

## Plant Closing Not a Surprise!

**DuPont Planned Falls closing for more than two years!**

# NIAGARA FALLS REPORTER

THE TRUTH IS ALWAYS FAIR

FREE

DEC 03 - DEC 10 , 2015

VOL. 16, NO. 47

FREE

**Ortt wants higher casino \$\$ percentage for Niagara Falls,  
less for Albany; But where do Dyster, Ceretto stand?**

## Proposed Casino Pie...



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# Reporter Predicts DuPont Closing; Mayor Dyster Stunned by News

## Mike Hudson

Don't say we didn't warn you.

Back on July 30, 2013, we stated unequivocally that the 200 jobs at DuPont's Niagara Falls facility were in grave danger.

"The future of the DuPont plant in Niagara Falls and the more than 200 employees who work there is a little uncertain at this time given recent public statements from the company and information obtained by the Reporter suggesting a sale may be inevitable..." we wrote more than two years ago.

"Today, there are 215 people working at the DuPont plant on Buffalo Avenue, and the jobs they hold are among the highest paid in the county," we wrote in July 2013. "What does the future hold?"

This first week in December 2015, the public learned that the plant is closing and all 200 jobs will be lost.

These jobs are not the minimum wage service sector jobs held by many in Niagara Falls. The average worker at the plant makes between \$60,000 and \$70,000 a year, sources said.

Mayor Paul Dyster, who has waxed ecstatic over the opening of heavily subsidized coffee shops on Third St. and the 30 full time equivalent jobs as maids and desk clerks at the still not built Hamister Hotel as examples of his proactive economic policies, took the news in stride and assured every one he was on the job, even if they'd lost theirs.

"My initial concern is for ensuring the future employment of the employees and contractors at that facility," he said on the day the news broke that the 200 DuPont jobs were going to be lost. "Already today, I have been in contact with the Company, Empire State Development, and other stakeholders in an effort to secure future operations at that site."

The United Steelworkers Union also

tried to put the best foot forward.

"I'm confident that if this company doesn't just want to harm a community and harm its workers a deal can be done to keep the plant open," says Jim Briggs, an official with USW which represents the soon to be jobless workers.

But Briggs admitted he was taken by surprise by the closure, given that he and others took a tour of the Falls facility with corporate representatives on Monday, just hours before the formal announcement was made.

At that time, Briggs said, there was no indication that the facility would be shuttered. He also noted that union members agreed to a new, four-year contract on July 1, with no indications that the company was planning to close the site at that time either.

While once known primarily for its chemical business, the 210-year-old DuPont Company has diversified and now is a global science business, veering headlong toward genetically engineered agriculture and nutrition products.

In any event, the city of Niagara Falls is losing a \$13 million annual payroll and the "spinoff" on that will be devastating. Those workers ate in restaurants and bought automobiles and appliances here, owned homes helped keep what is left of the economy churning.

Neither Dyster nor Briggs seemed to have a clue that this was coming, despite its having been predicted on the pages of the Niagara Falls Reporter two years ago.

In our article two years ago we not only predicted the jobs would be lost but gave the corporate reasons why this was all but inevitable.

Two years ago we wrote, DuPont "announced it is 'taking the next steps in its transformation to a higher growth company (and) exploring strategic alternatives for its Performance Chemicals segment.'

"That language is corporate-speak for 'it's for sale'... 'The Buffalo Avenue



The DuPont Plant's closure took some by surprise.

plant... is for sale, or soon will be."

We based our 2013 conclusion that the jobs would be likely to be lost on a DuPont 2013 press release which read, "DuPont's transformation to a higher growth, less cyclical company that integrates its unique scientific capabilities in biology, chemistry and materials to develop ... attractive agriculture and nutrition, industrial biosciences and advanced materials markets worldwide".

As we wrote in 2013, DuPont is "moving away from the kind of business conducted at the aging, Buffalo Ave. plant."

Now in late 2105 that anyone should be

surprised at the closing of the DuPont plant shows they simply weren't keeping abreast of the very clear signs DuPont has given over the last few years: They are moving away from chemicals to genetically engineered food.

And with the high cost of doing business in New York State, and the antiquated facilities here, the handwriting was on the wall years ago.

Apparently, no one was looking.



The old DuPont plant on Buffalo Avenue in Niagara Falls was handed off to Chemours in July. Five months later, the facility has been targeted for closure.

Chemours, a DuPont spin-off announced Monday a worldwide workforce reduction of 400 jobs. Half of those lost jobs will come from shutting down its Niagara Falls plant by the end

of next year.

The cost of refurbishing the aging plant (seen above) combined with ultra-high New York State taxes was part of the reason for the closure.

While it took many by surprise, the Niagara Falls Reporter wrote more than two years that the plant's closure was inevitable.

## NIAGARA FALLS REPORTER

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# What a Difference a Day Makes

## Anna Howard

Monday November 30 was one of those under the radar sort of days that very well may go down in the annals of city history as a major turning point. November 30 was a city council meeting day that: mourned the loss of a council member; witnessed the reveal of a citizen panel finance plan; and, received a report from the mayor regarding the unending residential frozen water line issue. All of this occurred while just a few blocks from city hall the loss of 200 jobs at the DuPont facility had been announced.

The irony of the eliminated jobs being reported in the media as elected city officials blathered over financial problems they created, and the scandalous lack of running water in a city neighborhood they failed to address for two years, wasn't lost on the residents. It's been this sort of blame dodging and responsibility shirking that landed the city in the financial briar patch it now occupies.

The passing of Councilman Bob Anderson, the voice of a common-sense-common-man, was all the more painfully obvious as the council meeting droned on and matters of running water and fiscal drama played out pointlessly.

As for the loss of 200 jobs at the DuPont facility political observers were left wondering if the eliminated positions came as a genuine surprise or was instead conveniently timed post-election bad news, withheld until Paul Dyster was back in office. The Reporter asks, did the mayor and his economic development staff know DuPont was cutting those jobs? And, if so, did they do anything to address it? Or was it simply inconvenient news to be ignored and wished into the cornfield for fear of making Paul Dyster look bad? He's taken credit for new hotels and retail development he had no hand in, where does he see his role in this major job loss?

200 well-paying jobs connected to an



The late Robert Anderson's legacy is discussed.

industrial giant, now gone. Not to worry. Because we have a skate park coming on line, a dog park behind that, a train station on track, a \$14 million ice pavilion boondoggle, \$2.2 million in trash totes, a \$2.4. million per year 30 year mortgage on a \$50 million courthouse, along with a feel-good program that painted happy faces on fire hydrants, decorated vacant downtown storefronts and put colorful designs on the butt-end of alleyway buildings. If that's not enough to warm



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



Painted fire hydrants adorn Niagara Falls.

the cockles of the taxpayer heart the specter of a council/mayor/finance panel supported city-wide property reassessment looms ahead.

November 30, 2015. It's one for the books.

## Statement From Mayor Dyster Regarding Layoffs at Chemours, Co.

December 1, 2015

[Press Release]

Statement From Mayor Paul Dyster:

Today the Chemours Co., which spun off from Dupont earlier this year, announced that as part of a global workforce reduction they will be ceasing operations at their Niagara Falls plant by the end of 2016. This decision will effect approximately 200 positions locally.

My initial concern is for ensuring the future employment of the employees and contractors at that facility. Already today, I have been in contact with the Company, Empire State De-



velopment, and other stakeholders in an effort to secure future operations at that site.

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# Financial Review Panel Plan Ignores Facts; Administration Spending is Willfully Out of Control

**Anna Howard**

After nearly one year on the job, the Niagara Falls Financial Review Panel, a volunteer board appointed by the council to examine and recommend fixes to the administration's fiscal woes, delivered their long-awaited final report at the November 30 council meeting. Chief among their list of recommendations to repair the city's well documented dysfunctional finance management system was...drum roll, please..."Hire a Budget Director!"

Yes. We kid you not. And it took the panel nearly a year and the review of "reams of data" to include that jewel in their report. Recommending the hiring of a Budget Director at city hall is akin to hiring a new Navigator on the Titanic after the iceberg had been struck. Frankly, we're left wondering if someone isn't being lined up for a new, cushy job. How sad, but how typical, it would be if this panel's legacy turns out to be the expansion of the very bureaucracy that has mishandled millions in casino revenue and taxpayer dollars...a bureaucracy the panel was charged to analyze and recommend for financial repair.

We ask, exactly what were the goals of this finance panel and what were the realistic expectations when Council Chair-

man Andrew Touma stoked the panel largely with those who are or were connected to the city school district? Mr. Touma is, after all, a school district employee. So, we're left with the uncomfortable feeling that all of this Financial Review Panel whoop-de-do has, in the end, all the sincerity of an Iron Curtain show trial from the Fifties.

As is often the case with citizen panels it's not what the panel addresses and comments upon that's telling, it's what they ignore and evade that's key. In this instance city hall's citizen finance experts ducked the real financial issues, big time.

While the panel members wrote that: a Budget Director must be hired, an earlier jump on budget preparation must be had, and more timely budget data should be developed and shared, they ignored what actually vexes the city financial management system: irresponsible spending and a complete lack of accountability. The reality of this administration's eight years of money management has been highlighted by a shocking lack of transparency and endless wasteful expenditures even as the NYS Comptroller (May 2013) sternly told the city to knock off the cooking of the books.

For eight years Mayor Paul Dyster has presided over the draining of the casino

revenue account while calling himself the "casino revenue gatekeeper." Now that the gate is fully open and the revenue is gone he's shifted the blame to the council, the State, and city employees. And a Budget Director could fix this sort of extravagance exactly how?


The 2013 NYS Comptroller's audit revealed: the mishandling of millions of dollars dedicated to city projects, more than a million dollars unaccounted for, and the misuse of casino revenue in closing budget gaps. Tell us how better communication between mayor and council could possibly eliminate such a misuse of funds?

While the city edges toward the introduction of a control board (the State Finance Restructuring Board is already here) Mayor Dyster plows ahead with a \$44 million train station that has no visible means of support - although it will open this year

- and will service a mere handful of daily riders. And a more timely budget preparation process is supposed to stop such brazen money mismanagement?

We've said it before, the financial problems of this administration are willfully, suspiciously, self-inflicted and need to be identified, rooted out, and made to go away. Who to do it? Well, a sincere but toothless finance panel that was appointed by the government that caused the problem can't possibly fix what ails the city.

Nothing in the city's present, or future, fiscal picture, will improve until an outside authority - such as a control board - steps in and asks the inconvenient questions that need to be asked and imposes the needed remedies.



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

St Francis of Assisi

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# Finance Panel Finds Same Problems As Reporter, Auditors in City Budget

**Mike Hudson**

The Niagara Falls Financial Advisory Panel unveiled its long awaited report at this week's city Council meeting, a scathing impeachment of the present administration that would be familiar to any regular reader of this newspaper.

Despite the fact that the city is the most highly taxed municipality in the state, according to the New York State Financial Restructuring Board for Local Governments, and despite the mainline injection of nearly \$200 million as the local share of slot machine revenue from the Seneca Niagara Casino, the city is for all intents and purposes broke.

The panel's report found plenty of blame to go around, all of it centering on City Hall.

"In spite of the availability of adequate formal budget reporting, the members of the (panel) were alarmed by the absence of 'a sense of urgency' displayed by the mayor and city council regarding the financial weaknesses that are inherent in the development of the city budget," the report stated.

In essence, the city is running its day to day operations on money it has yet to receive. In the 2015 and 2016 city budgets presented by Niagara Falls Mayor Paul

Dyster, a total of nearly \$25 million in casino revenue has been allocated just to keep employees paychecks from bouncing.

As City Comptroller Maria Brown has repeatedly pointed out, the practice cannot continue for long. The panel's report stated that the available pool of casino revenue will have shrunk from \$20 million a year to \$2 million in 2018.

The cavalier practice provides a "principal illustration" of the city's "lack of fiscal discipline," the report states.

And this does not even take into account the fact that Revenue from the casino has fallen steadily, from \$21.6 million in 2012 to \$20.2 million in 2013 and \$19 million last year. Projections show that, this year, just \$18 million will be realized and things look even worse for 2016.

"There was ample time for the mayor and members of council to come together to identify any combination of revenue enhancements and cost reductions for (2016) that would constitute an acceptable fiscal 'correction'," the report read. "(The panel) was dismayed to learn that no such discussions occurred."

Former Niagara Falls School District Superintendent Carmen A. Grant served as chairman of the panel and Lawrence H. Cook II, a senior program officer with the Oishei Foundation, was its vice chairman.

The six member panel also included Falls School Board member Russ Petrozzi and former city councilman Frank Soda.

They questioned the "political will" of the mayor and the city Council to address casino fund usage, property reassessment, tax equalization and asking the state's Financial Restructuring Board for Local Governments to come in and take over the city's finances.

Among the city panel's recommendations;

- That the position of budget director, eliminated in the 1990s, be reinstated. The panel recommended that the budget director's job be given "an inherent degree of independence" under law to protect against political meddling from the mayor's office. The panel had previously found that a "politically acceptable" property tax rate was determined before even considering how much was actually needed to run the city.

- Tax equalization and a citywide property reassessment were both on the panel's "to do" list. The equalization of tax rates between business and residential properties is an idea that has long been discussed but never acted upon completely. Currently, business property owners pay somewhat more than residential property owners for similarly valued real estate. A reassessment would theoretically increase revenue by raising the tax on properties to 100 percent of their value, rather than the 60-80 percent that is collected now. But since the value of many if not most properties in the city is declining rather than increasing, it is uncertain what the real effect would be.

- Raising taxes to the maximum limit allowed under state law would give the city \$31 million next year, instead of the city's roughly \$28 million that is projected, the panel noted. This proposal would increase Niagara Falls lead over all other cities in the state as the highest taxed city in New York

and might backfire since the more taxes are raised the more people move out or make other selections as to where to move into.

- The city has already gone ahead with a recommendation from the panel to ask the NYS Financial Restructuring Board for Local Governments to come in and provide some adult supervision over the city's budget making process. The board is authorized to offer grants and loans of up to \$5 million through the Local Government Performance and Efficiency Program to targeted municipalities willing to undertake certain recommendations. If the municipality agrees to accept the money then it must undertake the board's recommendations and becomes contractually obligated to fulfill those terms.

The local panel's bleak assessment of city finances is in line with an audit conducted in 2013 by state Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli and a second audit, finished in May of this year and commissioned by Dyster himself. Both documents highlighted out of control spending that led the most highly taxed city in the state, one with the added advantage of nearly \$200 million in casino revenue unavailable to most other municipalities, to the very brink of bankruptcy.

With the exception of raising taxes, the report is very much in line with the ongoing analysis that has appeared in one form or another in most editions of the Niagara Falls Reporter published over the past eight years.

You can't say we didn't warn you. With no significant opposition on his new look city Council, nothing will prevent the mayor from raising taxes, cutting services and turning even more authority for city operations over to the state.



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# Ceretto Says Albany Must Change Political Culture And Supports Increasing Slot Revenue to City



**Tony Farina**

Assemblyman John Ceretto (D – Lewiston) says the conviction of former Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver on federal corruption should be a call to arms to state lawmakers to abandon the political culture of Albany that Silver used as his defense and work hard to restore the public's trust in government.

Ceretto, a former Republican who switched parties last August, is also planning to reach across the political aisle to discuss Republican State Sen. Robert Ort's legislative bid to try and triple the City of Niagara Falls' share of slot machine profits from the Seneca casino from 25 percent to 75 percent.

Ort, from North Tonawanda, says the time to increase the share of the profits going to Niagara Falls is at hand, given the state's anticipated \$1 billion surplus next year. Under the current casino compact revenue sharing formula, which expires at the end of next year, the state takes 75 percent of the casino profits, leaving 25 percent for the city.

Ceretto stopped short of endorsing Ort's plan, but says he has supported legislation in the past to increase the minimum percentage of casino revenue dedicated to Niagara Falls, and he issued the following statement to the Niagara Falls Reporter:

"On the surface, the senator's plan is in line with my continued commitment to secure more funding for our area, and it echoes my view that our local government deserves a larger share of revenue."

Ceretto added that increased revenue would help the city's ongoing revitalization and in his statement said "I have reached out



**Three men (formerly) in a room - Dean Skelos, Andrew Cuomo and Sheldon Silver.**

to the senator's office for more information, and I look forward to reviewing the details and specifics of his proposal to see if it is the best option for our community. As always, my door is open and I look forward to working with my colleague to ensure our region gets its fair share."

In a statement on Silver's conviction, Ceretto said "this year the Assembly created the Office of Ethics and Compliance to strengthen legislative ethics and increase transparency and accountability within the chamber. However our work is not done. I'll continue to fight to strip taxpayer-funded pensions from public officials convicted of corruption and to close the LLC loophole to

reduce the influence of big money in politics. New Yorkers deserve representatives who serve the people, not their own interests."

Ceretto's comments follow Silver's corruption conviction after a federal court trial during which, according to reports in the New York Times, his lawyers argued he was operating within the political culture of New York, "and that is the system New York has chosen," one defense lawyer said. Ceretto and others say it is time to change that culture.

Meanwhile, a second federal corruption trial involving another Albany political kingpin, State Sen. Dean Skelos, is continuing in Manhattan as Silver and his son, Adam, face



**John Ceretto**

charges of lining the pockets of their family using Dean Skelos' influence in an eight-count indictment alleging bribe solicitation, extortion under the cover of political right, conspiracy to commit extortion, and conspiracy to commit honest services wire fraud.

Silver and Dean Skelos, the former Senate majority leader, wielded enormous power in their positions and along with the governor made up the three-men-in-a-room triumvirate that controlled state government years. The defense of just doing what always has been done didn't work for Silver, and Skelos and his son also face very damaging evidence from phone taps where they were allegedly recording planning their money grabs in exchange for political influence.

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# Dyster, Ceretto, Cuomo Say Little On Ortt's Casino Revenue Proposal

## Mike Hudson

Whose side are they on?

Are Niagara Falls Mayor Paul Dyster and state Assemblyman John Ceretto looking out for the interests of the people who voted them into office, or are they instead ready to throw city taxpayers under the bus to protect the interest of Gov. Andrew Cuomo?

Recently, our friend Ken Hamilton linked to an article we ran last week concerning freshman state Sen. Robb Ortt's proposal to reverse the shares received by the city and the state in revenue from the Seneca Niagara Casino on his Facebook page, Niagara Community Forum.

Ortt held a press conference on November 23, saying he would introduce legislation changing the split from the current 75 percent of slot machine revenue going to Albany with the city getting 25 percent, to one where the city of Niagara Falls got the larger cut.

In a November 30 letter to Cuomo, Ortt said strict controls would have to be implemented for his funding formula to go into effect.

"This cannot simply be another good program or a blank check to the city," he wrote. "The original intent of the local funding formula was to create local jobs, but that clearly didn't happen, much to my frustration."

The reason for the failure is simple, Ortt told the governor.

"The city diverted tens of millions from economic development to cover operating expenses and other projects not related to creating jobs," he wrote. The population declined while taxes and poverty increased."

Scott Kiedrowski, Ortt's chief of staff, told the Niagara Falls Reporter that the senator, along with Dyster, Ceretto and representatives from Niagara Falls Memorial Hospital, the school district and other stakeholders in the casino revenue, had been meeting regularly to discuss issues of mutual interest.

Ortt wanted to fill everyone in on the details of his plan prior to making a public announcement, Kiedrowski said, but Dyster and Ceretto didn't show up.

Since the casino opened, the state has raked in some \$600 million, while the financially strapped city has collected just \$183 million, Ortt said.

"The fiscally-strained city deserves a bigger piece of the pie to strengthen key stakeholders and regain solid financial footing. Flipping the formula makes sense and should be feasible," Ortt said. "Considering the state's surplus, along with the dire need of jobs and support in Niagara Falls, the time is now."

The money could allow the city to reduce the property tax rate to zero, and still allow for unprecedented infrastructure improvements, the wholesale demolition and rehabilitation of vacant, abandoned houses, businesses and industrial sites and make the city an attractive place.

Such a move would make national headlines, and bring new business and homebuyers from all over the country to Niagara



Robert Ortt

Falls. Ortt's simple piece of legislation could, in a matter of days, reverse the city's decline and turn it into once of the fastest growing municipalities in America.

Being daily newspapers, the Buffalo News covered Ortt's announcement in an article on November 24, and the Niagara Gazette got around to it the next day. The Niagara Falls Reporter published an analysis piece on November 27.

In it, we stated that it was somewhat strange that neither Niagara Falls Mayor Paul Dyster nor state Assemblyman John Ceretto had backed the specifics of Ortt's planned legislation which would see the city they allegedly serve rake in three times as much revenue from the casino than it does now.

Anyway, Hamilton's Facebook link to the story which was commented on almost immediately by Rob Nichols, a political operative from Lewiston and close personal

friend of Ceretto's, who made a disparaging remark about Ortt.

"Is it true that Ceretto has not commented on this?" Hamilton asked Nichols.

Ceretto did in fact comment. He just didn't say anything. With the courage of conviction of a man who was a Democrat who turned Republican and then changed back into a Democrat, he said he wanted to know more about Ortt's proposal.

"Of course I'd be interested in helping the city, but I'd suggest Rob Ortt get a hold of us and talk to us," Ceretto told the Buffalo News.

"I didn't know about this plan," he told the Gazette, despite the fact that the News had run a major article on it the day before. "Anytime you're fighting for monies for our area, it's a good thing — but it works better when working as a team."

So instead of saying something along the lines of, "Yeah, I'm in favor of the biggest city in my district getting three times the money it is now," Ceretto backhanded Ortt for not calling him before making his announcement.

But Ortt had in fact called. He had scheduled a meeting on the subject Ceretto had chosen not to attend.

Amazingly, after repeated attempts by the Niagara Falls Reporter to contact him for this edition were unsuccessful, Ceretto issued a statement Wednesday on the matter,

but stopped short of endorsing the planned bill, saying he needs more information.

"I have reached out to the senator's office for more information, and I look forward to reviewing the details and specifics of this proposal to see if it is the best option for our community."

Dyster refused to return calls seeking comment from both the News and the Gazette, but in a stroke of genius, the Niagara Falls Reporter called him Tuesday using an out of state number he was unfamiliar with.

He picked up his phone and this reporter identified himself, then asked the all-important question.

"Have you been in contact with Sen. Ortt about his casino revenue plan?" I asked.

"I...I... I'll have to get back to you on that," he stammered.

The phone went dead in my ear.

It's been nine days now since Ortt announced his plan, and the silence coming from both the Ceretto and Dyster camps — otherwise known as the Cuomo camp -- has been deafening.

That \$600 million that Albany got for Niagara Falls having a casino bought a lot of something. We're not certain what exactly it bought, or for whom, but the long silence of Ceretto and Dyster speaks volumes.

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# It's Time to Probe the 72nd Street Scandal and Thaw the Icy Relationship Between City and Water Board

**Anna Howard**

The legendary city hall cone of silence has descended on the 72nd Street water line project. The work is enveloped in the omnipresent murkiness of the Dyster administration and the residents remain in the dark as to exactly how the repair work became necessary in the first place. And that's because transparency is to the Paul Dyster administration as a cross is to a vampire.

In recent weeks the mayor has struggled mightily to tell anyone who will listen that he has no money for the project. A project initially estimated to cost "several hundred thousand dollars" but rose to \$640,000 and then settled at \$960,000 when finally bid. The city hall canard of "we have no money to pay for the work" flies in the face of the fact that state law forbids a bid being let until expenses for the project are fully funded. So, how was the bid let if there's no city funds available?

We have some suggestions on how to address the troubling questions and growing confusion flowing from the frozen water line scandal and the dysfunctional relationship between city and water board.

First - the city should hold regular weekly public briefings as to how the 72nd Street work is proceeding. Budget, work progress, work schedule, and the details of the "re-engineering" of the water line would

be shared at those public sessions. The expanding project budget should be detailed and the status of the relationship between city and water board should be reported on for the residents.

Second - go back to the future - 2010 when 72nd Street was rebuilt by the city. It was in 2010 that the road took a bad turn as the city and water board mishandled the road construction and water line replacement from Stephenson Ave. to Niagara Falls Boulevard. As a result water service to many of the homes on that section of 72nd was frozen for the past two winters. Because the investigation was never conducted, and because no culpability was determined, the "he said, she said" nonsense continues to this day between city and water board.

Third - the State should conduct the investigation with Senator Ortt and Assemblyman Ceretto taking, without prejudice, respective leadership roles. The goal of the probe should be to a) determine responsibility and liability of the city and water board in the cause and remediation of the 72nd Street water line, and b) establish a clear cut understanding from the point of the probe forward regarding how the city and water board must cooperate regarding water line, sewer line, and road maintenance.

Fourth - a shared services agreement between the city and water board should be initiated. Why? Two reasons: 1) the city has a

publicly documented financial crisis including a \$7.5 million deficit, a \$63 million debt and a shrinking casino revenue stream. 2) The water board cannot sustain the track they are on as they struggle to maintain an aging infrastructure, continually increase administrative costs, and bicker with the city as to who should pay for what. High taxes and high water rates are a painful reality for residents as the city and water board continue their contentious relationship. Significant savings can be realized if the two bureaucratic entities share finance, payroll, purchasing, engineering, computer, HR, and

law departments. Building maintenance, outdoor maintenance and snow removal are additional points for shared services.

If there's any good to come from the scandal of the 72nd Street frozen water lines let it be a new era of responsible administration and shared services that could realize millions of dollars in savings. Savings that should translate into lower taxes and reduced water bills for residents.

## Dyster Administration Sleeps Through Nightmare on 72nd Street

By Anna Howard

Two weeks ago a local talk show host said, "I hope that one day the Buffalo News or the Gazette or the Reporter will write a story about 72nd Street and what's gone on there." Well, the Reporter has owned the story of the 72nd Street frozen water line for the past two years. We were there, literally on the street, from day one. As film star Walter Brennan, portraying television cowboy fast draw expert, Will Sonnett, used to say, "No brag, just fact."

Far from taking a backseat on the 72nd Street scandal the Reporter has, instead, led

the way on the city hall saga of the frozen water line. This week we move forward with a story installment that lays out a four point plan solving the 72nd Street disaster while addressing the "he said she said" foolishness occurring between the Dyster administration and the water board.

Our readers turn to the Reporter for unvarnished truth, inconvenient news, and editorials that never mince words. It's in this spirit that we offer our latest dispatch on what we've dubbed, "A Nightmare on 72nd Street."

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# Conman Extraordinaire Shmuel Shmueli Comes to One Niagara

## Frank Parlato

This week we return to the extraordinary conman Shmuel Shmueli, who defrauded dozens of local lawyers along the way to making me his chief victim.

Born April 9, 1951, in Israel, Shmueli came to the US decades ago.

He uses several aliases and has made the religious claim to be “Shmuel Shmueli Representative of the Lubavitcher Rebbe For matters on Our Land of Israel.”

The title – which he bestowed on himself – is a claim to leadership of the Hassidic Chabad sect of Judaism, a claim which is uncorroborated by any member of the Hassidic community.

Shmueli, assuming an air of piety, informs those he does business with that he adheres to a Kosher diet and never works on the Sabbath or Jewish holidays.

In our preceding article, we traced how Shmueli formed a weekly Hebrew newspaper in Brooklyn, Israel Shelanu (Our Israel) which closed after Haaretz Daily Newspapers and Maariv Modiin Publishing Co. sued him for plagiarizing their work. They won a \$24 million judgment against Shmueli.

Shmueli, discharging the \$24 million judgement in bankruptcy, never paid a penny.

He also discharged the debts to his lawyers on the case, Moskowitz and Book, Andrew Paul Cooper and Jon Lefkowitz, as well as his newspaper employees and vendors to the tune of some \$400,000.

As a strong reflection of his religious sincerity, he included the Wisconsin Institute of Torah Studies in his bankruptcy avoiding a payment of more than \$3000 the school claimed was due.

Last week we also detailed how Shmueli bought a home in Brooklyn then sold it to his wife, who sold it back to him, who sold it back to his wife, who sold it to

his daughter – each time raising mortgage money against the home. Finally his daughter sold the house for almost \$500,000 to a couple who planned to live there. After they paid for it, Shmueli told the couple they could not move in because he had a lease from his daughter guaranteeing him the right to stay in the house.

The couple sued in Federal Court; Shmueli lost, was evicted, and federal marshals removed him. The court awarded the couple a \$56,669 judgment for legal fees and losses occasioned by Shmueli's fraudulent lease. But Shmueli, never paid a dime since he discharged that judgment in bankruptcy, as well.

After losing his home and his newspaper and his wife, Shmueli wound up in Niagara Falls where I had the misfortune to meet him.

## The “billionaire” David Ho Sets the Table

While Shmueli was in Brooklyn conning people, a Hong Kong businessman named David Ho commenced a development in Niagara Falls called AquaFalls.

Ho's bio lists him as the founder of Caltex South China Investments Limited, a “petroleum firm” with ties to Chevron-Texaco. In addition Ho sat on the boards of a number of companies that raised investor capital and lost investors' capital.

Ho described himself as a “billionaire” when he promised the \$65 million AquaFalls underground aquarium would be built 200 feet from the entrance of the Niagara Falls State Park.

The project, announced to great fanfare in July of 1999, was described as an oceanographic experience where spectators could view the sea through a series of glass tunnels.

Gov. George Pataki arrived for the ground breaking and many locals, including



Gov. George Pataki attends the groundbreaking at the ill-fated AquaFalls project.

the mayor, heralded the development. The Niagara County IDA granted AquaFalls' tax-exempt status.

After securing approval from the Army Corp. of Engineers, Ho hired Ciminelli Construction to blast the 40 foot deep, one acre hole into bedrock in front of the old Occidental Chemical building, a mere 900 feet from the brink of the American Falls.

Yet somehow “billionaire” Ho could not get financing to build his aquarium.

In fact he could not even pay for the hole and one of his partners, Niagara Falls businessman, Harry Williams, arranged for Ho to obtain a \$2 million loan from local developer Larry Reger.

## A Hole is a Hole is a Hole

When I was introduced to Ho by his lawyer, Gregory Davis the hole was already five years old. The Buffalo News described it in news stories, as, “The locally infamous

hole in the ground, dug in front of the former Occidental Chemical Center in 1999, has never been filled with anything, much less the .... aquarium a group of international investors promised.”

And, “There's a huge hole in the City of Niagara Falls, and it needs to be filled with more than excuses..... It's the first thing drivers see when they cross the bridge from the Canadian side. They also see an aged sign on the hole-encompassing fence, trumpeting an ‘AquaFalls’ attraction that has been five unproductive years in the making.”

By the time I got there, the City of Niagara Falls had taken AquaFalls to court on claims the hole was endangering the safety of pedestrians and traffic; in Nov. 2004, City Court Judge Angelo J. Morinello fined AquaFalls \$192,500 for prolonged delays in remedial work to its property.

As the News reported, “After five years, the 40-foot hole on Rainbow Boulevard is still not an aquarium, and the protruding metal fences and broken sidewalks around the property still trip pedestrians and force them to walk in the road” in order to get to the Niagara Falls State Park.

## Reger starts foreclosing

As the hole was creating civic concern, privately, Reger, who lent the money to pay for the hole, was foreclosing.

As holder of a second mortgage, his mortgage was legally junior to a \$6.8 million first mortgage on the property, placed there somewhat suspiciously by Ho himself – and in Ho's name.

This meant that, if Reger foreclosed, and tried to sell the property, Ho would get the first \$6.8 million of the sale price before Reger could collect his \$2 million. And frankly nobody thought the property was worth anywhere near \$6.8 million.

Should Reger decide to keep the property, Reger could not even collect rents – since the rents were assigned to the first mortgage which was held by Ho.

While Reger's mortgage was in effect worthless, he could still foreclose, and, owning the property, he could still prevent anyone from renting it so that Ho stood to lose his first mortgage, as the property, with its



Are great things ever done smoothly? Time, patience, and indomitable will must show...

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# Shmueli cons everyone; threatens to destroy project



From a giant hole - the remnant of AquaFalls I developed a parking lot and inside the building a successful tourist welcome center where everyone made money.

to Niagara Falls. On May 10, 2005, WBN radio announced "(A) gaping 40-foot hole in the heart of downtown Niagara Falls is finally being filled.... The removal means a blight that greeted people as they entered the city from the Rainbow Bridge will be no more."

By next spring, as it was filled, as WGRZ TV reported: "The giant pit is filled now, but what's next? Buffalo developer, Frank Parlato, says he's turning it and the adjacent building, into a giant tourist center to greet those coming into Niagara Falls, N.Y."

The Gazette editorialized (5/18/07): "With the paving of the dirt lot at One Niagara it truly was an end to all signs of the failed AquaFalls project that has lingered in the city like a ghost for more than seven years. Now, Frank Parlato said he will (use) the site as a paid parking lot in conjunction with a food and souvenir attraction he will operate... on the first floor of the nine-story glass building.... (O)n this side of the border... it's a pretty big development."

## Reger and I partner successfully

In April 2006, I entered into a partnership with Reger to operate the parking lot and businesses on the first floor.

By 2007 it began to be successful.

I filed permits to open up the top floor at One Niagara as an observation deck to provide a panoramic view of the American falls, which the Gazetteeditorial board called a "good sign".

That same week, the Buffalo News reported: "The first floor now bustles with food stands and souvenir vendors. A 40-foot excavation has been filled and is a paved parking lot that fills nearly daily."

Within two years, Reger got his entire investment back (\$780,000) with interest

(Continued on page 12)

giant hole, and mounting expenses, would be condemned and, ultimately, the tax man would foreclose and everyone would lose everything.

In late 2004, Reger set a date for foreclosure, but he did not want to foreclose. In fact he told Ho that he would forestall foreclosure if Ho would merely make a payment of \$23,000 to cover one month's interest.

The "billionaire" Ho asked me for a loan of \$23,000 to stop the foreclosure.

I came up with a plan. I approached Reger and negotiated with him to assign to me his \$2 million second mortgage and stop the foreclosure. Then I cut a deal with Ho, moving Reger's mortgage to first position (from second), and making Ho's \$6.8 million a second mortgage.

Instead of foreclosing and getting nothing, Reger would get paid first if I could develop the vacant building with its giant hole.

I next formed a partnership with Ho,

saving him from foreclosure.

## Ho and I form a partnership

Called One Niagara LLC, Ho and I signed an operating agreement for a company that gave me irrevocable rights to manage the property – both the 9-story former Occidental Chemical office building and the one acre hole in front of it - with Ho having no managerial rights whatsoever - but 50 percent of the proceeds of a sale and profits after expenses.

The agreement Ho signed – when he was on the verge of foreclosure – read in part: "Frank Parlato shall be the sole Manager of the Company," with "full and exclusive right to control day to day operations and business affairs of the Company, and ... this provisions shall be broadly interpreted in favor of (Parlato) and (Parlato) shall be entitled to take any and all actions with re-

spect the Property and the business of the Company that (he) determine(s) to be appropriate and in the Company's best interest, in each case without any further confirmation or approval of (David Ho)."

From that day forward (December 9, 2004) Ho had no more obligation to invest in the project and no managerial rights. And Ho never invested a single dime in the project from the day we formed our partnership.

In return for my doing all the work and being responsible for all cash calls, the contract gave me the unilateral right to pay myself a management fee which I could set without Ho's consent.

## 2005-2006 I develop the property

During the next two years I rescued the old Occidental building now renamed One Niagara. I immediately filled the hole and turned it into a paid parking lot for visitors



# Falls project thrives as Shmueli cheats lawyers



*(Continued from page 11)*

and, starting the third year, (2009) he earned pure profit with no further investment.

Between the time I started the business and his death in March 2015, Reger not only got all his original investment back with interest but earned millions from a partnership which started out of a bad investment he had with Ho.

Reger's estate now enjoys a six figure annual dividend from the project I started without having a dime invested into the business.

No wonder Reger's longtime lawyer, Gregory Photiadis, wrote a letter stating that Reger was complimentary of my work with him.

Along the way I created more than 60 jobs in depressed Niagara Falls, with more than 20 of them paying more than \$75,000 annually and all of this was done without accepting a single dime in public subsidies.

**Ho brings the kiss of death, Shmuel Shmueli, to One Niagara**

By 2007, when Shmueli entered my life, the One Niagara project was far from out of the woods. The Niagara Falls' tourist season

One of the most successful food courts in Western New York was developed by Frank Parlato.





# 25 local lawyers swindled by conman Shmueli



**Shmuel "Sam" Shmueli, a no-table conman.**



**David Ho claimed and was claimed to be a billionaire. He wasn't.**



**Larry Reger invested \$2 million with Ho. Ho defaulted on the repayment.**

is only 100 days long and this 9-story, 200,000 square foot building had year round expenses.

In July 2007, during a visit to the building, Ho, seeing business bustling, and possessing a disdain for Reger, objected to my partnership with Reger and demanded the deal with Reger be canceled and that he get Reger's share.

As manager of One Niagara with full authority to operate the business, I refused to cancel the deal with Reger. Ho came the next day with Shmueli, whom he stated was his agent, granting Shmueli "the right to exercise all and any legal procedures to enforce ... David Ho's rights."

Ho left for Hong Kong never to return to the building.

By August, 2007, Shmueli was on the scene daily. It soon became apparent that, now that the project was veering from a vacant hole and a condemned building, to a successful tourist operation, Ho wanted it all.

Shmueli told me that if I did not cancel the deal with Reger and make him, Shmueli, the new manager he would use Ho's wealth to destroy the project and me personally.

As we sat at a table at Denny's across the street from One Niagara, I remember Shmueli telling me he was a member of the Israeli secret intelligence, Mossad, and how he would force me to spend \$500,000 in legal expenses.

"I'm going to toil you a very tiny small leetle secret you will come to know because

you is very smart Mr. Frank Parlato Jr." Shmueli told me. "You can understand my meaning and what kind of a man Mr. Shmuel Shmueli is.

"You have heard of the Mossad? Well I have steel the ability to do damages to you and your friends like Mr. Lawrence Vreger...

"Now I propose you do not fight and get rid of Mr. Vreger. I will assume his role and we will be friends for I like you style very much Mr. Parlato, Jr.

"If not we fight in the court and out of the court so that you will spend much more than you will make in years with Mr. Lawrence Vreger.

"In your store you sell the postcard picture. There are two pictures. We will make you spend half million in lawyer fees or this instead you can keep in your pocket if we move Mr. Lawrence Vreger out of the postcard picture - which you can do as manager. Otherwise you will pay and I cannot stop the move until you are no longer manager and out of the picture postcard. This is David Ho's demand who hired me as his agent."

Shmueli then proposed that he keep the cash proceeds from the building earned on weekdays, and I take the cash from weekends - with or without telling David Ho.

When I said no to his plans, Shmueli started a campaign to disrupt operations and, over the next eight years, Shmueli was true to his word - at least as to cost: Reger and I spent more than \$1.4 million to defend Shmueli's 10 lawsuits against us.

**Shmueli tries to overthrow the manager, me**

He began at once.

Although the operating agreement of One Niagara LLC permits only the managing member - me - to call a member's meeting, on August 16, 2007, Shmueli called a meeting when I was out of town and in that illegal meeting demoted me to superintendent of buildings and grounds, and appointed himself as the new manager.

At the rogue meeting he passed a resolution that a locksmith be empowered to enter the building and change the locks.

I informed Reger of the attempt at a hostile takeover and we agreed to take action to protect our assets and commence a lawsuit.

On August 30, 2007, I brought an action against Shmueli in State Supreme Court before Justice Frank Caruso and won a temporary restraining order preventing Shmueli from changing the locks to the facility.

Shmueli retained the law firm of Lorenzo and Cohen LLP, which was headed up by prominent local attorney Steven Cohen. It was an odd retainer agreement for, instead of the usual hourly agreement most clients have with their attorneys, this was a flat fee agreement - for \$150,000.

The payment was contingent on, in Shmueli's own words: "To get F.P. (Frank Parlato) out of management position in One Niagara Building."

As mentioned in previous stories, Shmueli was to stiff each of some 25 attorneys he retained to fight me in his attempt at a hostile takeover. Lorenzo and Cohen were among the first to be cheated.

In next week's edition, we will see how Shmueli sent them an initial retainer of \$40,000 then proceeded to cheat them and Steve Cohen's subsequent law firm, Hogan Willig, out of more than \$112,000 and hired four more law firms, Zdarsky, Sawicki and Agostinelli, Jaekle Fleishmann and Mugal, Bloom and Shonn, and Anderson, and Anderson, pitting one against the other.

All the while Shmueli collected fees from foreign investors who gave him money for the promise of a piece of his litigation.

With Shmueli pulling the strings and calling the shots - he was soon able to dupe Ho out of his entire interest in One Niagara.

Stay tuned as we report further on one of the great rascals of our area, the amazing conman, Shmuel Shmueli.

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# The Cult of NXIVM Series:

## Frank Parlato

I lived and worked with NXIVM for several months as their round-the-clock consultant, staying in their properties and communicating closely day and night with their top officials. That included leaders Keith Raniere, hypnotist and president of the organization, Nancy Salzman, and the wealthy Seagram heiresses, Clare and Sara Bronfman who fund the operation.

At first I thought they were a much persecuted but kindly group of people who were being attacked for having a different belief system. I later came to believe they were operating a criminal enterprise.

Since beginning my series last month, victims of NXIVM who were past members have contacted me. They are people who managed to get out and want to lend their testimony to this series. But others are still there, perhaps afraid to leave, intimidated by the vast wealth of the Seagram heirs and the NXIVM history of destroying its enemies. I am therefore creating a new website, [www.leavingNXIVM.com](http://www.leavingNXIVM.com), to help those who feel trapped escape the clutches of Keith Raniere and the Bronfman sisters.

Starting next week I will detail my personal sojourn with the organization.

This week, I am offering hope to those persecuted and who want to escape. These can contact me through the new website or



Keith Raniere

by email [frankparlato@gmail.com](mailto:frankparlato@gmail.com) or by phone at 716-990-5740. All communications will be kept confidential.

Among alleged crimes I have evidence of or information that can be developed into evidence of NXIVM – and its leader, Raniere and its wealthy “justice purchasing” members, Seagram heiresses Sara and Clare Bronfman, are: Hacking into people’s personal emails, phone records, and bank accounts; bribing Mexican judges and



Raniere makes the cover of Forbes Magazine

politicians; massive tax evasion; smuggling \$10 million into the US in cash from Mexico; bringing illegal aliens across the border at Niagara Falls and then imprisoning them; allegations from victims of statutory rape; cover up of at least two suicides; engaging in a classic Klein Conspiracy to impede the function of the IRS, with more than 75 corporate entities and/or “shell” companies, with scores of shifting bank accounts; paying employees’ salaries and telling them not to



NIXVM member Clare Bronfman

- The Bronfmans giving (or perhaps being swindled out of) \$100 million to/by Raniere through various shell corporations. Raniere never reported the income. The Bronfmans never reported the gift, preferring to fraudulently list it as a loan with (phantom) interest payments.
- The Bronfmans allegedly took more than \$1 million fraudulent write off for “litigation support” which was in fact an illegal surveillance on judges involved in their many lawsuits.
- Raniere’s cult NXIVM made millions in coaching fees but never paid taxes.



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# Keith Raniere, Self-Proclaimed Smartest Man In the World and Spiritually Evolved Guru



**Nancy Salzman President of NXIVM**

• Certain top Bronfman/Raniere aides have not filed tax returns for years. A lot of people are on the hook and sources say they will “roll” on Raniere if law enforcement becomes interested in what is possibly one of the largest tax evasion schemes in the nation.

• Bronfmans set up false charities and under-reported income while helping launder millions from Mexico into the USA for Raniere.

• More than a dozen carriers brought cash to Raniere and these are the ones “who will roll” on Raniere and Bronfman, sources say.

• Raniere allegedly hid more than \$2 million in cash stored in a basement safe in a suburb near Albany – in a home owned by Nancy Salzman - for his escape to Mexico if authorities come after him.

• Raniere has not reported one dollar in taxes.

• The Bronfmans and NXIVM bundled money to politicians in return for promises of indictments against their enemies.

• Bronfmans may have evaded more than \$35 million in unpaid taxes through deceitful “loans” to Raniere.

• NXIVM had offices on Buffalo Ave. in Niagara Falls where plans were made to launch illegal attacks on enemies.

The NY Post on March 27, 2010 reported that Raniere “Blew through \$100 million of (Bronfmans’) fortune.... Raniere ran out of money to fund a long-running commodities scheme and a real-estate development deal involving (the late Edgar Bronfman Sr.’s) two daughters, Clare and Sara”.

Many believe Raniere swindled the two gullible sisters out of the money.

In another story, “Guru: Blow off taxes” (January 31, 2011) the NY Post writes, “The leader of an Albany ‘cult’ financed by the Bronfman booze fortune urged followers to dodge taxes.... and dispatched top advisors to break into the homes and ‘sweep’ the bank accounts of his detractors, according to a new court filing.”

On October 22, 2010, the NY Post wrote, “An accused con man who runs an upstate ‘cult’ bankrolled by the Bronfman booze fortune has ‘had people killed,’ he boasts in an explosive new video. “Keith Raniere, who runs Albany-based NXIVM, makes the chilling claim on tape to female followers who confronted him with their concerns about the group, which has been

derided by detractors as a harmful ‘cult’.”

The Albany Times Union reported that Raniere serially raped underage girls, and used Bronfman money to pursue and hunt down enemies.

Today NXIVM continues to operate from its Albany region headquarters, drawing new believers from across North America. About 12,000 people, it has been estimated, have taken the courses paying up to \$10,000 for a 16-day “brainwashing” seminar.

NXIVM evidently never reported income despite receiving substantial fees from students and large gifts from the Bronfmans.

During seminars, students must remove their shoes, bow and refer to Raniere and Salzman, as “Vanguard” and “Prefect” respectively, and wear colored sashes denoting their rank in the organization.

Among NXIVM’s highest ranking members – the knowing enablers of the alleged crimes - are the sisters, Bronfman.

Prominent past and present clients include Linda Evans, Richard Branson, TV actress Kristin Kreuk, Sheila Johnson, co-founder of BET; Antonia Novello, former Surgeon General of the United States; Stephen Cooper of Enron; and Ana Cristina Fox, daughter of former Mexican president Vicente Fox.

“It’s like a practical MBA,” Emiliano Salas, son of a former Mexican president and a member, told Forbes magazine in 2003.

## A Membership Urged Not to Pay Taxes

Our investigation has uncovered that, among the highly secretive NXIVM mem-

bership, some of whom work for the Bronfmans and/or NXIVM and earn money – and some of whom have not reported their earnings - are, Karen Abney, Vera Alvarez del Castillo, Anthony N. Ames a/k/a/ “Nippy”, Vera Autrey Da Costa, Lisa Barwise, Wayne J. Bates, Kimberly A. Beekman, Matthew A. Beekman, Barbara M. Bell, Jose A. Beltran, Michael L. Bennett, Carole L. Bergeron, Shaun D. Bergeron, Alexander (Alejandro) Betancourt Lesdesma, Edgar Boone, Omar Boone, Christopher K. Bowcutt, Channel A. Bowden, Luis Miguel Boy, Anna B. Boyce, Sally G. Brink, Crystal Brooks, Kim Busby, Victor Diego Cadena Boone, Pamela A. Cafritz, Roberto Cardenas, Jack Casey, Claudia Castaneda, Cedric F. Celik, • Esther L. Chiappone/Carlson, Tracy Christopher,

(Continued on page 16)

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# Clear pattern of intimidation; possible tax fraud evident

(Continued from page 15)

Sean R. Claesgens, Lorri E. Clark, Christine Collins, Pam Cooley, Sean H. Craney, Stephen P. Dautell, James J. DelNegro, Katie L. Deming, Lisa A. Derks, Marvin W. Derks, Jeff T. DeWeese, Jennifer A. DeWeese, Franca DiCrescenzo, J. Mark Drexel, Dazzle Ekblad, Peter S. Fallon, Hector Fernandez, Adrianna Fernandez, Brendan J. Flanagan, Rebecca ("Becky") C. Freeman, Loretta Garza Davila, Katharine W. Gibson, Mark Hildreth, Allison N. Hlas, Siobhan J. Hotaling, Wende Irick, Barbara Jeske, Edward Kinnun, Kristin Laura Kreuk, Rick Ley, Silvia Lloyd, Lorraine Loshin, Milton Loshin, Allison Mack, Patrick Maloney, Virginia (Ginger) McIntosh, Eugene M. McLaughlin, Matthew J. McMorris, Dawn Morrison, Megan Mumford, Ivy Nevares, Adrianna Nienow, Steven T. Ose, Sarah Peters, Farouk Rojas, Wendy Rosen-Brooks, Kathy Russell a/k/a "Sage", Emiliano Salinas Ocelli, Lauren R. Salzman, Michael A. Salzman, Michelle D. Salzman, Angelo F. Scaturro, Angel P. Smith, Michael Sutton, Alissa S. Taft, Michele J. Tarzia, Karen A. Unterreiner a/k/a "Gozer", Juliana Vicente, Mark A. Vicente, Antonio (Tony) Zarattini.

The above named are invited to break from the secretive organization and reveal the activities of the Raniere/Bronfman enterprise to this writer or the authorities.

## A Host of Shell Corporations

NXIVM Corp (New York State corp.) has many related and affiliated corporate entities or "shell" companies and appears to be engaged in a classic Klein Conspiracy to defraud the government.

The shell companies – all of them under the control of Raniere are ostensibly owned by various Raniere followers.

Raniere's name appears on none of them.

The associated bank accounts also do

not have Raniere's name or social security number on any of them. To date we have identified 75 different entities under Raniere's putative control which do not have his name attached.

Many, perhaps all, according to our sources, have never paid income taxes.

The list of companies include:

- 26 Realty Property Management, LLC
- A Cappella Innovations, Inc.
- Aletheia LLC
- Alpha Development Group
- Axiology, Inc. (Nevada: March 18, 2008)
- Buyers Advocate, Inc. (Delaware: June 28, 1999)
- Center for Ethical Justice LLC (Delaware: October 7, 2007)
- Consumers Advocate, Inc.
- Consumers Buyline, Inc.
- Crosspoint Communication, Inc.
- Ethilogia
- Elite Housing Corporation
- Elite Marketing Professionals, Inc. (Delaware: August 26, 1999)
- Essence Interactive
- Athletics LLC
- Ethical Principles Inc.,
- Ethical Publishing LLC (Delaware: August 26, 1999)
- Ethical Value Exchange, Inc.
- Events for Humanity, Inc. (Delaware: November 2, 2007)
- Executive Housing & Properties, Inc. (Delaware: January 28, 2004)
- Executive Housing & Properties, Inc. (New York State: January 9, 2004)
- Executive Success Programs, Inc. (Delaware: July 20, 1998)
- Executive Success Programs, Inc. (New York State: May 6, 2002)
- First Principles Inc. (Delaware)
- Grow Sport, Ltd. (Great Britain)
- House of Equus LLC
- In Lak Ech
- International Center for Change, Inc. (New York State: October 14, 1992)

- J. Cricket LLC
- JM Tax Consulting
- Jness
- Karmar
- Krunch Corporation
- Las Casitas Rental
- Moving Pix LLC
- My Home, Inc.
- Nataraja Center for Movement Arts
- NXIVM Corporation (Puerto Rico: October 25, 2005)
- NXIVM LLC, (NYS)
- NXIVM Properties LLC, (NYS),
- NX Trust
- Occam's Razor LLC
- Our Evolution LLC
- Peak Physique, Inc.
- PERSENSEO, Inc. (Delaware)
- POIESIS, Inc.
- Precision Development, LLC (Nevada)
- Rainbow Cultural Garden, Inc. (Delaware: September 7, 2007)
- Rainbow Cultural Garden LLC
- Remick Consulting (Delaware)
- Rochester Media Management LLC
- Signature Event Marketing Group
- Slate River Farm, Inc.
- Slate River Mobile LLC (Delaware)
- Slate Sista Farm LLC
- Spirit@19, Inc. (Delaware)
- Sunshine Properties LLC
- The Art of Movement, Inc. (Delaware: April 12, 2004)
- The Athletics Foundation
- The Dalai Lama Trust
- The Ethical Foundation, Inc. (Fictitious)
- The Ethical Foundation, Inc. (Massachusetts: January 22, 1979)
- The Ethical Humanitarian Foundation
- The Ethical Science Foundation (Delaware)
- The First Foundation, Inc.
- The Raniere Group, Inc. (Delaware: April 12, 1994)
- The Think Fund, Inc. (Nevada: Octo-

ber 10, 2001)

- The World Ethical Foundations Consortium
  - Truth LLC (Delaware: August 23, 2007)
  - Ultima ® (New York State: May 6, 2008)
  - Veinte Seiz LLC f7k/a Blue Skies LLC
  - Veinte Siete LLC f/k/a Charly's Wings LLC
  - Village Hall LLC
  - Whare LLC
  - World Audience Productions LLC
- Stay tuned.



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— Francis of Assisi

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# Where is The Economic Development Dyster Says He Spent \$200 Million On?

**Mike Hudson**

The standard definition of economic development is that of efforts seeking to improve the economic well-being and quality of life for a community by creating and retaining jobs and supporting or growing incomes and the tax base.

Over the past eight years, nearly \$200 million – the city's share of slot machine revenue generated by the Seneca Niagara Casino – has been spent by Niagara Falls Mayor Paul Dyster on what he refers to as economic development projects.

When asked, as he has been repeatedly, why he can't use the money to put more cops on the streets or provide tax relief to beleaguered property owners here, Dyster says that those things don't fall under the economic development umbrella, and the agreement the city has with the state won't allow it.

You'd think that eight years and \$200 million might add up to something you could point at and say, "Now that's economic development!"

Not in Dyster's Niagara Falls though.



**This property is across the street from the Seneca Casino showing the economic results of casino spin off in Niagara Falls.**

When the casino first opened at the end of 2003, there was a lot of talk about what would happen to the run down neighborhoods north on Niagara Street and east of John B. Daly Boulevard. The thousands of casino employees would need nearby housing said the Seneca leaders and white politicians – including then-councilman Dyster.

Replacing blighted neighborhoods with

new residential properties, along with the amenities to serve the prosperous new homeowners seemed like the very definition of economic development, so much so that the private company, Niagara Falls Redevelopment, began buying up much of the land east of the casino.

So what happened? Absolutely nothing. The formerly run down neighborhoods have now become genuinely blighted and are a breeding ground for the sort of crime that has propelled Niagara Falls to the position of Most Dangerous Place in New York State and the 53rd Most Dangerous City in the United States.

Property crime is rampant and murder, rape, assault and armed robbery are all too common. The area adjacent to the glitzy casino is a veritable war zone, and the innocent victims often include out of towners who made the mistake of simply crossing Niagara Street to the convenience store to pick up some snacks to take back to their hotel rooms.

So no effort to improve the quality of life in the neighborhood immediately adjacent to the casino. For that you have to walk

over to Whirlpool Street, where the Aquarium of Niagara beckons. Earlier this year, Dyster and the city Council found a way to throw \$150,000 in casino cash at the aquarium in order to improve penguin habitat.

The \$150,000 represented a down payment on a project that will ultimately cost \$15 million!

State Sen. Rob Ortt, who represents Niagara Falls in Albany, has proposed reversing the current split between the city and the state, so that the city gets 75 percent and the state 25 percent instead of the other way around, which is how it is now.

Had Ortt's formula been in place since the beginning, the city would have already received around \$600 million, rather than the nearly \$200 million it has collected.

But the \$600 million would still go to City Hall, where, in their wisdom, Niagara Falls voters have seen fit to return Dyster for another four years.

Seeing as how he has spent \$200 million no real economic development to show for it, would giving him triple that amount be advisable?

## Public Reaction to Ortt Plan; Don't Give Dyster More \$\$\$!

**Mike Hudson**

Though Niagara Falls Mayor Paul Dyster managed to eke out a 47 percent

"victory" in the recent mayoral election thanks to spoiler Glenn Choolokian's write in campaign, his popularity is arguably at the lowest ebb of his political career.

So much so that the overwhelming re-

sponse to state Sen. Rob Ortt's plan to triple the amount the city receives in slot machine revenue from the Seneca Niagara Casino was opposed by an overwhelming majority of commentators on the Facebook pages dedicated to Niagara Falls on the logic that it would just give Dyster three times as much money to squander!

"There is no question that this proposal will only help those with their hands in taxpayer's pockets," said Bob Ballentine. "Dyster's history with the casino credit card is pretty evident."

Dave Kopczynski agreed.

"Dyster and the council will just waste it," he wrote.

Joanna Jo Romano congratulated Ortt for a brilliant plan, but cautioned him against throwing the additional revenue down the same black hole as the nearly \$200 million the city has actually received.

"Bravo Senator Ortt!" Romano wrote.

"If and when we receive this money, there has to be stipulations on the spending. You can't allow Paul (Dyster) and the self-servers to squander it. They are selfish and incompetent individuals who have no consideration for the tax base. They should have never gotten away with that spending. That was one of the worst blows to our city next to Lackey's rule."

Alisa J. Pucci agreed.

"One thing that worries me is if Sen. Ortt gets us the increase, where will it be squandered?" Pucci asked. "We won't see it. Not if it lands in the hands of the mayor and Council."

Robert Ventry also argued for stricter

controls on how the money is spent. Like many here, he can't believe that Dyster managed to squander nearly \$200 million and have nothing to show for it.

"I believe if this does happen, we would need more controls in place to detail on how and what it could be spent on," Ventry wrote. "We had the perfect opportunity to rebuild our city, and that opportunity looks like it's going down the drain."

David Cuomo said that the fault was that of the Senecas or the state. He expressed amazement at the thinking of Niagara Falls voters.

"The citizens of Niagara Falls just re-elected this administration back into office and are now going ask for a renegotiation because the funds are being mismanaged?" Cuomo asked. "They should have thought about that before they put the same group of people back into office."

"The only ones to blame for the mismanagement of casino funds is Paul Dyster and his city cronies, who care more about lining their own pockets than taking care of the people of Niagara Falls," he continued. "The reason the casino is the largest employer in the city is because Dyster has done nothing to bring a living wage jobs to the people of Niagara Falls."

It's kind of ironic really, Dyster gets reelected and the Niagara Falls Reporter is more popular than ever. It's probably not too far off to say that these next four years might be pretty interesting.



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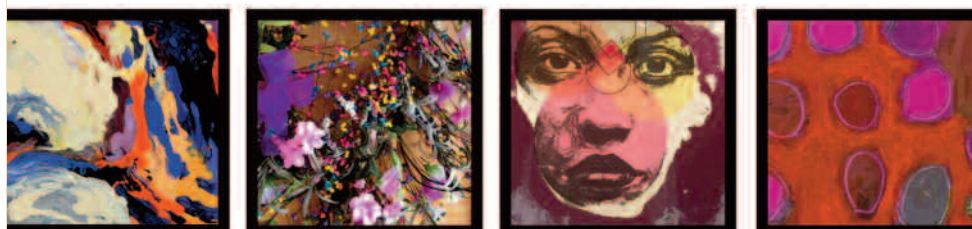
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# Who Escrows Proceeds From a Theft? ... Get Real!



**J. Gary  
DiLaura**

## The Right Side

In the present case against Frank Parlato, it had been reported that the one million dollars the developer allegedly defrauded the Bronfman sisters out of was held by Parlato in escrow pending a resolution of a civil dispute.

As my readers know, I was an FBI Agent for three decades and I worked all types of violations of Title 18 US Code. That includes White Collar Crimes like mail fraud, wire fraud, Hobbs Act, advance fee schemes. You name it and I investigated it except for security type cases.

In 1977, I even worked on a special called the Fountain Conspiracy which was the biggest fraud case in FBI history up to 1977. In that case the bad guys, as an aside, scammed Elvis Presley's jet from his father, just to strip it, which they did to the tune of millions of dollars.

The Fountain Conspiracy case makes any scam you can think of look like small potatoes. Hundreds of millions were scammed in the most elaborate advanced fee scheme you can imagine and NO one "escrowed" their crime proceeds...no one. I have to say that in the hundreds and hundreds of cases I worked over the years, from robbery to scams to kidnappings, I NEVER, EVER saw or heard of anyone putting their theft proceeds into a freaking escrow account. You see, thieves ALWAYS try to HIDE or spend their illicit proceeds never escrow them, in case they get caught! Think about that for a minute... a guy robs a bank and puts the money in an escrow account or scams a million and puts that into an escrow account...REALLY, in what world do you live in?

Someone who escrows alleged theft proceeds is not hiding anything and that goes a long way to destroying any criminal intent. And as to motive... most people steal because they need money?! Now that's a very important point! You see without criminal intent there is NO CRIME! If the motive was to gain needed money, why didn't it get

spent? There may be a civil matter but not criminal!

Here's a few more things of some interest; one of the scams in the Fountain Conspiracy involved taking control of a business, factory or office building that had valuable capital equipment. Say something like the "One Niagara Building" BEFORE Frank Parlato bought it. You know ...when some businessmen, not Parlato, were going to build an aquarium.

In the cases I worked, the scammers took control of the property, stripped it of anything of value and then "walked away". From what I saw when I examined the One Niagara Building after it was stripped and a hole dug but BEFORE Parlato bought it, it reminded me of that big case and couldn't understand why the FBI was NOT investigating that deal! I even asked former COP and Mayor Galey about that, before Parlato bought it.

Parlato took what WAS once, the best piece of property in downtown Niagara Falls that was almost destroyed by the previous owners, and filled the hole and got it back on the tax rolls as a viable business again! The inside is still in need of repair but Parlato, and Paul Grenga both deserve a pat on the back for what they accomplished, instead of a knife in the back!

Understand, I write articles for Parlato's paper and that's it! He has NEVER discussed his case with me nor asked me for anything,

not even my opinion on any of his matters nor a recommendation on attorney. I am my own man and so is he. Any of you who think otherwise may ask any of the numerous prosecutors, lawyers and judges I worked with for those three decades. That includes judges and friends Pete Broderick, and Matt Murphy, as well as Federal Judges Arcara, Skretny, and Scott and, coincidentally, Dennis Vacco and Carol Heckman. I also worked with Bill Hochul and Tony Bruce and both are good prosecutors and good people. That's why I think there may be outside pressure!

If Dennis Vacco and Carol Heckman went to bat for Parlato, Bill Hochul should reassess the facts and not make a big mistake.

Now don't get me wrong, I know only what I read, just like you! I have no "inside" information, but I know the system and the players and I can say with CONFIDENCE that the escrowed money and Mr. Vacco and Ms. Heckman's letters should be enough to wake up a very good attorney, prosecutor and unquestionably honest, Bill Hochul, even if being pressured!

He will have a better chance convicting a real criminal, like Tim Geithner, the former IRS Thief, (oops) I mean, IRS Chief.

That's the way I see it!



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# Only in NT: Questions for our City Clerk–Treasurer



**Sweeney Payne**

Memo to City Clerk-Treasurer Daniel Quinn:

How about putting the City's actual financial results for 2015 on the website next year? Putting the budgets up is fine—but residents deserve to see how the actual financial expenditures turned out also.

Explain what Lumber City Development Corp. is. It's supposedly a separate, not-for-profit. Where is its financial reporting to the citizens published? How does the intertwining of funds between the City and LCDC get reported and monitored? Why cannot a review of NTs budget tell us what LCDC's finances are as well? To whom are they accountable?

In 2016, we'd like to see some detailed accounting of the costs of operating Gateway Park and Gratwick Riverside Park and the income from each. Do we actually have people collecting docking fees in Gateway Park now? That was a problem every summer for years, especially when the "harbormaster" worked out of town and "supervised" summer employees by cell phone. How are docking fees collected at Gratwick Riverside Park? What is that "hot dog stand" costing us at Gratwick Riverside Park?

What are the costs of caring for our City parks and playgrounds? How do we do on renting parts of our public parks for private events? Do we require certificates of insurance for such usage? What are plans for the greenhouse at the Botanical Gardens? Will it ever be a "botanical garden" again? Why isn't that park offered for memorials to deceased children instead of tiny Brauer Memorial Park? There is one fairly large private memorial to a youngster in the Botanical Gardens for the last seven or so years. What was the arrangement for that?

What are the plans for Deerwood Golf

Course as golfing changes nationally, due to changing tastes and economics, and the aging population of golfers? What do grounds maintenance, fertilizing, and mowing the grass cost us annually? A recent Buffalo News article (November 26) indicated there are about 4 million fewer golfers in the country than there were a decade ago. The trend for closings of golf courses is ongoing, along with many going bankrupt or being foreclosed upon.

What is the expense and income history of the restaurant at Deerwood, separate from the golf course itself? How is NT planning for adaptations to deal with the national trend?

How did we lose Jacob's Ladder to Wheatfield? LCDC asleep at the switch again? No photo ops for the politicians?

We note the former Hungarian church building on Oliver Street at First Avenue is for sale. No doubt, the candidate who ran for alderman in November's complaint about the prostitutes gathering on the steps of the church at the Chamber debate motivated the current owner to put it up for sale. Will LCDC and the Historic Preservation Commission do anything to preserve this piece of NT's history with a solid new use? Will the same owner put the long vacant Pee Wee's Pizzeria building up for sale also? The Republican Committee would have to find a new political poster display site if that were sold.

Driving over the County line on the five bridges over the Canal which connect NT to the City of Tonawanda, the Town of Tonawanda and the Town of Amherst, the question comes up as to why the bridge where River Road joins Seymour Street has no sign with the name it was given when constructed--Niagara Frontier Bridge; and the bridge where Webster Street joins Main Street has no sign with the name it was given when constructed--Renaissance Bridge.

Why not invest in such signs on the NT side?

Did Witter's tavern and Paul Brown's Fish Place on Oliver Street get a deal on the blue paint? How about painting their planters to match? Now if we could only get rid of those childish faded fish window coverings and the simulated finger paint "painting" across the street from Witter's on Oliver at Schenck.

What do those currently in office know about marketing a business park? What do they know about Oliver Street? Except for using them as reasons to vote for them, what are their chances of accomplishing anything any of us want and need for Oliver Street? We need people who have lived and/or worked on Oliver Street over the years, for serious amounts of time, to make decisions about Oliver Street.

We also need our NT officials to find ways to communicate with us instead of putting announcements in newspapers in NT. Hiding announcements in papers no one reads is not transparency.

NEWS FOR A FIT BODY AND MIND  
**THE DAILY-POD**  
CHRISTMAS BEER BASH  
SUICIDAL SAUCIES  
STYLE TRANSIT-WEDNESDAY  
DECEMBER 9 6PM

THE GREAT SUICIDAL SAUCIES OF THE QUEEN CITY ROLLER GIRLS WILL HOST AN AWESOME XMAS BEER PARTY. SUPPORT THE GIRLS WITH THEIR 50/50 RAFFLE! ENJOY OUR BEERS, LIKE MIKKELLER SANTAS HELPER TO A HOPPED UP CBW CASK! FLIGHT SPECIALS, MAYBE SANTA!

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WEDNESDAY DEC 16 TRANSIT  
FIRST INVASION TO OUR SUBURB...AND THEY ARE BRINGING SOME BREWERY ONLY TREATS.. DONT MISS IT

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**BLACK AND BLUES** Dec 5 Jazz/funk/blues  
**BUDDY HINDS** Dec. 19 Awesome Rock Trio  
**LAST SHOT BAND** Dec. 12 Power Alt Rock/blues  
Slim Chance & Cann't Hardly Playboys  
Dec. 26 Rockabilly Swing

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(excluding periodicals & specials)  
(light refreshments at Main st sale)  
(our annual double thanks to you)

**EVENTS**  
Jim Santella, Classic Rock Classic Jock  
Longtime rock, blues, theater DJ tells his story  
Sat, 12/12, 1-3 pm, Main Street Signing

\*\*\*\*\*  
Ann Hood, returns to Larkin Square Author Series  
Knitting Pearls (essays) + Italian Wife (novel)  
Wed, 12/16, 5:30 pm, Larkin Square Filling Stn

\*\*\*\*\*  
Your purchase of books at our events is critical to their continued success.

\*\*\*\*\*  
Project Coat Tree Year 21! (the original!)  
now collecting clean coats & winterwear at both stores for donation to local charities  
Thanks for your support for this over all the years

\*\*\*\*\*  
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Check out our used books at Main Street

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chosen with care in your home town  
+ CALENDARS & OTHER GIFT ITEMS  
SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

\*\*\*\*\*  
**READ TO THINK, THINK TO READ**

**TALKING LEAVES BOOKS**

**Where The City Smokes**

**HOLIDAY EVENTS**  
**DREW ESTATES CIGARS**  
Wednesday December 2nd  
**JOSE ESPINOSA CIGARS**  
Friday December 4th  
**MONTECRISTO MIKE FROM ALTADIS**  
Tuesday December 15th  
All Events Scheduled 4 - 8 pm

Rocky Patel Lounge, 65" HDTV,  
Free Coffee, Great Service,  
Unmatched Selection

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Sun. 12PM - 8PM

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MTV'S "FALOSOPHY" + "GIRL CODE"  
DEC 17-19

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## Workplace Safety Begins With Breakfast

Eating a healthy breakfast before heading to work may be as important to construction site safety as wearing a hardhat. Unfortunately, breakfast is also a meal that often gets short changed. In the rush to get out of the house, many people begin their day with high-in-calorie, low-on-nutrient fast food. Many people eat nothing. Either way, workplace safety can suffer.

Research published by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) shows that people who skip out on a healthy breakfast – like 31 million Americans do every day – go about their workday more tired and less focused than those who take a few minutes to have a bowl of oatmeal and a piece of fruit. Punting on breakfast increases the likelihood for on-the-job injuries.

Mental sharpness may not be the only thing that suffers when breakfast is short-changed.

A recently completed 16-year study on men's eating habits from Harvard School of Public Health found that when people don't take time to eat a healthy breakfast, their risk for a heart attack or death from coronary heart disease goes up.

"Skipping breakfast may lead to one or more risk factors, including obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes, which may in turn lead to a heart attack over time," said lead author Leah Cahill in a statement to the American Heart Association, which published the study last summer.

The message, then, is that no matter how busy your morning, make time for breakfast. These suggestions from the Mayo Clinic are nutritious and quick. Choosing one option from each of these groups will get your day off to a great start.

- Whole grains: whole-grain rolls, bagels, hot or cold whole-grain cereals, low-fat bran muffins, crackers, Melba toast
- Low-fat protein: peanut butter, lean meat, poultry or fish, hard-boiled eggs
- Low-fat dairy: skim milk, low-fat yogurt, low-fat cottage and natural cheeses
- Fruits and vegetables: fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables, 100 percent juice beverages without added sugar, fruit and vegetable smoothies

NIAGARA FALLS REPORTER SEP 29 – OCT 07, 2015

## Ryan Great at Selling Tires, Not Much as a Coach

Tony Farina

It seems pretty clear to me that Rex Ryan is a better salesman than coach, whether it comes to selling tickets or tires.

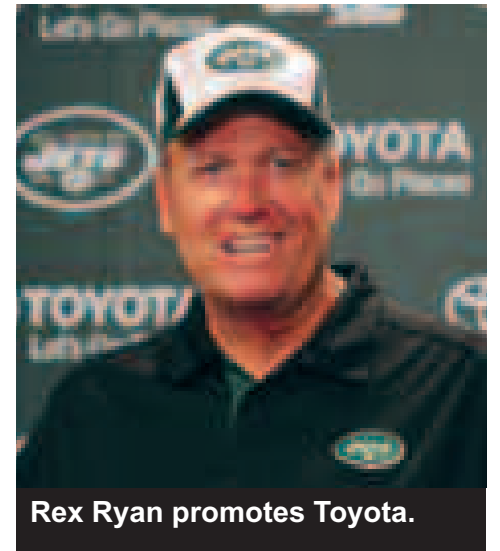
Rex roared into town last January to the tune of a five-year, \$27.5 million contract and promised desperate fans that he would take the Bills to the playoffs and end the 15-year post-season drought that stretches back to the last century. It now looks like he'll probably not top the 9 – 7 mark posted by Doug Marrone last year who looks like a genius in getting out of town as soon as the season ended.

At 5 and 6, the Rex Ryan-led Bills are still mathematically alive for a playoff spot, but after getting outplayed and outcoached by the Kansas City Chiefs on Sunday, their chances of ending the drought seem longer than Jacksonville winning the Super Bowl.

It is truly amazing that Ryan, coming off his disappointing run with the Jets where he posted a 50 -52 mark, could be viewed as the second coming of Vince Lombardi by local fans who gobbled up his big talk almost as fast as they gobbled up tickets.

Ryan was full of big talk about a playoff run after signing his huge contract, and fans bought it hook, line, and sinker from a pitcher who can be seen selling tires almost as much as he can be heard talking about the Bills. But from early on, it was evident that Ryan's team was undisciplined, inconsistent, and unable to win big games, a tradition around here for the last 15 years and longer if you consider the four straight Super Bowl losses.

Rex might be a great guy to go out on the town with, but as a football coach he's a fraud, pure and simple. He failed in New York before they cut him, and he's failing here even though he may have found a quarterback with a future in Tyrod Taylor. But his game management and leadership are highly questionable and he doesn't have the control of his team that the great ones have, like Bill Belichick. His players like him, and maybe that's the problem. They are being



paid big dollars, like he is, but don't produce when it counts because he can't get them to play up to their potential.

Last Sunday, he was badly outcoached by Andy Reid as one might expect given that Reid has a career record of 156-110-1, miles better than Rex's losing numbers. Even Rex's bravado has been muted as he had a lot of trouble explaining his lack of challenges in the Chiefs game, perhaps because his decisions were indefensible.

The Bills and the humbled Ryan will have their hands full again come Sunday when they take on a Houston team that has won four in a row, including shutting down the highly potent offense of the New Orleans Saints last week in a 24 – 6 victory. Houston boasts the league's best defensive player in J. J. Watt who, like Ryan, pads his bankroll with TV spots. The difference of course is that Watt can play and Ryan can't coach.

But Rex probably isn't going anywhere anytime soon after Pegula paid him the big bucks to come here, so fans better get used to it. He'll win a few games to get your hopes up, but then deliver a Kansas City or Jacksonville game along the way to remind you he's still the coach who couldn't win in the Big Apple and who has a career record below .500. Forget the playoffs this year. But maybe next year, right Rex?

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# NEWS OF THE WEIRD

## Chuck Shephard

### It's Snot Hygienic

The manager of the agency in Louisville, Kentucky, responsible for, among other things, development planning, zoning changes and historic landmarks revealed in November that his headquarters has a "boogers" problem and ordered users of the third-floor men's room to stop hocking them onto the walls adjacent to the urinals. According to an internal memo cited by InsiderLouisville.com, Metro Planning and Design Services manager Joe Reverman called the mucus buildup "a very serious situation" and had his executive administrator post signs instructing restroom users on the basics of proper disposal of "anything that comes out of or off a person's body."

### Great Art!

The 1968 Cy Twombly "blackboard" painting sold for \$70.5 million at New York City's Sotheby's auction in November (higher than experts' estimate of \$60 million). The painting consists of six horizontal lines of continuous circular swirls (white chalk on a "blackboard")—perhaps the same swirls that might be made by an extremely bored, aggressive first-grader given a supply of chalk and the absence of the teacher.

The Baltimore-based "experimental music" creators Matmos announced the release of their new album, *Ultimate Care II*, consisting entirely of "music" made by a Whirlpool washing machine (the *Ultimate Care II* model). According to a November report in *Time* magazine, the machine's 38-minute wash cycle will be "sampled and processed" to lighten the original sound. (Matmos previously "played" canisters of helium on stage at Radio City Music Hall and a cow's uterus at the San Francisco Art Institute.)

### Cultural Diversity

In an enterprise somewhat resembling *American Idol*, amateur performers in China become self-supporting online not by soliciting money directly, but through virtual gifts from enthralled fans, with performers getting a cut of each sale. Beijing's YY.com hosts original performances, and two of the site's favorites, Mr. Earth and Ms. Cloud, earned the equivalent of about \$160,000 last year from their universe of 1.8 million fans (according to a November *Wall Street Journal* report). In an ancillary industry (led by 9158.com), hard-core fans can purchase access (think "virtual limousines," shown "arriving" at a "concert"), giving them bragging rights. (A simple "applause" icon after a song costs about a penny.)

### Bright Ideas

The exasperated drug enforcement chief of Indonesia told reporters in

November (following confiscation of a massive quantity of methamphetamine from China) that the ordinary death penalty was insufficient for drug runners, who should instead be forced to overdose on their own shipments. Budi Waseso also mused that crocodiles would make better prison guards than humans because crocs can't be bribed and later added tigers and piranhas to the proposed guard roster. Even so, Waseso's boss reiterated that the government is committed to rehabilitation over punishment.

### New World Order

Watch Your Language: (1) Recently added to the list of words and phrases to be officially discouraged on campus, according to the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's website: "political correctness." The phrase is said to be a "microaggression" that might make some students feel uncomfortable or unsafe if they hear it or read it. (2) In November, the University of Vermont held a (voluntary) three-day "retreat" open only to students who "self-identify as white," so that they can study the implications of "white privilege" in society (e.g., "what does it mean to be white?" and "how does whiteness impact you?").

### Government Inaction

The Queens (New York) Redbird Tourist Information Center was finally ordered to close in July following an extraordinarily unsuccessful seven-year run in which, possibly, not a single tourist ever walked through the door. The *New York Post*, interviewing neighbors in Kew Gardens, found no one who ever saw a visitor, and the center's lone staff member said she recalled only lunchtime drop-ins from jury duty at the criminal court building down the block.

### The Continuing Crisis

Marshall University (Huntington, West Virginia), seeking a "star free agent" for its medical faculty, hired neurosurgeon Paul Muizelaar in July despite controversy from his previous work at the University of California, Davis. There, Dr. Muizelaar and colleagues, in a daring experiment, introduced live bowel bacteria into the brain—on lab rats—supposedly to stimulate the immune system when other remedies had faltered. However, Dr. Muizelaar, emboldened, also introduced the bacteria into brains of a man and two women who had highly malignant glioblastoma tumors (each patient having consented). However, two died within weeks, and although the third survived more than a year, UC Davis found numerous protocol violations. Dr. Muizelaar's new supervisor told the *Associated Press* that he nonetheless felt lucky to land him because "not everybody wants to move to Appalachia."

### Ironies

Deputy sheriff Michael Szeliga of St. Petersburg, Florida, in Fort Lauderdale for a weekend training session in July, was to receive a commendation at the formal banquet, for exemplary DUI enforcement, presented by Mothers Against Drunk Driving. (This is *News of the Weird*; you've already guessed the outcome.) He, escorted by two fellow deputies, arrived for dinner "staggeringly drunk" (though he did not drive), according to an internal affairs investigation, and he was ordered to go sleep it off. (Szeliga wrote an apology and was transferred out of DUI work. Sheriff Bob Gualtieri said Szeliga was a good deputy but that the incident was "one of the most ridiculous things" he'd ever heard of.)

### People With Issues

Social science professor Dr. Jeff Justice resigned from the faculty at Tarleton State University (Stephenville, Texas) in October to head off an investigation into whether he supplied alcohol to students and proselytized at least one to undergo a self-mutilation practice. Justice admitted, post-resignation, that he was a devotee (since age 13) of the "Sundance" ritual, in which he would hang from a tree in his backyard by hooks connected to stakes in his bare chest and that he demonstrated it to some students but apparently interested none. He attributed the incidents to "severe depression." (Bonus: He had won a Faculty Excellence award in 2015.)

### Least Competent Criminals

Kaleb Alexander, 25, was shot and killed in October as he emerged from a United Dairy Farmers convenience store in Columbus, Ohio, still with his gun defiantly drawn after he had just then robbed the clerk. A Columbus police SWAT team was waiting outside the store because Alexander had robbed the store the previous two nights, as well, and somehow must have thought that the police would not catch on to his cunning robbery strategy.

### Recurring Themes

Are We Safe? As *News of the Weird* chronicled in 2010 and 2011, Iraqi police (either corrupt or sincerely unsophisticated) continued to purchase worthless bomb "detectors" to use at checkpoints in Baghdad, instilling residents with a false sense of security, with the result that hundreds of people died in supposedly safe neighborhoods. Briton James McCormick, the most successful con man/seller, is serving a 10-year sentence for the "ADE 651" (which, somehow, Baghdad police continued to buy long after the U.S. had warned of the scam). Since then, more bogus detectors have been peddled to Thailand and other governments. In

November 2015, London's *The Independent*, in a dispatch from the Egyptian resort Sharm el-Sheikh, reports that luxury hotels' security officers are now using similar bogus detectors to reassure tourists frightened by the recent terrorism-suspected Russian plane crash in Egypt.

### A News of the Weird Classic (March 2011)

Mental health practitioners, writing in the January (2011) issue of the journal *Substance Abuse*, described two patients who had recently arrived at a clinic in Ranchi, India, after allowing themselves to be bitten by cobras for recreational highs. Both men had decades-long substance-abuse issues and decided to try what they had heard about on the street. One, age 44, bitten on the foot, experienced "a blackout associated with a sense of well-being, lethargy and sleepiness." The other, 52, reported "dizziness and blurred vision followed by a heightened arousal and a sense of well-being," and apparently was so impressed that he returned to the snake charmer two weeks later for a second bite.

## Discover Buffalo Metropolitan Living

### OPEN HOUSE SAT 12-2pm

**TONAWANDA:** NEW! Lots of updates 3BR 2BA w/ lrg mstr ste w/ full bth, LR w/ fp & picture window. Fin. bsmt. 210 Fayette Ave, \$189,900. Tina Bonifacio, 570-7559(c)



### OPEN HOUSE SAT 1-3pm

**PENDLETON:** NEW! Beautiful patio home with 3BR, rear deck with views of pond & modern kit w/ granite & breakfast bar. 5731 Fisk, \$299,900. Joe Sorrentino Jr, 207-2994(c)

### OPEN HOUSE SUN 1-3pm

**LANCASTER:** Reduced! Country charm in this 3BR house on 1.5 acres. Newer windows & furnace, spacious kitchen, 1st flr Indry. Bring your cash offers! 216 Schwartz, \$129,000. Richard Fontana, 603-2829(c)

### BY APPOINTMENT

**AMHERST:** 4BR 2.5BA w/ hrdwd flrs, vaulted fam rm, sunrm, kit w/ granite, 1st flr Indry, bsmt rec rm. 284 Troy Del Way, \$299,900. Susan D. Lenahan, 864-6757(c)

**ANGOLA:** Nice retail space w/ new sub shop in 2nd bldg. Long walk-in cooler. 515 Herr, \$69,900. Richard Fontana, 605-2829(c)

**CHEEK:** Sky Harbor 2BR 2BA mobile home w/ many updates 4 Harmony Ln, \$39,900. Tina Bonifacio, 570-7559(c)

**CHEEK:** Reduced! 3BR 1BA brick Ranch w/ hrdwd under crpt, AC, 2car garage, sm. patio, 2nd full BA in bsmt. 66 Delmar, \$99,500. Andrew Whelan, 316-2038(c)

**DELAWARE DIST:** 2BR 2BA co-op w/ 1 park space. New kit w/ granite & soapstone, mstr w/ en suite bth & wall of closets. 925 Delaware #3B, \$495,000. Susan D. Lenahan, 864-6757(c)

**DELAWARE DIST:** 3BR 2.5BA stunning co-op. Gourmet kit. All totally redone top to bottom. 2 gar space. 925 Delaware Ave #2C, \$850,000. Susan D. Lenahan, 864-6757(c)

**ELMWOOD VLG:** Solid multi-unit bldg w/ two 2BR units & 13 unit rooming house (6 of the rms remodeled). 104 Richmond Ave, \$339,900. Robert Karp, 553-9963(c)

**LACKAWANNA:** Bethlehem Park 3BR 1BA with open dining/ kitchen & private deck overlooking spacious fenced yrd. Part. fin bsmt. 129 Madison, \$54,900. Thomas Walton, 949-4639(c)

**ORCHARD PK:** 4BR 2.5BA on 1.3 acres. Kit w/ granite, vaulted fam rm w/ sliders to deck, bsmt rec rm, upd. baths, many updates. 5 Cherry Tree, \$399,900. Susan D. Lenahan, 864-6757(c)

**ORCHARD PK:** Reduced! 3BR 1.5BA Ranch on lrg treed lot. Kit w/ sliders to deck. Part. fin. bsmt, garage. 12 Mt. Airy Ct, \$187,988. Ryan Shanahan, 432-9645(c)

**UNIV DISTRICT:** 3BR Cape. Excellent condition. Formal DR, eat-in kit, new roof, furn, drain tiles, 2car gar, fresh paint & carpet! 79 Nicholson St, \$79,900. Susan Lenahan, 864-6757(c)

**WEST SIDE:** 2/2 Double Invest. Opp. New electric. Fenced yrd w/ patio, 1 car garage. 246 W. Delavan, \$74,900. Thomas Needham, 574-8825(c)

**WEST VLG:** Rental. 2BR w/ hrdwd flrs, in-unit Indry, updated kit, city garden. 17 Whitney, \$1000+. Robin Barrell, 966-4061(c)



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# CITY HALL JOKES...



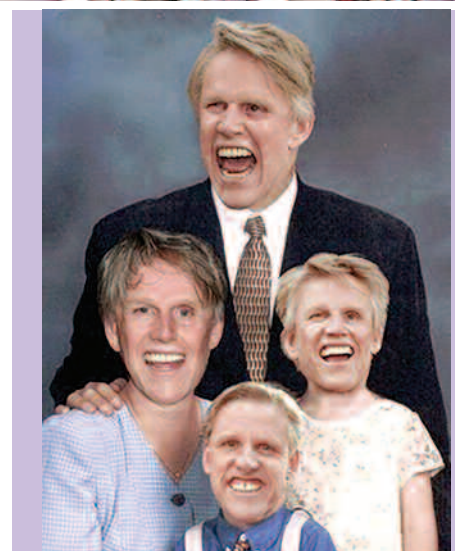
"This is another fine mess you've gotten us into!"  
John Accardo to Glenn Choolokian as Accardo channeled Oliver Hardy on election night



Paul Dyster, a registered sex offender, and an undocumented immigrant walk into a bar. Dyster turns to the bartender and says, "They're with me, they have to drink somewhere."



"The majority of voters didn't vote for me, they really, really, didn't vote for me."  
Paul Dyster looking in the mirror the morning after the election.



Don't go changing...again.  
There's no truth to the rumor that John Ceretto is switching parties again. It seems that Ceretto's errand boy, Rob Nichols, overheard the assemblyman telling friends that "I'll be signing up for the New Year's Party" and misunderstood his boss.



Last week Paul Dyster announced two meetings: the meeting of the "people and agencies I provided favors for in return for votes," to be held in the grand ballroom of the Niagara Conference Center, and "the annual meeting of the Paul Dyster fan club" to be held at the bus stop on the corner of Main and Third.



City hall survey  
What do you think will occur first?  
A) peace in the Middle East  
B) the Hamister groundbreaking  
C) Paul Dyster speaking the truth on anything  
D) none of the above



The three top movie rentals on 72nd Street:  
Ice Station Zebra  
Frozen  
The Ice Storm



The three top movie rentals at city hall  
A) The Heist  
B) Dirty Rotten Scoundrels  
C) Sex and the City

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# Your Weekly Horoscope

By Jean Topascani



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



Doctors discover strange growth on your neck is your head. You are so ugly, at a Christmas party they hung you and kissed the mistletoe! I've seen better legs on chickens. The gift you have that allows you to speak to the animals will today be unveiled as a fraud.

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



You have a mind of your own which is good since who else would want it? There's only one trouble with your face-- it shows! Despite their best efforts, rescue workers will fail to pull you out from beneath hundreds of pounds of stored fat this week.

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



You're present life is proof of reincarnation-- no one could get that dumb in just one lifetime. You should join the Ku Klux Klan -- you would look a lot better with a hood over your head.

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



You have a one-track mind, and the traffic on it is very light. You have a face like a flower-- a cauliflower. You have the urge to travel this week, and those instincts are spot-on. Burn all belongings before you leave the country.

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



When people want the real dope about anything, they go to the real dope -- YOU!

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



The English Channel is not a British T.V. station. The equilibrium of Saturn's seventh moon alignment with Pluto puts the sun in your water axis this week. Your marital status may change this week. You look like a million -- every year of it.

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



The St. Louis Cardinals are not appointed by the Pope. You take vitamins A, B, C, D, E, F, and G, and still look like H. The adventurous type, you are always looking for thrills and willing to try anything. In other words, you

are stupid.



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

Stars say you will lose your dog, but don't put an ad in the newspaper. Your dog can't read. You have a nice head on your shoulders. But it would look better on a neck! You are a light eater. As soon as it gets light, you start eating.



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

You jump off the bus backwards when you hear someone say, "Let's grab his seat when he gets off." You're not exactly bad looking. There's just one little blemish between your ears--your face. You are the eternal optimist, seeing the best of any situation. Most people consider you to be the greatest living moron.



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

You're the kind of person that members of the opposite sex dream about at night -- it's better than seeing you in the light.

You had your face lifted so many times, you talk through your nose. Remember you are not fat -- you're "big boned." But your big bones are definitely fat!



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

Looks aren't everything; in your case, they aren't anything. You have so many chins, you can't be sure of which one you're going to talk out of next. Even your double chin has a double chin. You have an inventive mind and are inclined toward progressiveness. Indeed you lie a great deal. A horoscope will affect your decisions today.



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

You have a very sympathetic face. It has everyone's sympathy. You have a big heart, and a stomach to match. Romance is in the air today, just over the north of France. Remember, it's unfair to expect your friends and family to provide you with alibis.

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Auction Start: 9AM

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