St. Jude Novena

May the sacred heart of Jesus be adored, glorified, loved and preserved throughout the world now and forever.

Sacred heart of Jesus pray for us.

St. Jude, worker of miracles pray for us.

St. Jude, helper of the hopeless, pray for us.

[Say this prayer 9x a day, by the 8th day your prayer will be answered. It has never been known to fail. Publication must be promised.]

St. Jude Thaddeus

Thank you St. Jude for answering my prayer, P.Z.

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