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What Budget Crisis?**



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Plush Carpets**

# NIAGARA FALLS REPORTER

THE TRUTH IS ALWAYS FAIR

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# New Sal Maglie Operator Ward Has Checkered Past in Arena Football

**Mike Hudson and  
Frank Parlato**

“Every saint has a past, and every sinner a future,” author and playwright Oscar Wilde once said, and he could have been talking about Ray Ward, whose proposal to operate Sal Maglie Stadium was, according to Mayor Paul Dyster, the only one received by the city.

Completely rebuilt in 1999 under the direction of former Mayor James Galie, who hoped to see it become the home of a minor league baseball team, Sal Maglie Stadium has fallen into disrepair over the years. Operated by the Niagara Falls City School District primarily for use by its sports teams, the peeling paint and broken seats speak for themselves. A bank of night game lights, struck by lightning three years ago, still hasn’t been repaired.

Looking to cut costs, the school district gave the stadium back to the city, which then set about trying to find an operator.

Enter Ray Ward, 42, a Wheatfield resident and youth baseball enthusiast who saw the facility as an answer to a prayer.

“You’ve got a stadium where Johnny Bench played, Rick Honeycutt pitched, one that saw thousands of professional baseball games over the years,” Ward told the Niagara Falls Reporter. “What kid wouldn’t want to play there? But until now, the only ones who got the chance were those on the high school team.”

Ward said that a combination of elbow grease, sponsorships and contributions from the youth leagues, which



**Ray Ward (4th from left) with members of his Mobile Bay Tarpons. Coach Willie Gaston 3rd from left.**

pay for field time no matter where they’re playing, could make operating Sal Maglie a break even proposition. And the sale of food and soft drinks – Ward is a restaurateur by profession – just might enable him to turn a profit on the operation.

“I’m an advocate of youth baseball,” Ward said. “That’s what I’m doing here.”

Anywhere else this would be a simple, heartwarming story. But this is Niagara Falls, where things are rarely heartwarming and never simple.

Back in 2011, Ward sold Ray’s Sanborn Pizzeria on Saunders Settlement Rd, and took the proceeds down to Mo-

bile, Ala., where he bought a franchise in the Southern Indoor Football League for the Mobile Bay Tarpons.

“I had a heart attack, went through a kind of midlife crisis, and I felt like I needed to get out and chase a dream,” he said.

From the start, things did not go well. Ward had about \$125,000, nowhere near enough to launch a professional sports franchise.

Tarpons head coach Willie Gaston said that he and players on the team were becoming increasingly suspicious even before the first game of the season.

“He seemed like a genuine guy, and I always thought an arena football team would work in Mobile,” Gaston told the Reporter. “I signed a contract for the season at \$10,000 and never saw a dime of it.”

Gaston, who was an All Conference defensive back at the University of Alabama and went on to play for the Houston Oilers of the NFL, said Ward showed up in a beat up jalopy and made calls using a flip phone held together with duct tape.

“He was slick though. He made a killing down here,” Gaston said.

The team’s first two games augured well. Home field upsets of the established Georgia and Abilene teams had the fans in Mobile excited, if a little confused.

One fan, Ronald Broughton, who purchased season tickets, said he knew something was amiss when the credit card transaction appeared on his statement as a purchase at a Ward’s New York pizzeria.

As far as Gaston and the team were

concerned, the victories were bitter-sweet.

“Nobody got paid,” he said. “And this was even after Ward pressured everyone to get their families to buy season ticket packages.”

Travis Barber was a player. He said about a week before the first game the players were asked if they could buy their own equipment, and that’s when he knew it was time to cut ties.

“Everybody wanted it so bad,” Barber said. “... there really was a lot of ... effort from the players and coaches, but they all got burned. Ray Ward took them for a ride.”

Barber said Ward may have started out with good intentions, but “got in over his head” and instead of taking responsibility, he just “bailed out and ran.”

“Ray Ward had no money,” Gaston said. “But Ray was a smooth talker. He made us believe we didn’t have anything to worry about.”

Meantime, as the season progressed, pressure mounted.

Rent to Mitchell Arena where the Tarpons played had not been paid, and totaled \$30,000.

Ward said that the league misled him on the price, and dimensions of the stadium were actually 10 yards too small for the team to play regulation games.

Gaston said that on the day of the team’s third game, a road game again against Abilene, Ward told him he needed to go back to New York in order to raise money to keep the Tarpons running. It would be the last time he would ever see the man who had hired him.

The road trip was a disaster. The bus the team was given to make the 12 hour

## NIAGARA FALLS REPORTER

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# Ward has vision for 'Sal' that includes little leagues



Sal Maglie Stadium would be a premier place for little leagues....

drive had no bathrooms and no air conditioning. The team was miserable. After being beaten badly by the Abilene squad, they reluctantly boarded the bus for the ride back to Mobile.

And the bus immediately broke down.

"We didn't get back to Mobile until late Monday," Gaston said. "Guys got fired from their regular jobs. How are you supposed to support your family? Now Ward's was nowhere to be found and I'm dealing with these players who never got paid, lost their jobs, and they're angry."

Gaston said he tried to call Ward repeatedly but found that every number he had had been disconnected.

Ward said that he sold the team to Roland Turner, a music promoter in Mobile, one week prior to the Abilene trip, and says he has a contract to prove it, though he couldn't produce the contract as of press time.

Turner's account of the day Ward left town - as told to the Alabama publication Lagniappe, was different than Ward's: "Ray kept calling my phone, but I didn't answer because I was on a conference call. Then I look in my rearview mirror, and Ray is behind me flashing his lights. So I pull over, and Ray (was upset) claimed to have heart problems, so I was worried he was having a heart attack. I tried to make sure he was OK, but he was just saying, 'Man, I have to go. I have to get to New York today, but I don't have any money to get up there.' So I gave him \$1,500 and sent him on his way. He called me a little later saying he had a flat tire, so I sent a mechanic and a tire out there to him. And I haven't heard from him since ... yep, he got me."

Ward disputes Turner's contention, saying Turner made him the "fall guy," when he decided not to field the team.

Ward said, "I left thinking he was the owner and I suppose he realized, like I

did, that the league was falling apart and he probably thought 'let Ray Ward take the blame.'"

At the time, the media was blaming Ward.

Lagniappe writer, Johnny Davis wrote of Ward back in May 17, 2011, when the team was falling apart:

"He came, he saw, and it appears he screwed us over. You name 'em ... it looks like Ray Ward screwed 'em.... He rode into Mobile a few months ago with big promises of establishing a legitimate professional sports team. In the end, it turned out to be a big sham.

"...Here in Mobile, everybody was left screwed over: the players, the coaches, the season ticket holders, the sponsors, the Mitchell Center, local businessmen and pretty much anyone in the area who cares about Mobile.

"... The players and coaches never got paid. The season ticket holders didn't get an entire season. The sponsors got next to nothing for their money. Ward skipped out on a nearly \$30,000 tab with the Mitchell Center. Local businessman Roland Turner says he is out nearly \$40,000 because of Ward. Ward even walked out on equipment and apparel debt to Bowen Sports and Riddell. According to Turner, the money for several pairs of shoulder pads ended up coming out of the paycheck of a local Riddell representative.

"And indeed, he even got us. The Tarpons had an advertising contract with Lagniappe.

"Altogether, it's a pretty sizable list of people Ward burned, but there may be countless others who just haven't come forward.

"In an interview before the season, Ward told me he would be here 30 years if that's what it took to make the Tarpons successful. So what went wrong? Was he lying? Did he come to Mobile planning to screw us all over?"

When the Reporter asked Ward why he didn't rebut the harsh criticism that appeared in the local Mobile media at the time, Ward said he had, as a part of his contract with Turner, a "gag order" that prevented him from talking about the sale, which, he said, was for the sum of \$10,000.

Some of what Ward claims is backed up by the fact that the SIFL apparently thought Turner bought the team from Ward since a letter was sent by SIFL commissioner Gary Tufford to some 600 season ticket holders, saying that Turner (not Ward) should be contacted if they wanted a refund on their season tickets.

Turner told Lagniappe that the SIFL spent weeks "drawing up paperwork" but ultimately the SIFL could not come up with satisfactory terms and Turner declined ownership.

This went on behind the scenes.

Publically Ward took all the blame.

Which brings us back to baseball and Niagara Falls.,

"Look. I'm just trying to save Sal Maglie Stadium," Ward told the Reporter. "I've learned from (the Mobile experience)... I've got a conscience. I felt bad about it for a long time and I still feel bad about it. But you live and learn."

Ward said that at Sal Maglie, he will work with Rev. Cal Kern to keep the Niagara Power playing there; will field little league teams and, importantly, Ward will pay rent to the city and make repairs himself at the stadium at no cost to the city.

Also, Ward said, the deal with the city will be on a one year trial basis.

If he succeeds, it will be renewed.

"It won't cost the city a dime," Ward said.

Ward described the way he would set up teams and provided information that showed he had some teams already lined up for games- at reduced prices.

Little league playing at Sal Maglie.

When the school district operated it, they charged \$1,100 per game - which made it out of reach for little league teams. Ward said he will be charging \$150 per game, just enough to break even - and affordable for teams.

In his own words, Ward explained:

"Sal (Maglie Stadium) needs a lot of work. It's not like it needs millions of dollars worth of work. The painting of the façade, that's probably the most expensive part; the concessions stands are right up there with it but that's what I do.... fix up restaurants. I just think if you keep a good product on the field (concession). We will have homemade pizza and pretzels. The more comfortable you make people, the easier it is to get them to spend money.... I think Sal is a great venue. It's a missing thing in Niagara Falls. I think, just focus on Sal and what it can do for some kids. Since the early thirties it has created memories; local baseball is fading and baseball is affordable especially for Niagara Falls... . Guess what's a cheap sport to play? Baseball. You need a glove, a bat....

"I'd like to see Sal succeed; it deserves to succeed; that place is gorgeous. I don't care what anybody says.... I know what kids are playing in... Sal is better.

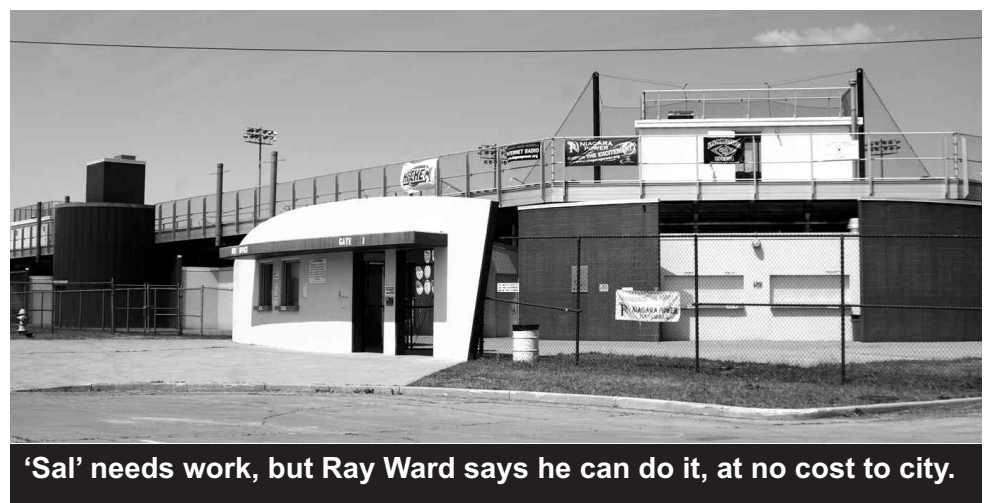
"Right now I have over 100 games tentatively scheduled. I have 13- 16 year olds that are going to travel out of there... existing travel (little league baseball) organizations that didn't have a home. Two teams are from Tonawanda; one from Amherst.

"There is nothing like Sal Maglie around. It is one of the finest stadiums you can play little league.... Let's have all the kids running through there. Let's have camps, clinics. It is =an affordable way for parents to create memories. I have one boy, 11. These are the years when we can create memories. If he can run out of Sal, that is a memory. I have had a lot of people come up to me and say to me 'I used to come up there with my dad and the lights were on and they were playing ball.' Those are the things you want, you want the community involved and it's affordable. Baseball is an affordable sport."

Will Ward prove to be a savior or a charlatan?

Will he be a saint with a past or a sinner with a future?

Only time will tell.



'Sal' needs work, but Ray Ward says he can do it, at no cost to city.



# With \$9 M Deficit, Cuts Won't Come Easy

**Frank Parlato**

The Niagara Falls Reporter has learned there is an estimated \$9 million shortfall expected in the 2015 budget for the City of Niagara Falls.

The \$9 million gap is the difference between what the city expects to collect from property and sales tax, state aid and other revenues and what the administration of Mayor Paul Dyster plans to spend.

Dyster is required to present a balanced budget to the council, which means he must close the gap.

He has limited options.

By state law, the maximum Dyster can raise taxes is about two percent, which means he can raise less than \$1 million through tax hikes, unless he can secure state approval for a larger increase as he attempted to do in 2012.

The deadline for such a request appears to have passed, however.

If he cannot raise taxes more than \$1 million, he can perhaps cut costs to shave the other \$8 million shortfall.

Dyster told the Niagara Gazette, "there's a structural problem (budget) and most of it is due to payroll."

Payroll - as it is today - was negotiated in the past by Dyster and the unions - and is dictated now by labor contracts.

Dyster cannot cut hourly wages for union workers. He could cut a few non-union employees - mainly department heads.

During the administration of Mayor Vince Anello, eight years ago, the average department head's salary was \$50,000. Salaries of \$100,000 for Dyster's department heads are commonplace.

In 2011, Dyster gave raises all around when he ran for re-election, which happened to coincide with similar increases he approved with union contracts negotiated during his election year.

A smart ploy, unions often agree to contracts that expire during election years. And smart politician: after Dyster agreed to huge union concessions in 2011, he picked up union endorsements.

Now, faced with a deficit, he can't cut union wages. If he cut 20 percent of the salaries of his department heads, it wouldn't save \$500,000.

The next place is layoffs.

Despite a bloated municipal workforce of 656 employees, it will be a challenge to cut jobs. Firstly, 2015 is an election year for Dyster. Most city workers and their families vote.

Even if Dyster cut 10 jobs, that would save only about \$700,000. Cutting even 100 jobs won't be enough.

And that's not going to happen.

Overtime is next.

Union contracts on "manning levels" encourage loads of overtime especially in police and fire. Many policemen and firemen double their salaries and earn



**The workplace of \$100,000 department heads in one of the highest taxed and poorest cities in America.**

over \$100,000 per year through overtime. These unions are strong and its members vote. Overtime cuts - which

majority - of Kristen Grandinetti, Andrew Touma and Charles Walker - agreed to restore the subsidy to USA Niagara - at



**Mayor Paul Dyster must bridge a \$9 million budget gap that, for the most part, he created.**

are hugely unpopular with workers who have built their lifestyle around overtime and who vote - are likely to be small.

While Dyster has permitted substantial overtime for a small group of city hall employees, even if these are curtailed, it won't amount to \$400,000.

Payroll, layoffs, tax increases, overtime cuts- all told might equal \$2 million.

What else could be cut?

Last month, rather than cutting, Dyster increased spending by adding something the old council cut out of the budget.

In 2012, Dyster proposed laying off 30 people. But the old council majority - of Sam Fruscione, Glenn Choolokian and Robert Anderson - chose instead to keep the jobs and cut the city's \$3.1 million annual subsidy to USA Niagara. This closed a large portion of the 2013 shortfall with a single cut.

But Dyster and his new council ma-

are a reduced, but still hefty, \$1.5 million a year - for events and parties at Old Falls St. and for subsidizing conferences at the conference center.

That single increase - although coming from casino money - all but offset the savings Dyster could get from combined cuts of payroll, overtime, layoffs and a two percent tax increase in 2015.

In past years, Dyster drained the

city's savings account - called "fund balance" - that every municipality has for emergencies and unexpected expenses. Dyster took \$4.4 million from savings to balance the budget last year.

One might expect the same this year, which will all but drain remaining fund balance, savings that date back to the Anello administration.

Additionally, last year Dyster took \$5 million of casino money to balance the budget. One should expect the same this year.

With these two items, he may balance the budget this year.

But not solve the structural deficit problem.

Next year, and the next, the city will spend more than it takes in.

This may be the last year Dyster can raid savings and tap casino cash.

In addition to the \$1.5 million a year he and the council committed to USA Niagara, the mayor committed \$4 million a year of casino cash to Gov. Cuomo's economic development contest in Niagara Falls.

Between this, and the rising cost of municipal debt - and other casino cash commitments - combined with declining casino revenues- it dropped more than \$1.4 million between 2012 and 2013, and is expected to drop again in 2014 - little casino cash will be available in the future to balance budgets.

While Dyster has inherited pension and payroll problems from previous administrations, most of the deficit is of his own doing. Anello left office with millions in surplus, which Dyster spent.

Dyster also had something past administrations did not have: Access to tens of millions of casino cash. He chose to spend much of it on "economic development" projects, which apparently have created no new revenues for the city.

Revenues are almost exactly what they were during the Anello administration, while expenses rose 25 percent.

Dyster's use of casino cash on low



**The cheerful mind perseveres and the strong mind hews its way through a thousand difficulties."**

**Swami Vivekananda**



**Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Mathew 11:28**



# Tapping casino cash and savings is temporary fix



**Among the many lavish casino expenditures was this \$100,000 playground at Griffon Park. In any real world where money is carefully spent this playground would have cost \$30,000.**

income housing and other, arguably, unnecessary projects and extravagant purchases, instead of using it for items that were otherwise paid for out of the city's

But there is little political will for such frugality.

Consider the decision to use \$6,000 of casino money to buy senior planner



**Dyster and his council - except Glenn Choolokian - approved \$500,000 to fix up this old fire hall on Highland Ave-- for a not for profit corporation.**

general fund, may be the problem.

For example, instead of giving \$4 million in casino cash to the state each year, he might have told Gov. Cuomo he has to fund his own contest - with some of the \$80 million the state gets annually from Seneca Niagara.

That \$4 million of casino cash could go towards, for example, roads instead.

It would qualify for the legal use of casino cash, for good roads are necessary for economic development.

And Dyster might have told USA Niagara that if they can't make enough money running concerts and parties on Old Falls St., or if conference goers can't pay enough for their own conferences, the city can't pay for it either.

Tom DeSantis new carpets and drapes for his offices. When a city hall official was asked, "why buy new carpets at a time like this," the person said, "the amount is so small it wouldn't even move a decimal point."

While that is true, frugality often begins small: "Many a mickle makes a muckle," is an old proverb which means a lot of small amounts, put together, become a large amount.

To prove the point, here are a few small (and large) expenses approved or spent by the city in the last year out of casino cash that might have been postponed or foregone. Added together, they would have gone a long way toward curing the problem of a city spending \$9

million more than it takes in each year.

\*\* Development consultants \$72,000 (what development?).

\*\* Ice Pavilion renovations on "old" locker rooms \$300,000. And a consultant on how to renovate those locker rooms: \$94,500 ((That's \$400,000. Couldn't brand new locker rooms for amateur hockey players hold a year of two?).

\*\* Train station: \$5,224,000. A new train station Is it really needed for a near bankrupt city?

\*\* Hard Rock Concerts: \$369,500. How can a city justify paying for concerts and at the same time look at tax increases and layoffs?

\*\* Niagara Falls Blues Festival: \$30,000.

\*\* Downtown Parking Study: Desman Associates \$112,430.

\*\* Holiday Inn: \$550,000. The city built a restaurant for a millionaire hotel owner.

\*\* NFC Development Corporation grants: \$368,581. Do city officials, who can't figure out how pay the city's bills, have the qualifications to decide which businesses should get a taxpayer gift? The NFC's track record is poor. Many businesses went out of business after getting the money.

\*\* Then there are gifts to not-for-profit corporations, organizations that in other municipalities must fund themselves. New Jerusalem Reporting Center for Boys \$90,000; Isaiah 61: \$500,000 - to renovate an old fire hall for offices and a store. (Within one week of the appropriation, the executive director quit and moved to Utica); Community Missions: \$150,000. (The not for profit has IRS tax liens and the city bailed them out); Niagara Military Affairs Council: \$160,000 and the list goes on.

These may be good organizations, but the city cannot pay its own bills.

\*\* Then there was a dose of questionable expenses: A grant writer con-

sultant: \$95,000 (How many grants were achieved?).

\*\* Code Enforcement got nine new Ford Escapes: \$210,595 (couldn't they have gone another year?).

\*\* DPW Director Dave Kinney got a brand new \$40,000 SUV. His old one was only three years old and had 50,000 miles on it. (Wouldn't most people facing a budget crisis keep their three-year-old car another year?).

\*\* Then there were consultants. One got paid \$7,329 to consult on what kind of signage was needed for LaSalle Waterfront and Griffon Park. There was a small 50-page park study that cost \$57,000.

\*\* Membership in Buffalo Niagara Enterprise: \$50,000.

\*\* Besides the garbage and recycling totes, which cost \$2,214,449, the mayor miscalculated the cost of the garbage contract. Additional funds for Modern Disposal: \$284,622 for 2014.

\*\* Then there was the repaving of City Hall's parking lot: \$468,720. (Could this have waited?).

And the list goes on ....

After awarding millions to all sorts of plans and schemes since June 18, 2013, when the \$89 million (four years) in casino cash was released, casino cash has been used for everything from roads to consultants to concerts to overtime to trucks and cars.

It has been used as city money for all city things. It should now be used frugally.

This city, under Mayor Dyster, has not been frugal and, while, for now, he can drain savings and tap casino cash, if this extravagance does not change, the city is headed for a control board in the near future.

Then the cuts won't come voluntarily. And they'll come deep.



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# Late Budget Should Come as no Surprise

## Neither Should Size of Deficit

### Mike Hudson

For the third year in a row, the city has spent considerably more than it has taken in. And Dyster missed the Oct. 1 deadline mandated by the City Charter for handing his proposed 2015 budget over to the city council, just as he did two years ago.



When it comes to hosting rock concerts or beer festivals, Niagara Falls Mayor Paul Dyster can't be beat. But when it comes to turning in a balanced budget on time, well, not so much.

“We’re working very diligently to address what’s an ongoing structural issue in the budget,” the mayor said. “The gap we’re facing is larger than anticipated.”

Why this should be so when the gap has existed in each of the past three years is uncertain. The city simply spends significantly more than it takes in.

Who can forget Dyster’s famous “disaster budget” of 2012, when the city took in \$78 million in revenues and spent a whopping \$88 million. Dyster’s solution was simple: he sought a whopping 8.3 percent tax increase from the city’s already overtaxed property owners.

The council majority at the time – Sam Fruscione, Glenn Choolokian and



Bob Anderson – responded with a hearty, “Hell no!” and, working with City Controller Maria Brown, found ways to cut costs so that the massive tax increase was avoided. In 2013, Dyster couldn’t very well raise taxes since his Council allies, Kristen Grandinetti and Charles Walker,

were running for re-election. Instead, using around \$4.4 million in general fund reserves and another \$5 million in Seneca casino cash, he covered his shortfall.

Rather than blame his chronic shortfalls on the city’s out of control corporate welfare program, subsidized rock concerts or white elephant projects such as the new train station, the mayor claims that his out of control spending is, well, out of his control.

“It’s no secret where the deficit is coming from,” the mayor said. “It’s driven by the personnel costs.”

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



# DeSantis Redecorates as City Debt Grows

City Planner, Tom DeSantis, the man who gave us the train station, the Underground Railroad Interpretive Center, countless studies and conflicting plans of the Jayne Park renovation, is re-decorating his city hall office.

On the council agenda for tonight (Oct. 14) is item #2 that will see Mr. Tom's offices get new rugs and drapes to the tune of \$6,175.

The cost of the rugs and drapes is being covered not by the general fund and not by casino cash. It is being paid with "casino cash interest."

Just when you thought you heard every type of expenditure in the Dyster administration, the mayor comes up with one more way of surprising us.

"Casino cash interest."

In the face of a \$9 million city deficit, the Dyster administration is going to update DeSantis' working quar-



**Senior Planner Tom DeSantis wants new carpets and he is going to get them.... You'll pay for them...**

the Planning Department office necessitate the replacement of both."

The irony doesn't escape the Reporter.

The man who is chiefly responsible

sites, the average cost of carpet, including pad and installation, is from \$12 to \$15 per square yard.

DeSantis' suite of offices is about 50 square yards.

With \$4,950 for his carpets, taxpayers are paying \$100 per square yard, or

about eight times the cost of average, decent carpeting.

Somebody is either making a huge killing on this carpeting or DeSantis is going to get the quality of carpet people put in million-dollar homes.



**At the incredible cost of \$100 per square yard, Senior Planner Tom DeSantis' new carpets may be the costliest in the city... But hey, the best, deserves the best....**

ters: \$4,950 for rugs, \$1,225 for window blinds.

The supporting information from the mayor reads, "...deteriorated conditions of the window blinds and carpeting in

for most of the major, misguided, and always costly city projects is – in the midst of budgetary calamity – refreshing the digs of his city hall lair.

Several years ago DeSantis dropped more than \$35,000 into a home kitchen renovation. He failed to get building permits for the work, was exposed in the Reporter, and consequently had to make good on the permit fees.

We're not sure why Tom skirted the building permit laws but at least he was spending his own money on everything including the kitchen sink.

This time his rugs and drapes are on the taxpayer.

The agenda item doesn't say what color the new rugs and drapes are, but there is one puzzling aspect: the high cost of carpet for the small amount of offices being carpeted.

According to [www.carpetsupersite.com](http://www.carpetsupersite.com), and other



## THREE GREAT CANDIDATES – THREE WEEKS LEFT

Three weeks from today will be Election Day – November 4, 2014. Please consider voting for these three great supporters of working men and women of Niagara County all vying for office.

Kathy Hochul - Despite the politics of her district, she never backed down from her Democratic values: pro-choice, pro-worker, pro-marriage equality values. Now she has the honor to continue to serve the public as the running mate of Governor Andrew Cuomo. Once elected, Kathy will be an outspoken voice in Albany for all New Yorkers and continue her fight for WNY and Niagara County. We need look no further than the Niagara Falls Air Base which Kathy fought tirelessly for in Washington when she was our Congresswoman. She is and always has been one of the greatest public servants to ever serve the people of Western New York.

Johnny Destino - Johnny has been investing his time to improve the lives of residents of Niagara County and all of WNY for years. Destino has the right mix of private-sector and legal experience necessary to continue his fight creating the living-wage jobs required to save our middle class working families. As an elected Niagara Falls School Board member, Destino has been responsible for holding the line on taxes while managing a \$130 million annual budget. In 2013, Destino was elected to represent the district on the Orleans/Niagara BOCES School Board and oversees their \$50 million annual budget for the 13 component districts across the region. His extensive budgetary and legislative experience is exactly what we need in the New York State Senate during this crucial time for public education.

John Ceretto - John Ceretto was elected to represent the people of the 138th District in the New York State Assembly on November 2, 2010. During his time in the Assembly, John has consistently reached across the aisle, working closely with Governor Cuomo and his colleagues from both parties to strengthen the region's economy and make Western New York a more affordable place to live and raise a family. During his tenure, Assemblyman Ceretto has helped to revitalize our economy and create good-paying jobs. Ceretto also led the fight to reform Albany. He helped reverse the Capitol's dysfunction by passing on-time budgets that reduced the state's \$13.5 billion deficit without raising taxes. To provide additional relief to taxpayers, John helped pass the historic property tax cap and passed the largest middle-class tax cut in nearly 60 years.

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# Dyster Deficit by Any Other Name Means Higher Taxes

**Anna M. Howard**

All together now, put your lips together and say with me: “structural deficit.”

If you don’t say it, if you don’t know it, if you don’t learn it, you’re going to fall behind the Niagara Falls information curve, and be left in the dust as the next six weeks of municipal budget drama passes over your head.

The Dyster administration is \$9 million in debt.

As the city hall story goes, the debt is no longer a simple “debt.” It’s no longer a case of more money going out than coming in.

No, the city has a “structural” deficit.

In a Dyster city hall where wasteful projects (courthouse, train station, Underground Railroad Interpretive Center) are called “transformational initiatives,” a formerly simple matter of owing more money than you possess has been re-phrased as a “structural” deficit.

The truth of the matter is that the first use of the word “structural” in regard to the city budget problems was contained within the New York State Comptroller’s audit of Niagara Falls in spring of 2013.

That audit from Thomas DiNapoli’s office reported that the city was relying on “one-shot” budget fixes and casino cash that didn’t exist in order to keep the budget balanced.

The term “structural deficit” was originally a criticism of the Dyster administration’s money management style, issued by the comptroller of New York State, DiNapoli, a fellow Democrat.

In a city hall where things are rarely what they seem and information is routinely withheld from those who file freedom of information requests, Dyster has taken the deficit he ran-up and uses the phrase “structural deficit” as if something was broken and simply needed a repairman with a box of tools to make it well.

Dyster has turned a vast monetary



## Dyster: City facing "significant" funding gap in proposed 2015 spending plan

posted: October 08

## Grant would boost efforts to renovate former school administrative building

posted: October 08

This screen shot of the Niagara Gazette web page carries an almost perfect irony. The website had these two top stories:  
The first is that the "City facing funding gap..."  
The second is that the city is giving away \$150,000 in public money to a developer for more low income housing "to renovate former school administrative building..."

shortfall into a matter of “structure.”

Dyster has turned a deficit into something that can be repaired, sort of like fixing the roof of a structure when it leaks.

Dyster’s nimble re-positioning of the \$9 million shortfall has, in his mind, removed him as the leading cause of the problem: his irresponsible spending.

Not so fast, Mr. Mayor.

From page 9 of the state audit, “We found that the City had a pattern of structural budget deficits, meaning recurring revenues were not sufficient to fund recurring expenditures. During our audit period (2009-2013 budgets) the general fund’s budget gap averaged \$12.4 million. City officials balanced the budgets using fund balance (i.e savings or reserves for emergencies) and an estimate for casino revenues that averaged \$5.3

million annually.”

And on page 10, “The City has

funded these structural deficits by relying on ‘one-shots’ such as fund balance and surplus moneys remaining in the capital project fund...while the City has been significantly affected by the casino revenue impasse, its financial condition has worsened significantly due to its budgeting practices.”

While the state’s recommendations for fixing the city budget deficit were numerous, two key recommendations were: “1.The Mayor and Council must develop structurally sound and realistic budgets. 2. City officials should prepare and adopt a multiyear financial plan.”

There you have the state audit’s advice in a nutshell.

Advice the mayor ignored.

Read the full version of the state comptroller’s audit online by searching for “City of Niagara Falls Financial Management and Information Technology Report of Examination Period Covered January 1, 2009 – January 9, 2013 2013M-47.”

Read this document and get the background of what really happened to the city’s finances. You’ll want to stay fully informed as the next six weeks dramatically unfolds.

Now, repeat after me, “structural deficit.”

## \$500 REWARD!



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**716-236-0145 (Roland)**

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# Oh, Budget How do I Cut Thee... Let Me Count the Ways

**Anna M. Howard**

It's not the job of the Niagara Falls Reporter to run city government, but, since the \$9 million shortfall represents a looming municipal tragedy that has within it the power to bankrupt Niagara Falls and turn the city over to a control board, we feel a duty to present recommendations.

If we were running city government we would:

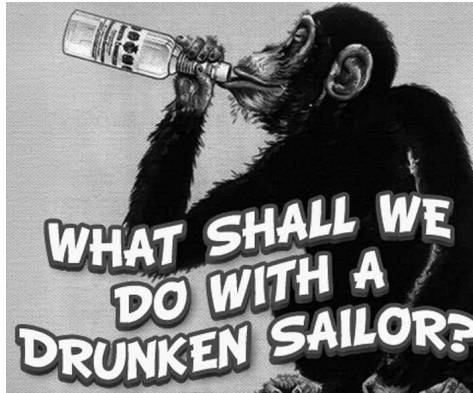
All department heads, along with the mayor and city administrator, should take minimum 10 percent cuts in pay. It saves money, sets an example and sets the tone for all to follow.

All overtime must be ended except for fire and police and even there - only where absolutely needed.

No more purchasing of vehicles, office furniture, computers, rugs etc., for now.

Any city positions currently unfilled, open, or expected to open due to retirement should remain unfilled and closed out.

The unions must be brought respectfully to the table as partners to the solution and be told that there are no raises



in the near future.

Review fire and police since they represent more than 40 percent of the budget. This is public safety, but it's time to review staffing levels, overtime and efforts that result in inflated pension costs. Lockport, with less serious fiscal problems than Niagara Falls, is making these cuts as you read this.

No more contracts for consultants. It's time for the mayor and his department heads to do their own work and planning. Step up.

No more legal consultants. With the use of outside law firms, the law department overhead has risen astronomically since 2008. It's time for the law staff to step up.

Immediately end the city contract

with the outside engineering firm. It's time for the Dyster administration to hire a city engineer and stop the costly consulting and overtime due to the lack of an engineer.

Stop all casino cash spending and immediately draft a casino spending plan to be shared with the residents in a spirit of transparency.

Cancel the work forced upon the Cayuga Island neighborhood at Jayne Park.

Bring in financial advisors carrying no conflicts of interest from the private sector to review the city's debt and debt structure.

Ask the state comptroller for assistance in meeting the demands and recommendations of the 2013 State Comptroller audit of Niagara Falls government.

Bring back the \$500,000 of casino cash that was awarded to the Isaiah 61 program and stop all rehabilitation work at the Highland Avenue fire hall immediately and demolish the building, saving the costs of future wasteful rehab efforts.

Bring back the \$1.5 million of casino cash that was given to USA Ni-

agara to operate the Conference Center and events and parties on Old Falls St.

Close the DPW Trash Office. The office sprang up out of thin air this summer with at least three employees, office space and vehicles. Close it and don't look back.

Determine, now, what it will cost to open, operate and maintain the train station. Dyster wants a private firm to run the station...what will that cost?

Call Gov. Andrew Cuomo's office and respectfully tell them the city cannot afford the \$4 million per year fee to co sponsor Cuomo's economic development challenge contest.

Make a serious effort to collect outstanding traffic tickets, an effort that won't involve a consultant who walks away with most of the money.

Take back the Hamister parcel and find a developer with cash in hand that will pay the city what the land is worth.

Painful reading isn't it?

Expenditures have consequences.

No one said it was going to be easy.

Certainly, not Mayor Paul A. Dyster.

## Dyster Polling Starting Already for 2015 Candidacy?

Over the past weekend an automated phone poll was launched in an attempt to take the pulse of candidate Paul Dyster.

People receiving the call informed the Reporter that the poll had six questions: How do you rate the mayor's performance? Would you vote for him again? Do you think it's time to give another person a chance? How do you rate Mayor Dyster's leadership? Is Paul Dyster accessible to residents? Who do you

prefer for mayor in a field of Paul Dyster, Johnny Destino, Glenn Choolokian, Charles Walker and Robert Restaino?

This poll is concerned only with potential Democratic candidates for mayor.

At the close of the poll the recorded voice states, "This poll was not paid for by a political candidate or party and was conducted by Damon Associates."

Was the poll ordered by Democratic operatives as a means to assess the chances of Dyster winning a third term? Or did Republicans conduct the poll so that they could determine who is likely to be the Democratic primary winner?

Either way, it is clear that the poll is meant to determine if the bloom is off the Dyster rose?

Every candidate elected multiple times inevitably reaches the end of their shelf life before the end of their final term as they "wear out their welcome." Their end could be due to failings of the candidate, bad luck or the inconvenient timing of events beyond the elected offi-

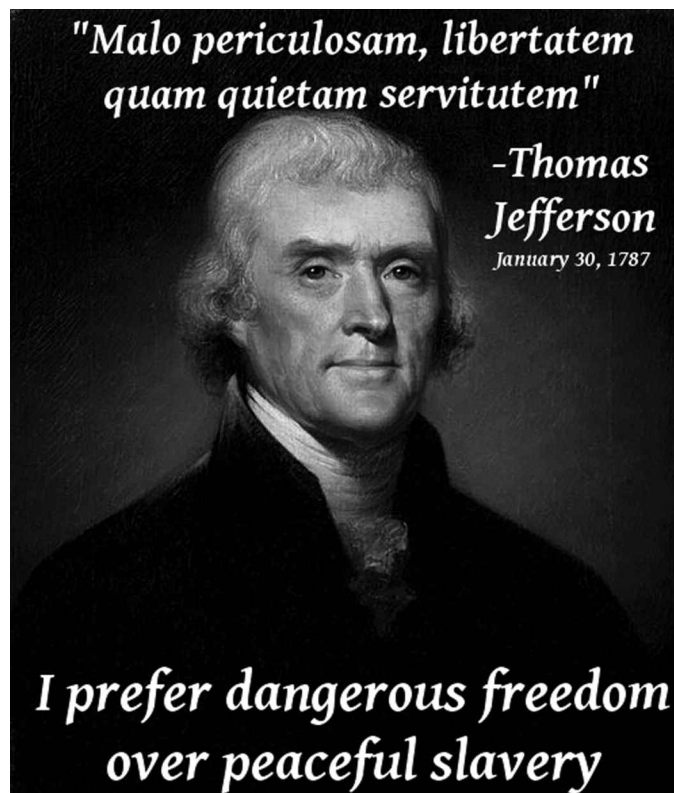
cial's control.

In the end it doesn't matter what causes the drop in popularity. That drop, once it begins in an almost imperceptible fashion, picks up momentum with the officeholder eventually suffering political death by a thousand cuts.

It's possible the poll was ordered by Buffalo businessmen that supported Paul Dyster from 2007 until now. Are those Buffalo supporters preparing to set candidate Dyster aside in favor of a new, more likeable mayoral candidate in 2015?



**Councilman Glenn Choolokian named in poll as possible mayoral rival for Paul Dyster.**



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# Destino, Brochey Join CWM Opponents In Seeking Extension of Permit Process

**Tony Farina**

The opposition to the proposed expansion of Chemical Waste Management's Town of Porter hazardous waste landfill is still a rallying point for environmental interests and many other citizens and public officials concerned with the future safety of nearby schools and the impact on tourism, farming, and the Great Lakes with 44 more acres of toxic waste.

Chemical Waste Management wants to expand its 710-acre landfill by 44 acres, enabling it to accept more than four million more tons of hazardous waste at the site, located just 10 miles from Lake Ontario and the Great Lakes—which contain 20 percent of the liquid fresh water of the planet. It is also in close proximity to the Lewiston-Porter Schools and the Niagara River.

According to the Sierra Club Niagara Group, Chemical Waste Management has already discharged PCBs into the nearby water supply and "the EPA has said all landfills eventually leak, and this process has already begun at CWM."

State Senate candidate Johnny Destino and Lewiston Mayor Dennis Brochey joined with representatives from several local groups on Monday (Oct. 13) at Lewiston's Hennepin Park



**Johnny Destino and Dennis Brochey discuss the effort to delay the decision on granting CWM a permit. The company seeking a DEC permit to take in more hazardous waste.**

Gazebo to report that opponents have requested more time for public comment from the State's Department of Environmental Conservation to examine the 30,000 pages of documents associated with the permit application from CWM.

April Fideli, president of Residents for Responsible Government (RRG), said opponents to the expansion are seeking an additional 90 days for the public comment period, extending the current deadline of Oct. 20 to Jan. 20, 2015. She said that so far the state has not responded to a Sept. 24 letter seeking the extension.

Both Destino, a candidate for the 62nd State Senate District that includes all of Niagara County, and Supervisor

Brochey expressed their concern for the health and safety of the region that could be compromised by four million more tons of potentially dangerous toxic waste.

Destino expressed concerns about the possible negative impact to the surrounding \$120 million agricultural industry and said the expansion of the landfill "may impact our ability to grow the region," saying "we have already received several generations of toxic waste and that's enough. It's time to put an end to being the state's dumping ground."

Supervisor Brochey said he was concerned with the potential environmental danger posed by the new landfill, and joined with the others in requesting

more time to study the thousands of pages of documents associated with the CWM permit application.

A total of 18 groups including the Great Lakes Sport Fishing Council, the League of Women Voters, and the Western New York Environmental Alliance joined with RRG in requesting the extension.

CWM spokesman Lori Caso is on the record saying "as the state's only hazardous waste landfill and with the current facility running out of space, there is a need for the additional 44 acres.

The company recently defended their expansion efforts in a letter to the Niagara Falls Reporter, saying the toxic waste dump provides safe disposal for manufacturers, for cleanup projects, and a lot of people depend on CWM to provide that service.

While the expansion could provide some temporary construction jobs, it is the long-term view of many of the opponents that in reality, the potentially dangerous new waste site could negatively affect the local economy, starting with the agricultural industry which is the backbone of the region. And what price do you put on a safe environment for nearby schools and public waters, they ask? We'll keep you posted.

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# Dominic's Little River an Undiscovered Treasure Here

**Mike Hudson**

Delicious food at reasonable prices.

That's the story of Dominic's Little River Bar & Grill, a LaSalle institution that refuses to rest on its laurels.

Located on the upper Niagara River on Buffalo Avenue, Dominic's Little River is truly a diamond in the rough. The atmosphere and staff are great and there is a beautiful view from the outside dining area.

Dominic's is nationally known for its seafood risotto, but try the chicken breast with spinach, bruschetta tomatoes, provolone cheese, roasted red pepper mashed potatoes You won't be sorry!

For lunch, there's a full selection of burgers, including buffalo and wild boar, along with pulled pork sandwiches, hot dogs, wings and different pasta dishes.



Whether steak, pasta, chicken, or Dominic's classic surf and turf, the presentation is splendid, the portions generous, the taste exquisite - and best of all - the price is fabulous.

After 4 p.m., the chefs hand cut 14 different 100 percent certified black angus steaks, including the slow roasted prime rib for which Dominic's Little River is justly renown. Cut it with a fork tender, the rare prime rib literally melts

in your mouth.

As Chef John Jourdain, owner of Dominic's Little River, explained, the demi-glace sauce that graces many dishes at the restaurant is a labor of love.

"A lot of restaurants will put demi-

glace on a steak and it is out of a bag or a can. I roasted these veal bones for four or five hours and I cooked them for seven days to get the sauce that you had," he said. "I always try to take it to the highest possible level that I can."

To say that the cocktails and wine glasses at Dominic's are amply poured would be an understatement. Service is fast and friendly and the park-like surroundings along the placid waters of the Little Niagara make for a wonderful dining experience.

Whether you're looking for a new spot to catch the Bills on a Sunday afternoon, a fabulous Friday night fish fry, or just a place to relax, have a good meal and enjoy some live music on a Saturday night, try Dominic's Little River Bar and Grill.

You'll be glad you did!

## What Work Will Actually Be Done At Jayne Park?

The Jayne Park "improvement" plan is back before the council. Tonight's (Oct. 14) agenda lists item #8 that will see the "park work" awarded to low bidder Scott Lawn Yard Care at a cost of \$269,115.

What the "work" consists of is unknown since there was no information or explanation on the city website. The council also was not provided with copies of the actual bid.

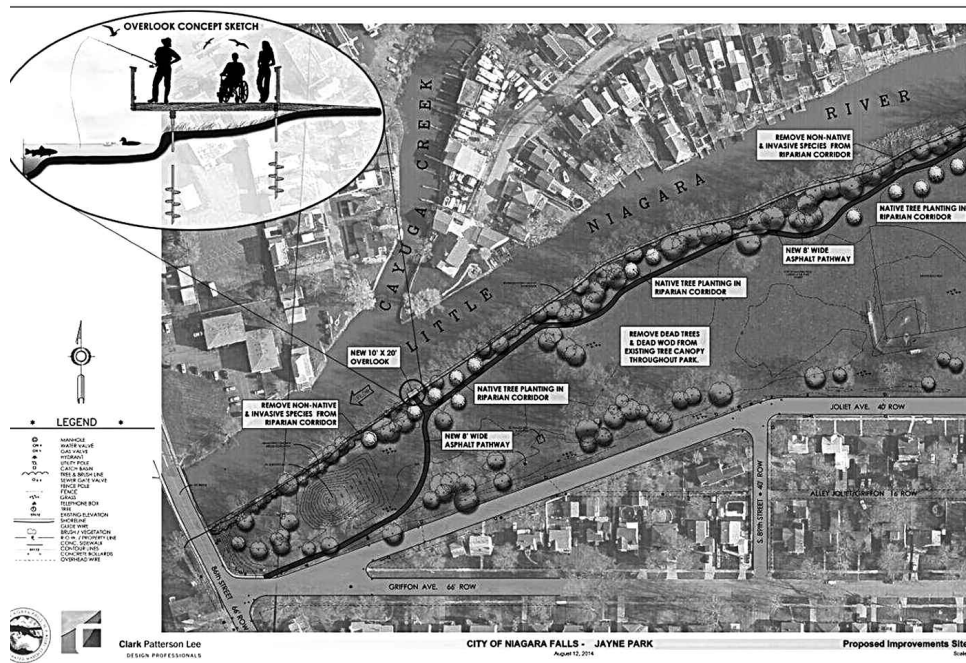
The agenda item states the project will be paid from "a combination of a grant with the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) and General Fund Balance, code H0612.2006.0612.0449.599."

The Dyster administration does not clearly refer to the funding line by name but instead chose to describe it by its computer budget code.

The residents of Cayuga Island where Jayne Park is located have been told since 2009 that the project was covered by a Greenway "grant."

Yet more than \$130,000 will be taken from city coffers to "improve" Jayne Park, which apparently comes as a surprise to some who thought the work on Jayne Park was going to be grant money.

In 2009, Mayor Paul Dyster and Senior Planner Thomas DeSantis launched the plan to transform Jayne



**While renderings of work to be done at Jayne Park appear on the city website, the actual \$260,000 contract that describes the work to be done is nowhere to be seen.**

Park from an all-green neighborhood park to a regional attraction. Plans called for the building of a canoe launch, a flood-lighted parking lot (there is no parking lot now), paved walking paths, in-ground signage, elaborate picnic grounds, stripped Little River shore and more.

The Reporter broke the story, warn-

ing residents and, from 2009 until this summer, frustrated and angry residents kept Dyster and DeSantis at bay, once signing a petition with more than 350 signatures, expressing their dismay with the plans.

Dyster promised to modify plans, assuring residents his new Jayne Park would eliminate the parking lot and

canoe launch.

If agenda item #8 passes - as it is expected to do - it will bring a modified - but not defined - project to Jayne Park and residents will see changes to their quaint, quiet park. Yet from 2009, until this moment, Dyster and DeSantis have not shared detailed information as to what they are actually planning.

How can the council vote to approve the project without knowing what it is specifically?

How can one of the loveliest and highest tax paying neighborhoods in the city witness work starting there without a clear picture of what is going to happen?

Cayuga Island resident, Tina Cosentino Flynn, last Friday (Oct. 9), writing on the Niagara Community Facebook forum, stated, "What I am wondering about is the Jayne Park upgrade that was being done with grants, so they said. This shows (agenda item) that the city is also paying for it with the general fund. If the city budget is short, why are we doing something that no one asked for and is not wanted?"

Jerry Craig, writing on the same forum, stated "Looks like they're trying to put in that damn canoe launch, parking lot, things the residents do not want."

## UAW to Push Destino Bid at Lockport Event

United Auto Workers Local 686, based in Lockport and representing nearly 1,300 members, will hold a press conference on Thursday, Oct. 16, at 6 p. m. at the union hall, 524 Walnut St., to state why they are behind the State Senate candidacy of Democrat Johnny Destino.

"We've invited other unions in the area to join us on Thursday for this important event," said Bill Nye, a long-time member of Local 686.

Destino, a Niagara Falls school board member who is running to replace retiring State Sen. George Maziarz in the 62nd District which includes Lockport, will be

the featured guest at the press conference, said Nye.

"We're hoping for a big turnout because this is a very important election for the working families of Lockport and the entire region," said Nye.

Destino has strong labor support in his race against North Tonawanda Mayor Robert Ortt, a Republican.



# Remembering a Great Gentleman; Michael Whitenight, 1960–2014

## Mike Hudson

I just received word of the sudden death of my old friend, Michael Whitenight. I am sad beyond measure, and my heart goes out to his wife Kristen and their boys, Michael and Maxwell.

Mike Whitenight was one of the good guys. I first met him 15 years ago when he called the offices of the Niagara Falls Reporter. The mayor then, Irene Elia, was mounting a telephone campaign in an effort to get local businesses to stop advertising with us and carrying the paper in their stores. He got wind of it and offered to help.

"I didn't serve in the United States Army to come home and have some politician try and shut down a newspaper," he told me that day.

I went out to LaSalle where Mike and Kris ran Whitenight's Fine Jewelers on Buffalo Avenue and, by the end of the day, the mayor had lost a supporter, the Reporter gained a new advertiser and I made a great friend.

We shared a passion for guns and shooting and were both members of the LaSalle Sportsman's Club. In 2008, as I was preparing for a bear hunt up in



**Michael Whitenight ...**  
"If you want me again look for me under your boot soles."  
— Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*...

Maine, he offered to go out to the range with me and spot using one of his telescopes to ensure that my rifle and scope were hitting well at any reasonable range.

Later, I was able to return the favor when he needed to sight in a Winchester



**The young Michael Whitenight.**

Model 70 .308 one of his boys was taking out on a deer hunt at the family's Southern Tier camp.

He loved those boys. I remember once he showed me a rare watch that had come in over the transom at his shop. He wanted to give it to either Michael or Maxwell but said he couldn't until he found an identical watch to give to the other son. He never wanted either of

them to think he favored one over the other, he said.

He was also passionate about the city of Niagara Falls, though not in a way that would ever prompt him into running for office or writing letters to the editor. He quietly but generously supported charitable organizations such as Community Missions and the Niagara Falls Boys and Girls Club, never seeking or asking for any sort of recognition.

But most of all he loved and was devoted to his beautiful wife Kris. He talked about her all the time, and when you'd run into the two of them some weekend night at the casino or some upscale nightclub, his love for her and pride in being with her was obvious. Mike was a guy who wore his heart on his sleeve.

Niagara Falls is a poorer place for his passing and so is the whole world. He was only 54.

So today I'll remember my friend Mike Whitenight. Odds are, I'll have a drink to his memory. I'll pray for Kris and Michael and Maxwell. As for Mike himself, there's no need to pray, because he's wherever good guys go.

Rest in Peace, old friend.

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# It's Official: Niagara Falls Now Most Dangerous City in State

## Mike Hudson

Niagara Falls is the most dangerous city in the state of New York according to a study released Monday by the popular internet site MyLife.

Researchers examined five sets of data, including the number of law enforcement officers per capita, violent crimes per capita, property crimes per capita, the number of registered sex offenders per capita and the percentage of the population enrolled in health care.

In two of those categories, property crimes and registered sex offenders, Niagara Falls ranked highest in the state. The city was also close to the top in other categories except for the number of people enrolled in health care, where it ranked near the bottom.

"After establishing a ranking for each of those categories, researchers assigned a score to each city for those categories as well. Once those were added up, we divided the sum into an average; the lower that average was the higher a city ranked," Mylife wrote explaining the study's methodology.

The city's reputation as a lawless

place going back to the days of Prohibition is noted in the report, along with its lopsided incidence of property crime and unusually high population of registered sex offenders. The report notes that the number of sex offenders living in a municipality is often a deciding factor for people in choosing a place to live.

The number of sexual predators, nearly all of whom target children, has grown exponentially in Niagara Falls, since Mayor Paul Dyster took office. In 2007, the year he was sworn in, there were just 82 registered sex offenders living in the city. Two years later and halfway into his first term, that number had jumped to 133.

By July 2010, Dyster's official "They've got to live somewhere" policies toward violent sexual predators resulted in a population explosion, and 178 convicted and registered sex offenders were reported.

And a look at the police blotter for any given week shows that property crime -- from the copper pipe burglaries in the city's worst slums to the automobile break ins in the downtown tourist district being so out of control



This photo - courtesy wkbw.com - was used in the MYLife report naming Niagara Falls the most dangerous city in New York State.

that signs warning visitors not to leave valuables in their cars are being posted -- has skyrocketed.

Other New York cities making the Most Dangerous list are, in descending order, Schenectady, Newburgh, Rochester, Gloversville, Buffalo, Jamestown, Albany, Binghamton and Auburn.

For more info--  
<http://www.mylife.com/blog/the-10-most-dangerous-cities-in-new-york-state/>

MyLife (or MyLife.com) is an American Internet company founded by Jeffrey Tinsley in 2002. It provides a subscription based, personal search service.

## Libertarian Gov. Candidate Wants Your Vote Even if it's a Protest Vote

Michael McDermott, a Libertarian, running for New York State Governor, is asking voters to cast their vote on an alternative party line - any line but Democrat or Republican - and preferably his party's line this year.

It is not a waste, McDermott says, but a wise use of a vote - for the message it sends to Albany.

As a Libertarian, McDermott is in favor of keeping government out of personal relationships, stopping government from spying on citizens, and ending prison terms for non-violent, no victim offenses.

He supports preventing New Yorkers from being told what medical plans they must buy via Obamacare.

The Libertarian Party supports "minimum government and maximum freedom."

The party platform reads in part, "We affirm the individual right recognized by the Second Amendment to keep and bear arms...."

"The only role of government in the economic realm is to protect property rights, adjudicate disputes, and provide a



legal framework in which voluntary trade is protected. All efforts by government to redistribute wealth, or to control or manage trade, are improper....

"(People) should be free to choose with whom they trade and set whatever trade terms are mutually agreeable.

"We call for the repeal of the income tax, the abolishment of the Internal Revenue Service and all federal programs and services not required under the U.S. Constitution...."

"Government should not incur debt, which burdens future generations without their consent. We support the passage of a 'Balanced Budget Amendment' to the U.S. Constitution, provided that the budget is balanced exclusively by cutting expenditures, and not raising taxes.

"(We oppose all) government subsidies and bailouts to business, labor, or any other special interest.

"We would restore authority to parents

to determine the education of their children, without interference from government...."

"Retirement planning is the responsibility of the individual, not the government. Libertarians would phase out the Social Security system and transition to a private voluntary system. The proper and most effective source of help for the poor is the voluntary efforts of private groups and individuals. We believe members of society will become more charitable and society will be strengthened as government reduces its activity in this realm.

"The protection of individual rights is the only proper purpose of government. Government is constitutionally limited so as to prevent the infringement of individual rights by the government itself...."

"Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of individual liberty, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to agree to such new governance as to them shall seem most likely to protect their liberty."

These are the main planks of the Libertarian platform.

If it sounds right to you, Michael McDermott, candidate for New York governor, wants you to cast your vote on the Libertarian line this November.

And make your voice heard.

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# Niagara Power Brings First Rate Baseball Action, Family Values

**Mike Hudson**

Since 2007, Sal Maglie Stadium has played host to the Niagara Falls Power, an amateur, summer league team affiliated with the New York Collegiate Baseball League and an affiliate of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. Players and coaches, staying with host families in the city, face a 46 game schedule that includes 23 home dates at the old ballpark on Hyde Park Boulevard.

The Niagara Falls Power was the brainchild of Grand Island businessman Cal Kern, who partnered with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes to bring the club to Niagara Falls. The team has made the New York Collegiate League playoffs in three of the past four seasons., bringing home the Western Division Championship in 2012.

Several veterans of the club are now playing professionally in the minor leagues, including relief pitcher Rohn Pierce, who was named Appalachian League Pitcher of the Week back in August following a successful string of ap-



**A team that prays together plays together: Niagara Power offers some 23 games at Sal Maglie Stadium each year.**

pearances with the Pulaski Mariners.

Over the past seven seasons, the club has become part of the fabric of the community.

"We support the Niagara Power Baseball Team, because it is our way of

giving back to the community and promoting good, wholesome, family entertainment," said George Edwards, proprietor of George Edwards Jewelers. "Hopefully, we will get some new customers from our advertising, but our

main reason is to stand behind Cal & Sherrie and their commitment to bring Salvation in Jesus Christ to the players, players families and the people of our community. Also, it allows them to keep the ticket prices affordable, so that the whole family can come out and enjoy a fun evening together."

The Power players seem equally as grateful to the city that hosts them.

"First of all, I want to thank you for the opportunity to play another summer in Niagara Falls for the Power," said Drew Hollinghead, who pitched for the club in 2007 and 2008. "It was an unbelievable experience for me both years. The main reason I am writing is to hopefully express to you my gratitude and thank you for all you have shown me over the past two summers...The Lord has been so good to me by putting people like you in my life to help me learn in such a vital stage of my life."

Since the days of Preacher Roe, baseball and Christianity have enjoyed a close relationship, a tradition being carried on today with the Niagara Power.

## Workshop Offers Help for Children Afflicted With Sensory Processing Disorder

A workshop, sponsored by the Parent Network of WNY, will be held on Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD) in North Tonawanda, at the Wheatfield Community Center, 2790 Church Road, on November 3, at 6:00 p.m.

SPD is a condition that exists when a person's brain doesn't process what he or she sees, hears or touches properly.

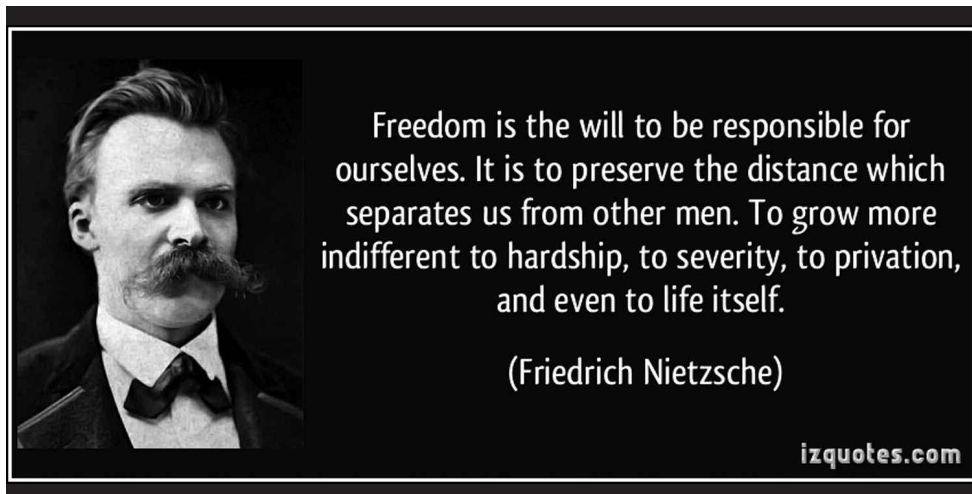
A person with SPD finds it difficult to perform everyday tasks. Clumsiness, behavioral problems, anxiety, de-

pression, and school failure may result.

In children, posture and motor skills are affected. Once children with SPD have been diagnosed, however, they can benefit from occupational therapy in a sensory-rich environment.

Participants in the workshop will gain an understanding of how the senses work and ways to improve their functions.

For more info: <http://www.parent-networkwny.org/workshop-registration>



Freedom is the will to be responsible for ourselves. It is to preserve the distance which separates us from other men. To grow more indifferent to hardship, to severity, to privation, and even to life itself.

(Friedrich Nietzsche)

izquotes.com

## Council Recognizes Pyska for His Attainment of Rank of Eagle Scout

A resolution sponsored by Niagara Falls Council Member Glenn Choolokian recognizes Andrew Pyska for his attainment of the rank of Eagle Scout, the highest rank in the Boy Scouts of America.

Pyska of Troop 849 in Niagara Falls advanced through the ranks of tiger, bobcat, wolf, bear, and webelos, having earned 32 merit badges, including the Arrow of Light, Light of Christ, and Parvuli Dei Catholic Awards, before attaining the rank of Eagle Scout.

The resolution reads in part, "THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of Niagara

Falls, New York hereby recognizes Mr. Andrew Pyska of Troop 849, Niagara Falls, for his attainment of the rank of Eagle Scout, and BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of Niagara Falls wishes Mr. Pyska the best of luck in his future endeavors, with confidence in his ability to achieve the goals he sets for himself."

Since its introduction in 1911, the Eagle Scout rank has been earned by more than two million young men.

Requirements include earning at least 21 merit badges and demonstrating "Scout Spirit" through the Boy Scout Oath and Law, service, and leadership.

This includes a service project that the Scout plans, organizes, leads, and manages.



**Have you got the will to surmount mountain-high obstructions?**



# Who's Funding Ortt, Destino as 62nd District Senate Race Heats Up

## Mike Hudson

The State Senate campaign between Republican North Tonawanda Mayor Rob Ortt and Democratic Niagara Falls School Board member Johnny Destino for control of retiring State Sen. George Maziarz's seat is shaping up to be one of the most heated in recent memory here on the Niagara Frontier.

Who is funding the two candidates, and why?

One thing seems to be abundantly clear: Ortt is getting big money from downstate contributors while Destino is relying for the most part on local contributors.

Ortt would seem to be Maziarz's handpicked successor. A veteran of service in Afghanistan, he has served as North Tonawanda's mayor since 2010. Prior to that, he was city treasurer and clerk since 2007.

Elected to the Niagara Falls School Board in 2010, Destino is also a member of the Orleans-Niagara BOCES board and narrowly lost his bid to become Niagara Falls mayor in 2011, losing to incumbent Paul Dyster. The following year he lost a Republican primary bid against the well-heeled Maziarz for the 62nd District seat he hopes to win in the current election. Following that race,



Speaking of old money, big time Democratic campaign contributor, Leonard Litwin, 99, (pictured at age 97) chose to donate to Republican Rob Ortt and not Democrat Johnny Destino. (Photo by Steve Friedman)

which Maziarz clearly resented, Destino switched his affiliation to the Democratic Party as the Maziarz political machine sought to marginalize him in the GOP.

As might be expected in what is ultimately a statewide race given the stakes, both candidates are taking money from sources outside the 62nd District. However the bulk of Destino's contributions are in the \$25 to \$100 range and come from local contributors. Ortt has plenty of those as well, but



Johnny Destino addresses the audience at the Orleans County Democratic Party picnic in Albion. Photo courtesy Tom Rivers, Orleans Hub.

has also managed to pull in a number of big ticket donors from outside the district, perhaps suggesting the Maziarz network is alive and well despite the federal corruption probe.

Ortt recently accepted \$3,500 from the New York City based Housing New York PAC, another \$16,800 from Paul Singer, a New York City businessman and gay rights activist; a total of \$20,000 from two real estate companies – Barclay Street Realty and Liberty Street Realty that share the same address in New Hyde Park, N. Y., and a second contribution from the Housing New York PAC for \$6,500.

New York City real estate billionaire Leonard Litwin, 99, a strong supporter



Robert Ortt, mayor of North Tonawanda, speaking at a pro-gun rally in Albion. Photo courtesy Tom Rivers, Orleans Hub.

of Gov. Andrew Cuomo who has reportedly given state Democrats a combined \$465,000 to help in a takeover of the State Senate, strangely threw \$2,500 at Republican Ortt's campaign.

Perhaps liberal contributors like Litwin and Singer are doubtful of Destino's Democratic commitment or simply believe Ortt is the likely winner, but, whatever the reason, Ortt has a commanding lead in money raised for the coming race thanks in great part from the downstate money.

Destino has taken \$5,000 from a Coral Springs, Fla., company called Exclusive Beauty Supplies, which Destino supporters say is owned by relatives.

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	<b>Keyed Entry</b> <b>\$8<sup>95</sup></b>	<b>Shopping Cart</b> Rubber Cushion Grip <b>\$24<sup>95</sup></b>
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<b>Oven Bake Element</b> <b>\$24<sup>95</sup></b> Compare up the street @69 <sup>95</sup>	<b>Keyed Entry Deadlock Combo</b> <b>\$17<sup>95</sup></b>	<b>3-Function Hand held Showerhead</b> <b>\$17<sup>95</sup></b>
<b>Contractor Garbage Bags</b> HANDI-BAG 42 G 3mil <b>\$10<sup>75</sup></b>	<b>Add-A-Shower with Bathcock Faucet</b> <b>\$119<sup>95</sup></b> For Claw Tub • 42" x 24" • W/ Riser & Wall Support	<b>Coffee Pots</b> • Dishwasher Safe • Stainless Steel • w/Permarwood Handle
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# This Week in Stupid Crime

**Mike Hudson**

## Stabbing on Niagara Street

A city man was stabbed in the chest recently after stopping his car in the 2200 block of Niagara Street to try and break up an altercation involving a group of black males.

Police were called to the emergency room at Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center, where the man went for treatment following the incident. He said he didn't know any of those involved in the altercation and doubted he could identify his assailant.

An investigation into the incident is continuing, police said.

\*\*\*

## First time thief busted

Chadwick Estes must be the unluckiest thief ever to attempt a petty heist.

The 48-year-old Estes was nabbed by store security recently at the Rite Aid store on Pine Avenue at Portage Road after stashing a bottle of Pepsi, a chocolate bar and an android cell phone about his person and then attempting to abscond without paying. He was held at the store until police arrived and took him into custody.

"This is my first time stealing and I got caught," Estes told the arresting officers. His statement was greeted with a healthy dose of skepticism, especially after it was discovered that Estes had an outstanding warrant in North Tonawanda.

\*\*\*

## Open container violation?

Niagara Falls has long been known as a lawless city and, over the past 15 years, the Niagara Falls Reporter has

covered more than its share of murders, rapes, robberies and conspiracy cases. But never before can we recall reading a police report about an open container violation.

The luckless perpetrator in this case of a cold one gone wrong was Eric S. Evchich, 22, of Michigan Avenue, who was walking down the 2800 block of McKoon Avenue one recent evening with a can of Labatt's Blue Light clenched in one hand.

Two of the NFPD's Finest happened to be driving past in a marked patrol car and came to a halt. Knowing he was busted, Evchich tried to get rid of the evidence, tossing the can onto a nearby lawn. The cops not only charged him with violation of the city's open container ordinance, but with littering as well.

One wonders whether this archaic law against drinking a beer in public gets a special waiver at events such as the Hard Rock concert series or Mayor Paul Dyster's annual beer fests at the Niagara Arts and Cultural Center or whether police are instructed to just leave well enough alone.

Police later explained that Evchich's arrest was a part on an operation directed against rowdy Niagara University students whose raucous parties are the subject of numerous neighborhood complaints each and every year.

Some things never change. The celebrated novelist and National Book Award winner John O'Hara was Class Poet at NU in 1924, but failed to graduate after showing up to commencement drunk.

# Green Party's Hawkins at 9% in Poll

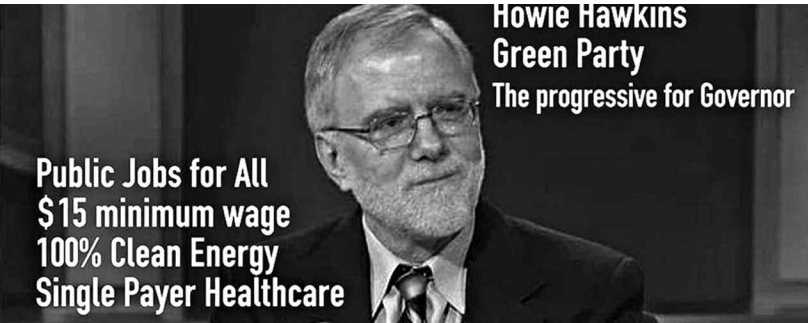
Howie Hawkins, the Green Party candidate for governor, is polling at 9 percent according to a new Quinnipiac Poll.

Cuomo holds a majority (51 percent).

The poll asked Hawkins' supporters who their second choice was. A majority indicated that if Hawkins was not run-

ning, they would vote for someone other than Cuomo.

"Our platform of higher wages, increased funding for schools and local services, and job creation through action on climate change is supported by voters," Hawkins said. "The challenge is letting voters know where we stand..."



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## Marshall Law, Ebola and Obama



**The  
Right  
Side**

**J. Gary  
DiLaura**

If you were President of the United States and wanted to HELP your citizens in times of natural disaster, what would you do?

You would probably set up FEMA facilities with supplies, equipment, housing trailers you could rush to the “flood” or “hurricane” or “earthquake” zones.

You would concentrate them close

to areas that are prone to disasters.

You would have food and water supplies, medical supplies, generators, temporary hospitals, and common sense emergency supplies.

Would you also have Internment Camps?

Would the internment camps be built like prisons with barbed wire?

According to sources, there are some 800 internment camps throughout the US, even in states like Iowa, Wyoming, North Dakota, where there are no known natural disasters?

Would you have strategically placed warehouses?

In the Buffalo area, Homeland Security has warehouses with some supplies you wouldn't expect! I've spoken to people who have seen them. Would you expect to see hundreds of thousands of body bags and millions of rounds of ammunition? Would you expect body bags and ammo like that all over the country?

Not unless you expected to have to shoot a lot of people.

Look at the outrageous executive orders Obama has passed relating to government control and Marshall Law. He has made it extremely easy for him to declare Marshall Law!

All Obama needs now is ANY civil “insurrection” or emergency that he alone (without congress) feels is a threat to national security!

If you were going to practice for national disasters would you have Apache Attack helicopters practicing military attack maneuvers, coordinating the military ground forces with unwitting local police departments? Look at live videos posted on youtube. Would you do these maneuvers at major cities like Chicago, NYC, Miami, and LA, Chicago? This IS going on around the country.

Now enter Ebola!

The perfect excuse/opportunity for President Obama to order Marshall Law.

He needs an epidemic. What dumb SOB would continue to allow commercial flights into this country from Ebola-infected countries or anyone with any of the Ebola countries stamped on their passports?

I am going to make a prediction. If the Republicans don't take the Senate away from Democrats led by that doing nothing, screwball 'Scary' Harry Reid and if they fail to keep the House, Barack Hussein Obama will find a “disaster” to declare Marshall Law within the next two years and there will be a war but, like he says, not against Islam!

I just hope to God the disaster is not Ebola.

*J. Gary DiLaura is a retired FBI agent. His opinions, while not necessarily reflecting those of the Niagara Falls Reporter, are nonetheless protected by the First Amendment of the US Constitution. Your response is welcome.*

## Aquarium of Niagara Introduces Rescued Blind Pacific Harbor Seal Pup

Niagara Falls— The Aquarium of Niagara has introduced ‘Pup 2014,’ a harbor seal rescued off the coast of northern California when he was days old, abandoned by his mother and unable to remain alone in the wild, possibly because he was born blind.

Harbor seal ‘Pup 2014’ is joining the Aquarium’s five other seals and sea lions, and will make his home in the Aquarium’s outdoor pool with Sandy, another harbor seal.

The staff trainers have been working to transition the blind pup into his new pool and routine and visitors will most certainly enjoy this new arrival in his new digs.



**Will he be named Bart, Jax, Cruz or Moe?**

The Aquarium’s deputy director, Gary Siddall was part of the team that transported ‘Pup 2014’ from Oakland, Calif., to Niagara Falls.

“He is adjusting nicely to his new home and new family,” said Siddall.

The pup was rescued by The Marine Mammal Center of Sausalito, Calif. Without their intervention, ‘Pup 2014’ may have sustained injury from other wildlife, fallen ill, or become malnourished. When found, the pup still had his umbilical cord, and was struggling to find food. At five months old, harbor seal ‘Pup 2014’ is healthy and learning how to receive daily meals from his trainers.

‘Pup 2014’ recently finished a period of quarantine required by New York State. Under 24-hour watch, the pup began training in order to learn how to

eat fish supplied by trainers, take verbal cues, and play with toys - a soft piece of neoprene, water “noodles,” and a giant foam fish. Currently just over 50 pounds, harbor seal ‘Pup 2014’ is expected to grow swiftly to about 200 pounds in adulthood.

The Aquarium is hosting a naming contest for ‘Pup 2014’ that will take place at the Aquarium, and via social media. After “liking” the Aquarium on Facebook or following on Twitter, participants may vote on one of four potential names for the pup - Bart, Jax, Cruz, or Moe.

Other names suggested on the Aquarium's Facebook page, but not under consideration, were Salty, Keller (after Helen Keller) Danny, Lou-Seal and Vision.

The most popular name will be announced the week of Oct. 27th.

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## Lewiston – Meet the Candidates Tues., Oct 21

The Lewiston Senior Club will be holding a Meet the Candidates Forum, Tuesday, October 21st, 12:30 p.m. at the Town of Lewiston Senior Center, 4361 Lower River Road.

The public is welcomed to attend and meet the candidates running for Lewiston Town Clerk, Lewiston Town Board and the New York State Senate 62nd district.

For more information please call either 754-2071 or 297-4749.



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**Wednesday:** Meet our Financial Counselor — Assistance with Benefit Applications and Budgeting," 8:30 a.m. - 12 noon

**Thursday:** Smoking Cessation, 9-10 a.m.; Pet Therapy, 10:30-11:30 a.m.; YMCA "Stretching," 1-2 p.m.

**Friday:** Co-ed Spirituality Class - "Heavenly Wisdom for Earthly Living," 10-11 a.m.

**Monday:** Healthy Relationships, 10-11 a.m.; Healthy Lifestyles - "Weight Management," 11:00 a.m.-12 noon; Medication Education - "Brown Bag Sessions," 1-2 p.m.

**Tuesday:** Eat Healthy NY! 11a.m-12 p.m.; "Women's Art Class" 12-1 p.m.; YMCA "Yoga," 1-2 p.m.

*All sessions are held at the Niagara Wellness Connection Center, Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center, Sixth Floor. Come for a tour. Stay for a class. Call 278-4820.*



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# State Park Making (bad) Changes, Not Improvements

**GUEST VIEW**  
**Robert M. Onesi**  
**Niagara Falls**

The Niagara Falls State Park is a constant disappointment.

Three years of construction fences everywhere.

Another tourist season lost with millions going home unable to enjoy the fabulous views.

There are new snow fences, red tape, red cones and signs through the whole park.

This season it was fenced from Goat Island to Prospect Point. There was access to Prospect Point. Then fencing all the way to the Discovery Center.

The fences are there because the park is making "changes." I am not sure I could call them "improvements."

Every day there are more areas that used to be accessible that are blocked off with red tape, snow fences or signs.

Snow fences turn to permanent railings.

The state continues to block spots so you can't get close to the water.

Sign used to say "No water entry."

Now they say "No Trespassing."

They are now appearing along the Upper Rapids parking.

Get there quick if you want to remember it as it was.



**For 10 years, the view of the rapids have been obstructed by chain link fence at this bridge to Goat Island.**

If you have not been to Three Sisters Island after last year's "IMPROVEMENTS," you may not know that you can no longer climb on rocks and get to the water's edge on the third island.

You must stay in middle of the island.

Soon after the "improvements," I ran into women who asked me how to get to Three Sisters. She remembered as a teen coming with her parents and climbing on the rocks, rocks worn smooth by the millions who climbed on them.

I had to tell her she was "a year too late. It is fenced and you're not allowed on the rocks anymore. You can't get near water or go to the east side of the third island where you can look out at the vastness of water about to plunge over the falls."

And all you gorge lovers better step up or that, too, will be railed off. They have already tried to force people to stay



on trails in the gorge.

People who have fished there all their lives were told "no more fishing, you must stay on trails."

I am not sure who makes these decision or why.

My number one pet peeve for about 10 years is the Goat Island bridges.

You can't see the rapids except through a metal chain link fence that is taller than most people.

Here we are 10 years later. Millions of people have had to take pictures over their heads. I have seen people get on others' shoulders. I have seen them squeeze camera lens through fence. I have seen people holding cameras over their heads in one hand blindly shooting photos and hoping.

Recently I saw someone put their camera on a tripod and hold it up over railing; maybe we can rent some tripods to visitors so they can get a picture with-



**Less Public Access! At one time, visitors could get close to the rapids at Three Sisters. Now much of the thrilling views are fenced off.**



out chain links of fence in it.

How many millions have missed views from this bridge?

NY State Parks now has it scheduled for repairs to be completed in 2016.

What a shame

If this happened in Canada I bet it would have been dealt with immediately and repaired.

## TNR Feral Cats Are Still Destructive Killers and Nuisance

**GUEST VIEW**  
**Lori Ogozalek**  
**West Alexander, PA.**

I would like to comment on your story on feral cats in North Tonawanda.

The problem of feral cat overpopulation cannot be solved with trap, neuter, and release (TNR) programs.

TNR programs perpetuate the irresponsible human behavior of dumping and abandonment that caused the problem in the first place. Municipalities that embrace TNR are encouraging more dumping and abandonment.

With approximately 80 million free ranging cats across the US, no one will ever be able to sterilize enough of them to have any significant impact on cat populations.

The claims TNR advocates make that sterilization will reduce/control/eliminate feral populations is fiction, dragged out to convince city officials to pass TNR programs.

There are many peer reviewed scientific studies that show TNR programs DO NOT have a significant impact on citywide populations of feral and stray cats, and NONE that show they do.

TNR is a feral cat maintenance program, not a feral cat reduction program, and can cause cat populations to grow.

Two examples of that are: Phoenix University in Arizona stopped its eight year TNR program, citing: "Instead of stabilizing the population, the population doubled, creating an unhealthy situation for the cats and our community."

In south Miami, cat populations have exploded since the onset of TNR.

Additionally, municipalities who embrace TNR as "humane" are not considering the inhumane cost to wildlife and the people who love them.

Not only does TNR not solve the population problem, it restricts property rights, threatens human health, destroys wildlife, and is cruel to cats.

Who will be liable for cats that destroy private property? The property owner or resident, not the city or TNR participants. Feral and stray cats expose children to Toxoplasmosis - found only in cat feces - rabies, and other zoonotic diseases when they deposit packages of feces and stinking urine in yards, sandboxes, parks, around schools, near restaurants, and shopping centers.

Who will pay the medical bills and endure the health consequences of Toxoplasmosis? The victims, NOT cat feeders, TNR supporters, or city agencies.

There are 10,000 to 13,000 people bitten by rabid cats annually, as determined by the Center for Disease Control. No resident or property owner should be

forced to accept on their property the invasion of a feral or stray animal that is being fed and maintained by someone



**America's cats kill more than one billion birds each year.**

else.

The practice of TNR causes the slaughter and wasting of our valuable and loved birds and other wildlife. Thirty-three species of birds have been driven to extinction worldwide, linked to free ranging cats. Several species of shorebirds in the US are on the brink of extinction, linked to free ranging cats. So much cat feces is seeping into the oceans from rivers, marshlands, and beaches that the corpses of sea mammals such as Manatees, Beluga whales, seals,

and dolphins are washing ashore, their deaths caused by Toxoplasmosis, found only in cat feces.

No cat will take the place of insect eating birds and mammals that cats are pushing into extinction. Even a well fed cat kills and maims. If the science demonstrating the decimation of wildlife by cats isn't enough proof, talking with a wildlife rehabilitator will give you some personal insight into how many native birds and mammals are slaughtered and maimed by free ranging cats.

Should compassion only extend to cat lovers? How many birds and wild baby mammals is one cat worth?

A more sound system is TENVAC (trap-evaluate-neuter-vaccinate-adopt-contain), a professional, public/private partnership cat sanctuary method that protects human health, wildlife, property rights, and the cats. TENVAC acknowledges, respects, and addresses the concerns of all stakeholders. Everyone is treated equally and everyone gets an equal share of the pie. Cats are domestic animals that need responsible owners, not a system that encourages the dumping of a lethal domestic predator. Consider this: the free ranging feral dog problem was whipped by containment, not more laxity.



# Letters to the Editor

**Ebola Not the Only Problem  
Meat Eating is ...**

U.S., state, and municipal health authorities are working overtime and spending millions of dollars to stem the spread of Ebola, which has killed just one person here.

Where is the comparable effort to stem the spread of heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes, and other chronic diseases that kill 1.4 million Americans annually and are linked conclusively to excessive consumption of animal products? According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, that's 23 times the number killed by all infectious diseases combined, including AIDS, hepatitis, blood poisoning, and intestinal infections!

Apparently, our society tolerates this massive assault on our public health, because meat, dairy, and egg products have powerful champions in Congress. Bacteria and viruses have none.

Yet, each of us can take personal responsibility for our own and our family's health by reducing, then dropping animal products from our menu. Fresh vegetables, fruits, legumes, and whole grains contain all the nutrients our body requires and are touted by leading health authorities. Soy and nut-based meats, milks, and ice creams offer a delicious transition treat. Lots of websites provide helpful transition tips.

**Nelson Gustavo  
Niagara Falls**

**Dyster philosophy at odds  
With Block Club mission**

In response to your recent article about the retirement of long time block club leader Roger Spurback, I have these observations to offer: The city building policies of Niagara Falls Mayor Paul Dyster couldn't be further opposed to those of Spurback.

Spurback believes that healthy neighborhoods are crucial to a city's success. Dyster believes throwing millions of dollars at the downtown tourist district will revive the city.

One of Spurback's biggest issues has been abandoned houses and businesses that sit for years, vacant and condemned, and act as attractants for drugs, prostitution and other criminal activity. When one house falls into ruin, nearby neighbors are quick to leave the neighborhood, creating a domino effect.

The city has entire blocks of such structures, which Dyster doesn't see as a major problem.

How many condemned houses could have been knocked down had the city sold the \$1.5 million downtown parcel for its full value rather than gifting it to do nothing developer Mark Hamister for paltry \$100,000?

More than \$481,000 in public money was given to Idaho snake oil salesman Mark Rivers to stage his disastrous Holiday Market a couple of years ago. The month long mid winter event was an abject failure. Could the money have better been spent in our neighbor-

hoods, cleaning up eyesores and tearing down vacant buildings?

More than \$700,000 was given to the multibillion dollar, multinational Hard Rock Café corporation for a series of downtown concerts that allowed Dyster to play rock star and down shots with washed up musicians. For that amount, 35 vacant and vandalized public nuisances could be eliminated.

Concerts, festivals and dubious hotel projects? The neighborhoods continue to crumble and those who can afford to are fleeing the city at the rate of around 1,000 a year during the time Dyster's been in office.

Spurback watched the sad decline and finally decided that, after 22 years of working diligently to save the city's neighborhoods from neglect and ruin, he's had enough.

I don't blame him.

**John P. McKnight  
Niagara Falls**

**Bills Have a New Owner; Start  
Putting Forth a Contender**

Buffalo sports fans can now breathe a sigh of relief as Terry Pegula is now "the man" with the Buffalo Bills.

However, the time for praising is now finished; it is time for Pegula to learn from his Buffalo Sabres experience and bring in people who know how to put together a winning team at One Bills Drive. His first call should be to Bill Polian, and give him free rein to make whatever appropriate changes are needed at season's end.

New ownership now means a new direction; it's time for Mr. Pegula to start leading the way for a championship-quality team, and not continue to put forth a half-baked facsimile for an NFL team as has been the wont of the previous ownership.

**Lloyd Marshall, Jr.  
Lockport**

**Tunisia Not a Backward Country**

In response to your article comparing New York and Tunisia:

Tunisia is far from being a desert country inhabited by nomads, and is certainly not a major oil-producing country either. It produces only about 25 million barrels per year. It is a Mediterranean country just a few miles south of Italy. This is the old country of Carthage (remember Hannibal?), which for a few centuries dominated the whole Mediterranean area before Rome did.

Its economy is based on services, agriculture, and tourism. It produces Mediterranean vegetables and fruits, olive oil and wine, like Italy, Greece, Spain, etc. Tunisia is visited by about 6 to 8 million, mostly northern European, tourists every year; attracted by its beaches, weather, and antique Roman and Carthaginian ruins. It has a well-educated population (mostly comprised of Muslims but also with Jewish and Christian minorities, living peacefully side by side for centuries), a large middle class, and is the only genuine democracy in its

region.

**Med Many**



**Carthage has numerous historical  
sites, including the 19th Century Saint  
Louis Cathedral, pictured, and the  
ruins of the ancient Phoenician city-  
state**

**Obscure North African country of  
camel-riding nomads!! Really!**

I'm just shocked when I read your article about comparing NY to TUNISIA regarding coal power plants pollution. I can't believe that in the US there's still ignorant "journalists" so disconnected from the rest of the world! So Tunisia is just an "obscure North African country of camel-riding nomads" !! Lol

Come on guys do your home work and get some informations before you publish such stupidity. English is just my third language so sorry for my poor writing. I'm Tunisian and proud of what my country did three years ago and still struggling to be a democracy after almost 50 years of dictatorship and facing terrorist threats. But I'm not expecting you guys to acknowledge that. I'm disappointed how rude you are; how hateful your words are against a whole country! Reducing 11 millions of Tunisians to camel-riding nomads in an "obscure" country!

**Janah Benali.**

**Insulting Article on Tunisia**

In relation to your article about comparing Tunisia to New York;

We the Tunisian people find it insulting that you refer to our country that of being inhabited by camel riding nomads. You accuse the reporter in your article of ignorance, however how much research did you do on what Tunisia is like today?

Tunisia is one of if not the most prosperous liberal, modern , economy of Africa and with a special economic relationship to EU. A vibrant and well-developed tourism industry with 1,148 kilometers res of pristine blue Mediterranean coast line. Snow capped mountains, dense woodlands, biodiverse wetlands, mystical deserts. Also, the location for many famous Hollywood films., and to name just a few. Last but not least our rich and proud history stretching thousands of years. World Empires fought and tussled over our land.

We have no beef with people of Jewish ethnicity, so to mention that we would have a problem with that in your article is also extremely insulting.

I hope that you can enable com-

ments section for your article so that people have a chance to clear your misconceptions and under-researched view of Tunisia.

**Nadir Debbabi**

**Reporter's comments on Tunisia a  
Fools Errand**

As a Tunisian, I must say I am dismayed reading the article "Comparing New York to Tunisia, Running a Fool's Errand or What? By Mike Hudson", published on October 7, 2014 in the Niagara Falls Reporter.

Apparently unhappy about some type of an environmental report by Ms. Heather Liebowitz—that equated the New York State's coal fired power plants pollution to that caused by the entire country of Tunisia—, Mr. Mike Hudson goes on to spew humiliating and degrading labels about the country of Tunisia and its people describing them as "camel-riding nomads". He also described Tunisia as "an Arab country that had its' last revolution, or violent overthrow of the government, just three years ago, in 2011."

I am really astonished of Mr. Hudson's remarks and connotations that are denigrating and of racist nature. In his short but full of hatred article, Mr. Hudson continues his bashing of Tunisia, as if the environmental report he is debunking was published by the country of Tunisia itself. He used language such as "The reality is that Tunisia produces more camel dung each year than the entire State of New York."

Despite my disgust of what I read, I do agree with Mr. Hudson that maybe "Tunisia is not better than New York in pollution"; however, as a proud Tunisian, I want to humbly invite Mr. Hudson to come visit Tunisia. He might actually be surprised. Yes, he may find "camel dung", poor infrastructure ... but he will surely find people who are proud and hospitable. We do welcome all irrespective of sex, race, or religion. I assure him that even Ms. Leibowitz—a female with Jewish last name—will be more than welcome. Even though, he thinks that "Ms. Leibowitz is perhaps unlikely to spend a night there". Lately, the Tunisian people are spearheading the region for change and in seeking a brighter future free of oppression and dictatorship. The Tunisian revolution was mostly peaceful and nonviolent to the contrary of what you claimed. It was a popular uprising—not a violent overthrow of the government-- that protested against corruption, poverty, and political repression.

Seriously, Mr. Hudson, come on down and visit Tunisia, the country to made fun of, and you might change your mind. After all, ignorance is the cause of fear and prejudice.

**Fethi Benjemaa  
Senior Scientist, State of California. (Formerly a camel-riding nomad)**



# 2015 Premier to Honor Seneca President Snyder, Dr. Ko

The president of the Seneca Nation of Indians and the medical director for Adult Behavioral Health Services at Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center will be honored at The 2015 Premier, Memorial's annual dinner gala.

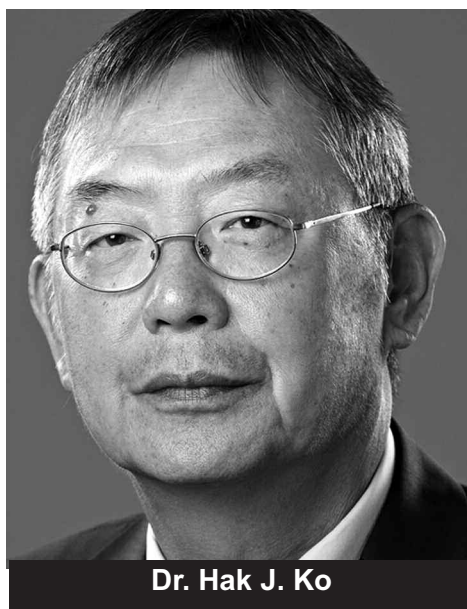
The event will be held Saturday, Jan. 17 at the Seneca Niagara Casino and Hotel, 310 Fourth St., Niagara Falls.

Barry Snyder, Sr. has been actively involved in the governing of the Seneca Nation of Indians for five decades. He has held numerous positions in the Seneca Nation's government including tribal councilor, treasurer, Tribal Council chairperson, Economic Development Committee chairperson and president.

Snyder established the Seneca Diabetes Foundation, which works in collaboration with the American Diabetes Association to enhance the efforts of the Seneca Nation Health Department.

Snyder will receive the Nancy Gara Spirit Award. The award is presented in memory of a Western New York banking executive and former medical center board member who was renowned for her positive attitude and personal commitment to serving the community.

A respected psychiatrist, Dr. Hak J. Ko has practiced medicine in Niagara since 1980. A graduate of the Seoul National University School of Medicine and a former medical officer in the South



Dr. Hak J. Ko

Korean Army, he plays a key role in Memorial's new Niagara Wellness Connection Center as well as the medical center's inpatient behavioral health units.

In addition, he has been a long-serving member of the behavioral health staff at the Buffalo General Hospital, where he served as medical director of the Adult Outpatient Clinic.

Chairpersons for The 2015 Premier are Dr. Venkat and Christin Kolli and Gary and Fran Hall. Proceeds from the event will benefit the new Golisano Center for Community Health. Tickets and sponsorship opportunities are available by calling (716) 278-4570.

## Tonawandas Chamber Honors DeGraff, Ramblin' Lou, Saltarelli and Zonta Club

The Chamber of Commerce of the Tonawandas is announcing that DeGraff Memorial Hospital in North Tonawanda has been named 2014 Business of the Year.

The hospital is celebrating 100 years in the Twin Cities and is one of the area's largest employers.

In addition, Tonawanda resident, Mark Saltarelli, has been named 2014 Citizen of the Year for his work and membership in many organizations in the community including the Kiwanis Club of the Tonawandas, the Riviera Theatre and Performing Arts Center, St. Francis of Assisi, the Knights of Columbus and the Chamber of Commerce.

Saltarelli is a former acting City Court judge and currently practices

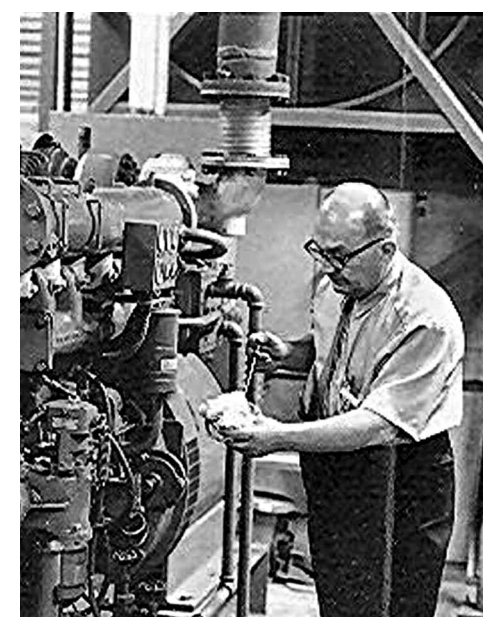


Ramblin' Lou Schriver

law in the City of Tonawanda. He has recently worked to keep St. Francis of Assisi School open.

Also, being given the Lifetime Achievement Award will be "Ramblin'

Lou" Schriver. Schriver, born and raised on Young Street in Tonawanda, has, through his radio show and by hosting and performing at benefits, contributed to his community, along with spotlighting his home town. He is a lifetime member of the Musician Local #209/106 of Tonawanda, was awarded the Tonawanda High School Distinguished Alumni Award in 2002, inducted into the "Walkway of Stars" in the Country Music Hall of Fame in Nashville, TN in 1978 and in 1996 was inducted into the Buffalo Music Hall of Fame. He has performed at Canal Fest every year since 1983 and served as the parade's Grand Marshall in 2007. In 1996 he was honored with a Distinguished Broadcaster Award by the Buffalo Broadcaster Pioneers. In



**Edmund Maziarz, father of State Senator George Maziarz, in the boiler room of DeGraff Hospital. During its century of service the hospital has not only cared for the sick but employed countless thousands of residents. (Photo courtesy North Tonawanda History Museum).**

2010 he was elected to the NYS Country Music Hall of Fame.

Also recognized will be Zonta Club of the Tonawandas. The local group was chartered April 15th, 1931 and was part of a global organization to advance the status of women. The local group made donations to the YWCA of the Tonawandas, the Salvation Army, and the Interchurch Food Pantry and developed the ZAP Program to teach local women computer skills through the YWCA.

The Awards Reception will be part of the Chamber's Annual Dinner to be held on Wednesday, Nov. at Banchetti by Rizzo's. The public is invited to join in celebrating the accomplishments of the honorees. For more information, please contact the Chamber at 692-5120.



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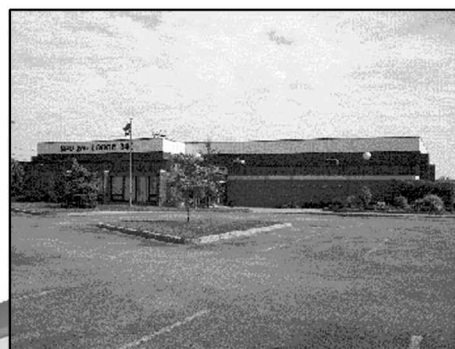
**Patti and Danny from Labruschetta and Dantes restaurant have united with the Elks Club at 1805 fashion outlet blvd.**

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# Deficit Jokes Leave Us With a Humor Deficit

## Deficit jokes

Mayor Dyster has a plan to close the \$9 million deficit. He's going to hold a bake sale at city hall. "We sell nine million cupcakes at a buck a piece and we're flush," said the mayor.



Donna Owens the reluctant city administrator has gotten into the act saying, "It's critical that we work together to fix the budget problem so our mayor can get back to his usual wild spending."

Sublime irony. Dyster remarked, "I'm indebted to the voters for elect-



ing me. Now the voters are in debt for electing me."

This guy means business. The



mayor has called for an immediate 45% reduction in unnecessary spending.

When asked by the press whether he would raise taxes or reduce services due to the deficit Dyster, always the football fan, replied: "I'm going to punt and pin the deficit inside the 10 yard line. I think it'll work!"

The city's finance department has a plan to reduce the \$9 million deficit by 33%. They're going to turn the 9 upside down.

His Honor said that beer brewing and debt reduction are similar in many ways, "They both require a smooth, level head. But you can't guzzle a deficit."

Dyster has been spending city cash like an irresponsible drunk. Exactly.



A city hall observer said "the mayor can go a long way toward closing the budget gap by returning his beer empties."

Donna Owens is serious about



fixing the city's fiscal woes. She's removing the toilet paper from city hall restrooms, labeling toilet tissue as "an unnecessary cost". The former Baltimore trash chief said, "I'm recommending that city employees



bring a Sears catalog to work. If they don't want to do that they can 'hold it' until they get home or walk up the street to the gas station."

The mayor said that waste in city government is out of control. He's

paying a consultant \$72,000 to write a study supporting his claim.

What can be said about the Dyster administration that hasn't already



been said? Uh, how about shocking, unbelievable, irresponsible and inexcusable?

"I'm a glass half full sort of guy," said the mayor. "Some people see a deficit, I prefer to see an intermittent negative surplus."

## Burley of Youngstown, Honored at National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service

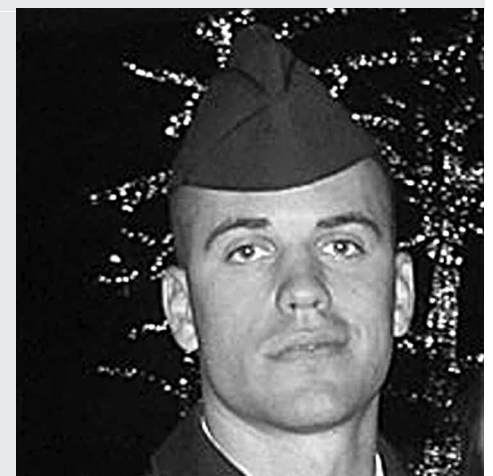
Emmitsburg, Md. – The late Thomas J. Burley of Youngstown, N. Y., was one of 107 fallen firefighters honored at the 2014 National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service, Sunday, October 12.

This annual tribute is sponsored by the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation and the Federal Emergency Management Agency's U.S. Fire Administration. More than 5,000 people attended.

Burley was born on June 16, 1993, with a birth defect, and underwent five major surgeries by the age of four. In high school, Tom joined the Air Force ROTC program, and was designated commander of his class.

At the same time, he joined the Youngstown Volunteer Fire Company, learning the skills of firefighting and emergency medical management. After graduation from Lew-Port High School in 2011, Tom joined the U.S. Air Force Reserves in Air Force Security Forces.

He was a police officer with the Security Force of the 107th Air Wing, Niagara Falls, N.Y., a member of the



Youngstown Fire Company and an instructor with the Lewiston Police Department Explorers Program.

Burley, 20, died in a motorcycle accident on June 18, 2013 on his way home from a firefighter training course.

For his service in the armed services, he received a posthumous "Letter of Commendation" from the president of the United States and the Air Force Achievement Award. He was named by the Youngstown Volunteer Fire Company as Volunteer Fireman of the Year.

## NOTICE

ALL WELCOME  
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MONDAY OCT. 20  
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5:30 PM.- BOARD OF DIRECTORS; 6:00 PM - GENERAL MEETING

AGENDA: CASINO & CITY BUDGET; WATER BOARD

For more info:

Candace Corsaro

716-804-4698

## Mary Ann Hess

After 35 years, Mary Ann Hess has relocated from Bucky's Barber Shop to Chelsea Salon on 1114 Haederle Ave.

Hours: Tue - Fri: 8am-5pm.  
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All walk-ins welcome, new and old.  
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## Help Wanted General 350

CHILD CARE Provider. Apply in person, Jack & Kill Childcare, 1905 NW Smith. NO PHONE CALLS.

How cat burglars start out

### York Police Department

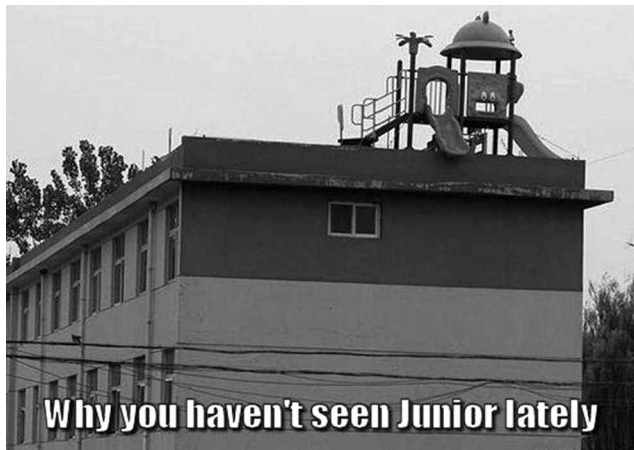
- Tuesday at 9:25 a.m., report that traffic was backed up at the Petro intersection.
- Tuesday at 9:57 a.m., "report that a kitten was acting suspicious" on N. Lincoln Ave.

Taking the full-service concept a bit too far ...

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Why you haven't seen Junior lately

Yeah, who'd have suggested something like that?

PORTAGE — A rural Portage man drank too much, then burned a travel trailer on Blackhawk Road Aug. 28 because he was upset with the owner for suggesting he did dumb things when he was drunk, according to charges filed Wednesday.

### Police solve case of the missing bacon

A Grand Rapids resident told police last week that someone had entered his home during the night and taken five pounds of bacon from the refrigerator.

Upon further investigation, police discovered his wife had gotten up for a late night snack, but was afraid to admit it.

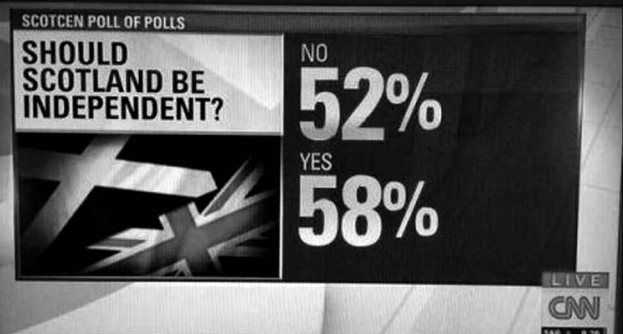
Note to self: Call in sick on Tuesday.



### A rather large either ...

SOCCER BALL \*\* signed by either Pele, the former Brazilian soccer player widely renowned by most experts and fans to be the finest player that has ever existed, or by some guy named "Peter". \$75. 901-529-XXXX

CNN poll using Common Core math



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