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(Cont. on pgs. 2)

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### HAMILTON: Clara Dunn makes Black History in Board of Education Selection

By: Ken Hamilton

Good argument can be made that there isn't much black history yet to be made; after all, we have National Football League games where one black quarterback is in the same stadium playing against another black quarterback, and

(Cont. on pg. 3)

### Batavia Downs Gaming Continues to Score Record Numbers

By: Tony Farina

Batavia Downs Gaming/WROTB continues to set new highs in numbers and attendance, continuing year-over-year in-

(Cont. on pg. 7)

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**THE CRIME** PAGE 4  
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# NIAGARA FALLS

## Restaino and Other Local Officials Attack Trusted Traveler Status Ban Cont. from Cover

**Tony Farina**

The battle between the Trump Administration and New York State is escalating and according to state and local officials the fallout from the loss of trusted traveler status imposed by Trump's Homeland Security Department could negatively impact Western New York's economy.

The state has filed a federal lawsuit claiming the federal government's actions blocking Global Entry and other programs that help travelers avoid security lines is intended to punish the state for new laws that allow unauthorized immigrants get drivers licenses.

Niagara Falls Mayor Robert Restaino is among the local officials targeting the federal government's actions, saying "don't penalize New York businesses and don't cripple communities that are trying to make sure that they can grow and continue to grow their local economy."

Restaino, in a statement released over the weekend and in comments made Monday in Buffalo, said the Trump administration's actions will damage business, trade, and commerce that local economies rely upon for their economy.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo charged that many states have approved laws allowing people who are not legal residents to get a driver's license and that Trump is going after New York in a way "that not only inconveniences travelers, but also creates very real security issues."

Local officials warn the Trump ban would seriously undermine cross-border travel between the U. S. and Canada and potentially create very serious economic consequences to local economies. They are urging the federal government to reverse the ban.

The state's lawsuit was filed in federal court in Manhattan on Monday.



Restaino 4 Mayor

February 8 at 3:22 PM · 🌐

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### PRESS RELEASE

In recent days the Trump Administration arbitrarily decided to prohibit New Yorkers from Trusted Travelers Programs, which among other things, are designed to expedite travel and commerce between US and Canada. This decision will undoubtedly have an incredible negative impact on the business, trade and commerce that Niagara Falls and surrounding communities rely upon for their local economy. As we continue to work toward growing the economy of Niagara Falls and Western New York, it is clear that travel and trade across the Canadian border is a vital part of that growth, we cannot afford to suffer from prohibitive, arbitrary and disastrous decisions by the federal government. Any suggestion that this decision by the Trump Administration is based on necessary security measures is just nonsense. If members of the Republican congressional delegation from NYS wish to continue to enable decisions and policies that ignore the rule of law and smack of nothing more than political retribution, then the lost trade and commerce that their communities suffer, as a consequence of this senseless decision, can be their responsibility as well.

As Mayor of the City of Niagara Falls, NY I am asking the Republican congressional members of NYS to do their job for their constituents and advise the President to reverse this arbitrary decision that will impact local trade, traffic and commerce. Further, I support the efforts of Governor Andrew Cuomo and Attorney General Letitia James in seeking court intervention to redress the outrageous decision of the Trump Administration, so that Niagara Falls and Western New York do not suffer economic hardship as a result of this arbitrary policy.

# NIAGARA



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# HAMILTON: Clara Dunn makes Black History in Board of Education Selection Cont. from Cover



**Ken Hamilton**

no one pays it too much attention anymore. But like the sun breaking through the cloud-crowded sky on even a warm summery day, it is still refreshing to see – if only for a short time – black history being made in Niagara Falls.

It's been done with the Niagara Falls Board of Education selecting Clara Dunn to fill the seat vacated by the victory of out-going board member Robert Restaino as Mayor of Niagara Falls. This marks the first time in the history of the city that there are 3, count them, three black members (Kevin Dobbs, Earl Bass, and now Dunn) of the nine-member board; and I'd venture to say only the 1st time in the last century since when civil rights activist Bloneva Bond was there that a black woman served.

Dunn's service on the board may be short-lived though, as she has to run in the upcoming May election to keep her seat. One of several scenarios may play out as a result:

If Dunn wins one of the two seats now occupied by the expiring terms of long-time board members drycleaner Russell Petrozzi and Reverend Kevin Dobbs, then she and the other top-2 candidate will win 5-year terms on

the board, and the 3rd place person will fill out what would then be the last year (2020-2021) of former board member, now-mayor, Restaino.

If Petrozzi and/or Dobbs decide not to run again, and Dunn comes in at the 3rd position, then she, or whoever else does, may fill out the remaining one-year term of former board member, now-mayor, Restaino; while the top-2 either remain or replace Petrozzi and/or Dobbs.

Similarly, if Petrozzi and/or Dobbs decide not to run again, and Dunn comes in at the 3rd position, then she, or whoever else does, may forego possibly filling out the remaining term of former board member, now-mayor, Restaino and, if the board opts to do so, though no board member with whom I spoke is absolutely sure, may win the maybe created 3rd five-year term that was created by the new mayor's absence.

If Dunn is outdone by 3 other candidates, then the clouds will close and the sky will again darken on a short-lived point in history – if no other black person fills the race-void that can be created if in addition to a Dunn loss and Dobbs decides not to run for reelection.

But should any of this make a difference to the quality of education when it comes to the city's growing numbers of non-white students in the school system. One has to ask the question if it did so in the past. After all, Reverend Martin Luther King extolled the virtue of content of character over color of skin.

So then, how was Dunn "selected" rather than "elected" to the board?



Of the board members with whom I have spoken, the present current members of the board agreed that it would be fitting to again have a woman on the board – especially a woman of color.

However, if we look at the diversity of the last race's election results, the Polish-named Paul Kudela's 799 votes and the Italian Nick Vilardo's 748 carried them to victory. Therefore, white Barbara Rodgers' 647 logically would have been the next choice of the voters. Rodgers would have been followed by Bruce Brundidge's 562, Vincent Orsi's 547 and then Dunn's 535 votes. Michael Gawel trailed the race at 157. None of the other candidates were asked about their interest in filling the seat; however.

To Dunn's credit, she remained diligent in her educational work and did approach the board and indicate that she had an interest in filling the seat. It might be wise for even non-candidates to follow suit during these rare vacancies.

While there's nothing illegal about the backfilling of Restaino with Dunn, sadly, one will have to look at her as an affirmative action

selection; and Dunn will have to work her butt off to actually win a seat and prove herself "historically worthy" in improving the quality of education in the city's schools – especially for the children (to paraphrase former President Barack Obama when he spoke of the death of Floridian teenager Trayvon Martin) that look like they could be her grandchildren.

But on the other side of town, this is one of those "other side of the rainbow" rare moments that since the 1991 election of African-American basketball coach Andrew "Andy" Walker's rise and fall from grace – abandoning his city council seat by moving and not resigning, yet still collecting a paycheck – and the advent of the rise of the haphazard City Councilman Charles "Charlie" Walker that since the death of Councilmen Robert Anderson and Ezra Scott, the city has been without black legislative representation, except between the two of the Walker" terms.

"So then, what y'all gonna do about it; maybe go out and make some Black History?"

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# THE CRIME

## WEEKLY HEADLINES

-Niagara Falls Police responded to the 1800 block of South Avenue in the evening hours of Monday, February 3rd, 2020, after reports of shots fired. According to police, at least five or more shell casings were recovered from the scene and there were no reports of any injuries. Police believe that the shooter walked up to someone's porch and shot at a passing vehicle.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to the 3100 block of 9th Street in the evening hours of Monday, February 3rd, 2020, after reports of a stabbing. According to police, the person who was stabbed allegedly broke into an apartment by climbing into a window. The subject was confronted by a male in the home which resulted in a physical altercation leading to the intruder being stabbed.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to the 2200 block of Pine Avenue in the evening hours of Thursday, February 6th, 2020, after reports of a female being assaulted and robbed on a NFTA bus. According to police, the male suspect fled before police arrived.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to the 1600 block of Cleveland Avenue in the late evening hours of Thursday, February 6th, 2020, after reports of a stabbing. According to reports, police and medical arrived after 5:00 pm for a female who said she was stabbed in the back of the leg. Police believe the incident occurred during an altercation involving up to ten juveniles.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to the 700 block of 17th Street in the afternoon hours of Friday, February 7th, 2020, after reports of a robbery. According to police, the suspect was wearing a black and yellow striped



hoodie and mask. According to witnesses, the suspect, who was in the rear seat of a car, got out of the vehicle, punched a woman and stole her purse before getting back into the vehicle and fleeing. The vehicle was stolen out of Buffalo.

-Niagara Falls Police responded to Rapids Bowling Alley around midnight on Saturday, February 8th, 2020, after reports of a large brawl involving upwards of twenty people. According to police, multiple units were asked to respond as well as assistance from other agencies.

-Niagara Falls Police and New York Parks Police responded to the Main Street Library in the morning hours of Saturday, February 8th, 2020, after reports of a robbery. According to a 911-caller, a male suspect was said to have a knife and robbed an elderly woman of \$50. The robbery had taken place in the Tops parking lot on Portage Road.

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# Single and Lovin' It: Niagara SPCA to Waive Adoption Fees for Dogs who Prefer to be the Only Pet

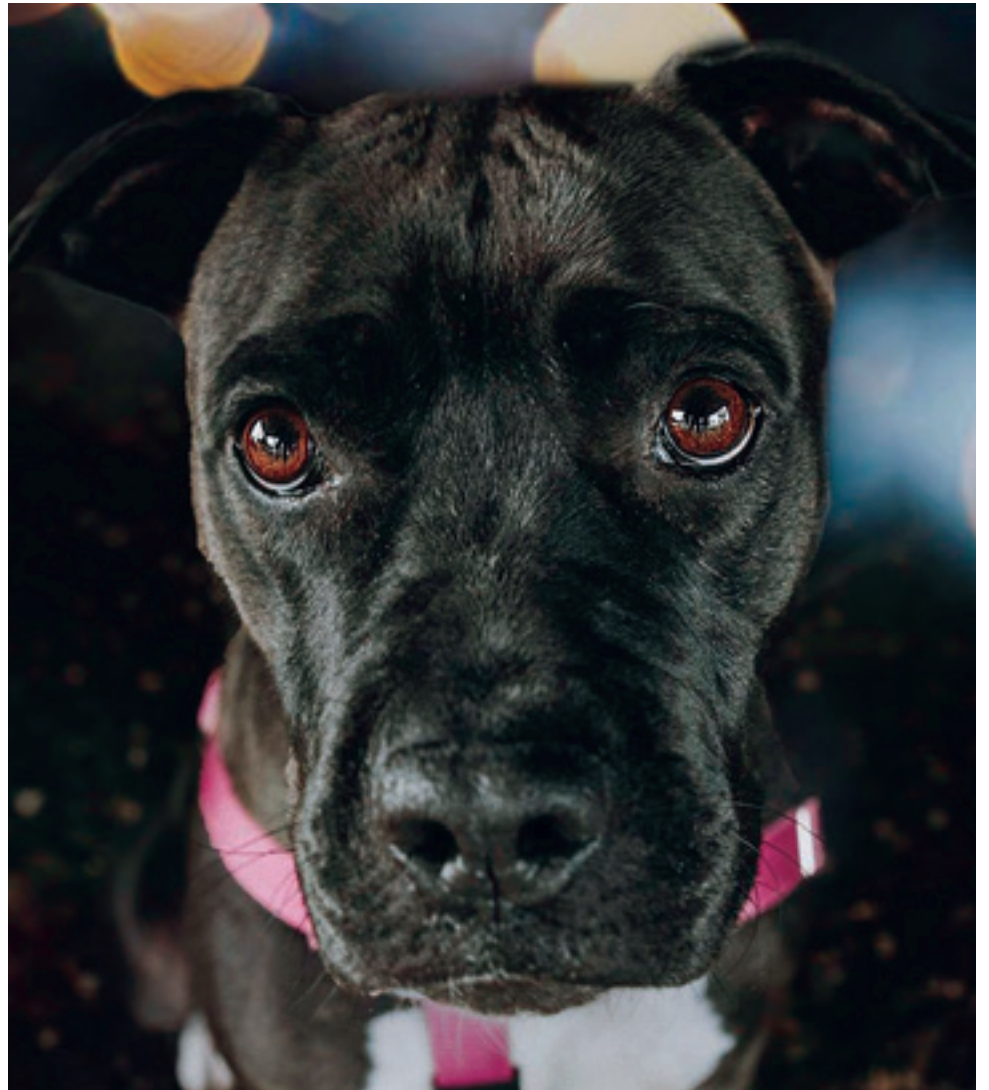
*Shelter hopes Valentine's Day promotion will help bring awareness to overlooked dogs*

This upcoming Valentine's Day, Niagara SPCA would like to let everyone know there's nothing wrong with being single, which is why it's running a "Single & Lovin' It" adoption promotion now through Feb. 15 to waive adoption fees for dogs who prefer to be the only pet in the home.

"Our adoptable shelter dogs are the most amazing dogs, but the problem sometimes is that they love people, they just don't love other pets. We wanted to bring awareness to some of our overlooked dogs this

Valentine's Day with this promotion in the hopes we can help find them their forever homes," said Tim Brennan, Executive Director.

The promotion will coincide with the SPCA's Lonely Hearts Adoption Event on Saturday, Feb. 15 where adopters can pick a Valentine and win a percentage off their adoption fee. A bake sale will also raise funds for Lucy the shelter dog who just had ear surgery. For more information on adoptable pets, visit [NiagaraSPCA.org](http://NiagaraSPCA.org) to find your new best friend.

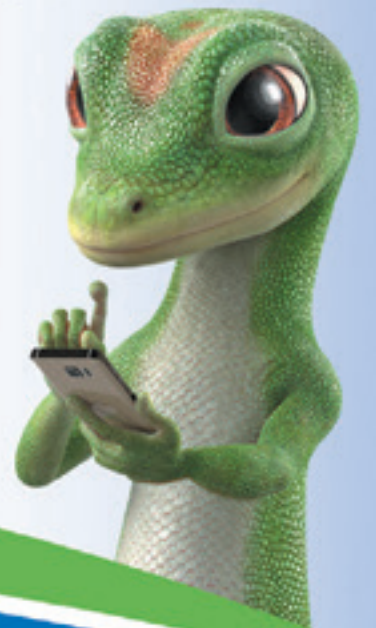


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# Batavia Downs Gaming Continues to Score Record Numbers Cont. from Cover

creases in spectacular fashion since it began in 2005.

In 2019, credits played increased by 5.39 percent over 2018 to a staggering total of \$830,339,510, a record high, and net win totals jumped to \$61,996,570, an increase of 7.72 percent over 2018 and another record high.

Gaming attendance in the Batavia Downs facility was up 9.95 percent to 799,282, also setting a new record.

It should also be noted that 2020 is off to record start as credits played in January were over \$70 million, an increase of 28 percent over last January while the net win total topped \$5 million in January, a whopping 21.65 percent increase.

Despite the slumping horse racing industry, live racing at Batavia Downs in 2019 nonetheless enjoyed an increase over 2018.

The story is the same for the Rockin' the Downs concert series with over \$175,000 in ticket sales and over 30,000 concert goers for the nine events. Eight shows are planned for this year and officials say ticket sales are already brisk with the season opening June 19 featuring Vince Neil of Motley Crew.

Other featured acts for this year include Journey, June 26; Molly Hatchet, July 10; Skid Row, July 17; Johnny Lang, July 24; Donald Felder (formerly of the Eagles), July



President and CEO of Western Regional OTB and Batavia Downs Gaming.

31; The Machine, Aug. 7 along with Queen Flash and The Who Show; and Puddle of Mudd, Aug. 14.

The coming year will also see more events than ever before including trade shows, psychic fairs, sports card shows, wine, beer, and spirit fests, an indoor concert series, comedy shows, fishing shows, wrestling events and kids events.

"We had an amazing year in 2019 and all signs point to continued success in the coming year which has already started out by setting records," said Henry Wojtaszek, President and CEO of Western Regional OTB and Batavia Downs Gaming.

Wojtaszek oversees over 500 employees as the chief executive with WROTB giving back millions every year to the OTB localities including 15 counties and 2 cities that make up the OTB network.



## Looking Ahead to the Next Decade through the Lens of Worker Safety and Health

Heading into a new decade is not only a time to look back, but also a time to look forward. Much like in our daily lives, progress in the field of worker safety and health is almost always measured in both victories and setbacks. The mission can sometimes feel like "two steps forward, one step back." Yet despite any bumps along the way, the Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA), has continued to make steady gains as we serve the District Councils, Local Unions, health and welfare funds, members and signatory contractors.

It is a time to assess what the future of work might entail for LIUNA members, including the potential occupational safety and health risks and impacts on health care and well-being that come with them. Rapid improvements in technology may lead to changes at a faster rate than the construction industry is used to. Autonomous vehicles, a major focus of the auto industry for consumer use, are already seeing some deployment in construction. Demand for solar installers and wind turbine maintenance technicians is expected to double over the next several years and create unprecedented demand for workers skilled in those jobs. As the landscape of work continues to evolve, LIUNA staff will help ensure that amid changes like these, a rush to augment jobs with technology does not introduce unintended hazards that jeopardize workers' safety and health.

As we look ahead to the next 10 years of worker safety and health, a large part of improving the lives of workers both on and off the job may once again hinge on new and changing laws at the federal and state level. The pace of regulations at federal OSHA continues to be slow, but we are seeing more progress at the state and local level. These changes often follow incidents that attract national media attention for their impact on both workers and the public. For example, after the April 2019 collapse of a tower crane in Seattle left four people dead, Washington state legislators proposed a bill that would require more oversight of construction companies operating tower cranes. It's unfortunate that it often takes a tragic loss of life to bring about measures that better protect the lives of workers and hold contractors that don't follow safety regulations accountable. We cannot afford to wait for the next incident to bring safer working conditions to LIUNA members and all workers across the U.S. and Canada. As always, the time to act is now.

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