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## New Council Chairman Looks Ahead in NF



(Cont. on pg. 3)

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**Niagara Falls GOP Supports Wojtaszek, Filicetti in County Races**

By: Tony Farina

The Niagara Falls City Republican Committee under the leadership of Bill Carroll heard from two major county-

(Cont. on pg. 7)

**HAMILTON: Silence of the Lambs Confound Police in Search for Richardson's Murderer**

By: Ken Hamilton

As anyone who is interested in knowing, now knows that the Niagara Falls Police Department has ruled the bedside death of Highland restaurateur Jesse Rich-

(Cont. on pgs. 4)

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**THE CRIME** PAGE 4  
 Niagara Falls

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# NIAGARA FALLS

## HAMILTON: We Get More of What We Celebrate – Even Disasters



**Ken Hamilton**

Sometimes I just have to shake my head and just laugh at the antics of those in so-called leadership roles in our city. NAACP Niagara Falls Chapter President Shirley Hamilton is one of those, and I have long said that she and another woman with whom she hangs have larger testicles than most men in the city – and the city shows it!

Shirley (no known relation) is the woman who fought tooth and nail not to turn the keys of the Niagara Community Center and Girls Club over to a group of citizens who would have been able to get the funding to rejuvenate the building and reenergize the community. She hung on, even in court, -- as Southerners say, like a tick on a dog. Now the institution that our forebearers sacrificed so much,

worked so hard and gave so much to build for us is lock, stock and barrel disposed of in a land field someplace; and there stood Shirley at the podium during a Martin Luther King event last Saturday, just a-cheesing away as if she had just built a new, more modern building.

King has to be rolling in his grave! I can't understand why anyone would have allowed her to so desecrate the memory of the man.

But we get that which we celebrate, don't we? And if no one said anything about her antics, who am I to complain?

Who knows? The next place you might see her is on your local water board with her partner in crime (so to speak), former Legislator Renae Kimble. I can't help but remembering when they worked together on the Niagara Falls International Airport project while on the IDA board, pushing it towards bankruptcy.

I have often said that the elected predecessor names their successor by what they do and by what they didn't do; and Kimble was replaced by Legislator Owen Steed, who claims to be, "... the hardest working legislator in the Legislature." Despite our differences, I'd wish Kimble back – but without Shirley.

But given the bulk of the last



Shirley Hamilton speaks at the NAACP.

stock of politicians that came out of the heart of the city, I'd have to agree with former City Councilman Andrew Walker when he was asked upon leaving the city, even while he was yet a city councilman, why he wouldn't name someone to take his place. He said that he couldn't find a qualified Democrat to do so.

While I doubted even his own qualifications, it is hard to debunk his opinion of those whom he left behind. But we do get more of what we celebrate, and that is why we are where we are; and with others accepting it, here we are doomed to stay!

# NIAGARA



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**Wilson:** Lakeside Market

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# Chris's Corner Cont. from Cover: New Council Chairman Looks Ahead in NF

*Chris Voccio is a Niagara Falls City Council member and can be reached at [ChrisVoccio@gmail.com](mailto:ChrisVoccio@gmail.com).*



**Chris Voccio**  
NF City Councilman

The recent election brought us a new Mayor and a new Council. While only one new Councilman was elected, the change of that one seat resulted in the first Republican majority City Council in Niagara Falls since the election of 1981, the year Ronald Reagan was sworn in as president.

While the jury is out on what that really means, I was asked to write a column explaining what I thought the people of Niagara Falls would see as a result of this change. Please understand that what I write here is solely my opinion. So now that we have a newly constituted Council, what can we expect?

You may have seen that the Council is seeking candidates for numerous boards and commissions. We want to find citizens who want to make a positive impact on Niagara Falls and have a background suited to serve on these various boards, regardless of their political affiliation. Campaign contributions and political party membership should not determine who is or isn't considered for a board.

Another aim is to give our Council meetings a little more dignity. We simply can't allow a small number of misguided souls to pollute the public discourse, unnecessarily prolonging meetings and preventing many of our good citizens from attending our meetings because they are turned off by a few uncouth people. We must raise the bar for what is acceptable behavior at Council meetings.

I plan to use my gavel, should



Niagara Falls City Councilman Chris Voccio was voted as Chairperson of the Niagara Falls City Council on January 1st, 2020, by a vote of 3-2.

it become necessary, to keep order in the meetings, and a new set of public speaking rules, aimed at keeping some sense of decorum in the Council Chambers, should help in this effort.

You may have heard that we've scheduled a few Council in the Community meetings. These quarterly meetings, spread across the city, are nothing new. But we will find new ways to promote them to reach more people and engage a greater number of citizens with their government.

The new Mayor and his administration will have a different relationship with the Council. That's already evident. I visited Mayor Restaino in his office the day after he was sworn in, and it was the first time in my two years as a Coun-

cilman that I entered the mayor's office.

Beyond improved relationships, I'm certain the new Mayor will not present the Council with some of the things that the previous administration presented us, so measures that passed in the past will likely not even come before the Council. That's a good thing.

For instance, previous Councils have ratified union agreements that, in my opinion, were bad deals for taxpayers. I believe that the current Council will not be put in that position, so those kinds of agreements will not be approved, because they will not be presented in the first place.

With a Mayor and a Council aiming for greater government transparency, more effective gov-

ernment and a new sense of fiscal responsibility, and with a more welcoming approach to economic development, I believe citizens will see improvements in the city as we move forward.

Niagara Falls didn't get to where it is overnight. It took decades to decay to this point. But it won't take decades to see a turnaround. Visible signs of improvement should appear in the near future. Of course, challenges abound, and the naysayers and Facebook warriors will criticize everything. That's OK.

But my prediction for 2020, and beyond, is a more unified city government, working in bipartisanship to build a stronger and more prosperous Niagara Falls.



# THE CRIME

## WEEKLY HEADLINES



-Niagara Falls Police responded to 17th and Pierce Avenue in the afternoon hours of Wednesday, January 15th, 2020, after reports of a robbery. According to police, a 49-year-old man was robbed of \$69 dollars after giving \$1 to a panhandler.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to the area of 13th Street and Center Avenue in the afternoon hours of Wednesday, January 15th, 2020, after reports of shots fired. According to police, a moving vehicle was shot at twice. Police are continuing to work with the victim to identify the culprit.

-Niagara Falls Police announced on Wednesday, January 15th, 2020, that the death of Jessie Richardson has been officially ruled a homicide. Police say this decision was made after accumulating evidence from his Calumet Avenue home.

-Niagara Falls Police and Fire responded to the 900 block of Ontario Avenue in the early morning hours of Friday, January 17th, 2020, after reports of shots fired. According to police, one victim was shot with non life-threatening injuries. The victim was transported to the hospital for treatment and police are continuing to investigate the incident.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to the 2700 block of Niagara Street in the evening hours of Friday, January 17th, 2020, after reports of a hit and run. According to police, a pedestrian was struck by a vehicle that then left the scene. The victim was transported to a hospital for treatment and police are continuing to investigate.

-Niagara Falls Police and Fire responded to the 1900 block of Niagara Street in the evening hours of Friday, January 17th, 2020, after a reported overdose. According to police, the individual who had overdosed started running away from police immediately after members of the fire department injected him with narcans

-Niagara Falls Police responded to 22nd Street in the evening hours of Friday, January 22nd, 2020, after reports of a home invasion. According to police, a cat entered the home through a doggie door and was hissing at everyone in the house.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to the 1900 block of Niagara Street in the late evening hours of Sunday, January 19th, 2020, after reports of a robbery and assault. According to reports, the victim was attacked by three or four individuals. In the midst of being attacked, the victim stated that his wallet was stolen which contained approx. \$50. Police are continuing to investigate the incident although initial attempts to locate camera footage has been hampered by business owners refusing to share it with police.

## HAMILTON: Silence of the Lambs Cont. from Cover

ardson as a homicide. In so doing, the detective's conclusion confounds them into a greater quandary than normal.

Normally, people in inner-city neighborhoods, like Highland, don't necessarily expect the police to find the people who murder black people. The irony of it is that when they do, the perpetrator is black as well. So are the silent witnesses who could have helped the police find and put away the person sooner.

Back in 1984 during Jesse Jackson's run for the presidency, the Chicagoan spoke on such matters. Back then, I was his Niagara County's campaign's communications person, so I listened to and absorbed most of what he said.

Jackson said that black-on-black crime is higher than white on black crime, and then went on to alliterate the myriad iterations of intra-group crimes: white-on-white, brown-on-brown, yellow-on-yellow and red-on-red, how each exceeds the incidents of one race killing one of another race. He said that the reason for it is that, "We always hurt the ones closest to us."

That closeness to the "us" of any group would also include witnesses and second hand whisperers of information about potential suspects as well. It is to the police liaisons who live in those areas to keep their ears to the ground.

But it is also much to be expected that a witness who is a part of a group that was herded into a neighborhood because of skin color and/or economic status would openly come forward – much as once were the Polish, Irish, Italians, Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Koreans, and others, as to a large degree are blacks; even when the person slain is a pillar to the community.

Even the term "community" precludes it from readily happening, as "community" connote a common way of thinking, and culturally that is silence; whereas the word "neighborhood" describes a warmer closeness by proximity.

In the years prior to the 1940s, blacks, as writer and former city administrator Bill Bradberry had often noted, were fully integrated in what could properly be called Professor H. William Feder's thesis *The Evolution of an Ethnic Neighborhood that Became United in Diversity: The East Side, Niagara Falls, New York 1880-1930*. When you flock such groups into such pens, one should expect the silence of the lambs.

Today, even after the some 70 and more years since black folks were redlined out of Feder's ethnically-diverse neighborhood, the



sons and daughters of those who once lived there thought it a good idea to tear down the old buildings in the areas where they were forced into and to build new ones in the same place, changing neither the minds, nor the location, nor the lot in life of those who are therein trapped; perhaps trapped to be the next victim.

Some years ago, a local barber called me at home and asked why the police have solved all of the white homicides but not all of the black ones. I told him that I didn't know if that was true, but I will investigate.

Before hanging up the phone I told the barber that black people seem to cloister ourselves in our community and don't talk to whites too much about such things. As a result, we know all of the black homicides but know little of the white ones.

Upon investigation I found that most black homicides were solved, and not all of the white ones were; but a higher ratio of white homicides were solved because whites are more willing to cooperate with the police than blacks.

Despite the detectives finding that Richardson's death was a homicide, rather than a suicide as some supposed, the police are indeed in a quandary. Had they ruled it a suicide, then some would believe that the police just didn't want to solve the crime and chose to write it off as such. But as the former police chief told me when I investigated the barber's concerns, "Police like solving all crimes." And with it being a homicide, I am sure that there will be those who will also have doubts about the police's determination to find the killer anyway.

Let's not turn our safety into the police's and our own quandary. As a "community", we must be more neighborly determined than even the police to find the perpetrator, and to do so by working with the police so that they can do so – before the next lamb is forever silenced.

We all just have to know that one of those silent lambs is most likely sleeping with the wolf.



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# Veteran donates \$50,000 to Niagara SPCA

*Army veteran Bob Nowakowski has donated a total of \$100,000 over the course a few months to help fund the shelter's new surgical suite.*

Army veteran Bob Nowakowski made his second donation of \$50,000 to Niagara SPCA during a check presentation held at the shelter today!

"We are so grateful to Bob for his continued support of Niagara SPCA. His donation will have a huge impact on our surgical suite so that we can help more dogs and cats in need," said Executive Director Tim Brennan.

Bob Nowakowski has been coming to the Niagara SPCA every week since the 1990s to provide treats to the dogs because he "just likes dogs." The

dogs in the kennels recognize Bob as he approaches with his large box of dog biscuits. Since he typically requires that each dog sit before he dispenses the biscuit, you will often-times see dogs sitting patiently 2-3 kennels down from where Bob is. It would be hard to argue that all the dogs look forward to Bob's visit each week and that Bob has made a difference in their lives!

This year, Bob made the biggest difference, not only in their lives, but the lives of all the animals in the shelter by pledging to match every dollar



From left, Board President Susan Agnello-Eberwein, Executive Director Tim Brennan and Army Veteran Bob Nowakowski. Nowakowski donated a total of \$100,000 over the course of a few months to help fund the shelter's new surgical suite.

donated towards the new surgical suite up to \$100,000! Niagara SPCA accomplished this goal thanks to the support of the community, so Nowakowski donated the first \$50,000 in

early November of 2019 and today, donated the remaining \$50,000!

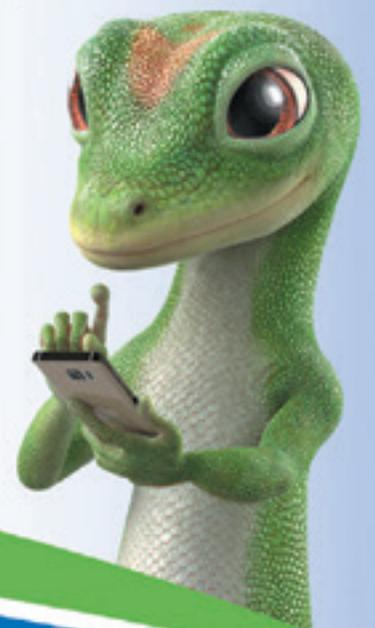
"I'm just glad I can help," said Nowakowski.

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# City GOP Supports Wojtaszek, Filicetti Cont. from Cover



Undersheriff Michael Filicetti.



Niagara County District Attorney  
Caroline Wojtaszek.

wide candidates seeking support last Thursday night at the Hyde Park Stonerom

Niagara County District Attorney Caroline Wojtaszek, a Democrat, and Acting Niagara County Sheriff Mike Filicetti, a Republican, both made brief appearances and answered questions before the committee.

Wojtaszek is running for county judge to replace Sara Sheldon who is retiring at the end of the year after reaching the mandatory retirement age.

Filicetti is seeking a full term as sheriff after serving for eight years as undersheriff under James Voutour who retired Jan. 1.

Both candidates made strong cases for support with Wojtaszek focusing on her many years of experience as a prosecutor and her many felony trials before winning the

office as the county's top law enforcement officer.

Filicetti also talked about his many years of law enforcement experience pledging to be tough on crime and promising to work closely with community organizations and individuals whose jobs and homes are in Niagara County.

City Committee Vice Chairman Mike Gawel says he expects both candidates will be recommended for endorsement by the the full GOP county committee shortly after both were well received at Thursday's meeting.

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## Health and Wellness For the New Year

The start of the New Year also marks the start of a focus on being healthier. We hope to educate you about the eight dimensions of wellness and enhance your own personal wellness. We will provide tips and strategies you can apply to your own life and the different roles you may fill.

### Health

Health and wellness are not the same although these terms are often used interchangeably. Health is typically thought of in terms of the absence or presence of disease. It is often defined by objective yes/no responses. Are you sick? Have you been diagnosed with a medical condition? Are you currently taking medication to manage a chronic condition? While the answers to these questions may provide a snapshot into your general physical health, they do little to determine how "well" of a life you are leading.

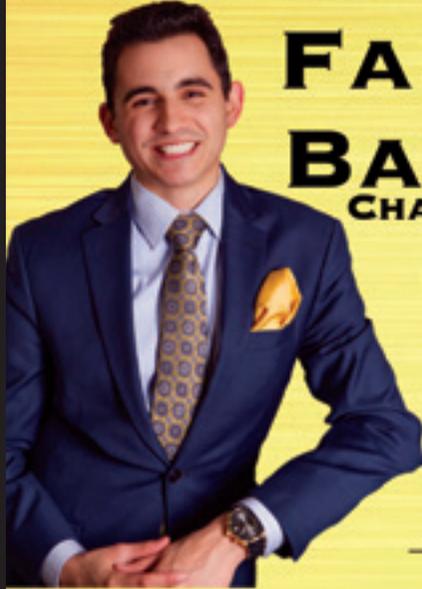
### Wellness

Now consider the following questions. What is the quality of your sleep? How healthful and nutritious are your meals and snacks? How often do you exercise? The answers to these questions may not be as cut and dry as the previous health questions. They likely require an explanation or a scale to answer, but they may also lead to a panoramic view of your overall, holistic sense of health, better known as wellness. Wellness is a multidimensional, holistic, evolving state and process of achieving your full potential. It is subjective, personalized, individual, cultural and situational. One's own sense of wellness may change based on experiences, age, life stage and values. Wellness is about balance, moderation and avoiding social comparison. It is comprised of the following dimensions: physical, social, intellectual, emotional, mental, financial, vocational and spiritual.

There are many different paths to follow heading to better health and wellness and you should take the path that makes the most sense for you. The journey is comprised of eight wellness dimensions and people are at varying levels on each dimension. For example, while someone may have a very strong sense of spiritual wellness, they may be lacking in their emotional wellness. Another person may feel secure in their financial wellness, but their physical wellness could use some improvement.

All aboard! Join us as we embark on this journey to become healthier, happier and well-balanced Laborers leading successful lives and doing our best each and every day.

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