

# Drivers need to slow down and pay attention

As I have been writing these monthly columns, I have attempted to showcase the broad array of issues and services that fall under the purview of Niagara County government. After all, most people tend to have limited interactions with county government. COVID-19 put county government front and center in most people's lives, as our Public Health Department led our battle against the pandemic. But beyond that, many people's interactions are limited to the DMV, Social Services, Veterans or some other department that can address their specific need.

The one exception to this that I have seen during my years in the legislature is anything having to do with our county roads. It's quite obvious that issues involving our roads and bridges pretty much impact everyone

**NIAGARA COUNTY LEGISLATURE**



Becky Wydysh  
Chairwoman

across the county. From talking to other legislators, I know that we collectively receive the most calls and emails on this topic. This can range from snowplowing concerns to questions about road conditions and construction. But No. 1 is road safety.

An unfortunate fact of life is that we have traffic accidents, and some of those accidents involve fatalities. A terrible accident leaves us all asking the question of "Why did this happen," and many times people conclude it has something to do with the road. This can lead to calls for improved signage, reduced speeds, installation of

traffic lights, even calls for a redesign of the road/intersection.

There is a process for making such changes, and that usually begins with the county Department of Public Works working with the state Department of Transportation (DOT), and perhaps outside engineering firms, to assess a roadway. These assessments look at the accident history at a given location, the volume of traffic, the speed and so on. From that data, they can look at what mitigation measures may make sense. One of their biggest concerns is taking some action that actually makes the problem worse. The safe flow of traffic has many components, and all need to be considered.

Which brings me to my next point. We all have a role to play in the safe flow of traffic, and

that has nothing to do with the design of the roadway. And the fact is, I have had many of my constituents tell me they are concerned about the level of aggressive, reckless and/or distracted driving taking place on our roads.

That is why I want to applaud Sheriff Mike Filicetti and his law enforcement partners across the county for taking on this issue. The sheriff announced that his department, along with the New York State Park Police, Niagara Falls Police Department, North Tonawanda Police Department, Town of Niagara Police Department, Lewiston Police Department, Middleport Police Department, Somerset Police Department, New York State Police, Lockport Police Department and Youngstown Police Department, is undertaking a

traffic enforcement campaign focused on aggressive driving behaviors.

Law enforcement has seen an increase in traffic-related complaints across Niagara County. The sheriff said accident reports are showing concerning trends, with many of them caused by unsafe speeds, passing stop signs, and driver inattention. This countywide campaign is aimed at increasing the safety of our roadways. This will be a strict enforcement period to address driving behaviors affecting all of us on the roadways of Niagara County.

Let's hope this effort by law enforcement proves effective, and we see improvement in motorist behavior. The message is one we can all take to heart: Drivers need to slow down and pay attention.

## NCSO targeting 'aggressive driving behaviors'

Submitted by the Niagara County Sheriff's Office

The Niagara County Sheriff's Office, in conjunction with our law enforcement partners across the county (New York State Park Police, Niagara Falls Police Department, North Tonawanda Police Department, Town of Niagara Police Department, Lewiston

Police Department, Middleport Police Department, Somerset Police Department, New York State Police, Lockport Police Department, Youngstown Police Department), announce a traffic enforcement campaign focused on aggressive driving behaviors.

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increase in traffic-related complaints across Niagara County. Accidents are showing concerning trends, with many of them caused by unsafe speeds, passing stop signs, and driver inattention.

This countywide campaign with our partners is aimed at in-

creasing the safety of our roadways. These increased patrols began Tuesday, Oct. 25, and will continue through Nov. 1. This will be a strict enforcement period to address driving behaviors affecting all of us on the roadways of Niagara County.

Sheriff Michael Filicetti said,

"Speaking with law enforcement leadership in this county, we all realize that aggressive driving increases the risks for all drivers on our roadways. Law enforcement agencies working together will have a direct impact on improving roadway safety."

## George Washington Peace Medal returns to Tuscarora Nation

Submitted by the Tuscarora History Group

After more than 150 years and many thousands of miles, a 1793 silver George Washington Peace Medal is back home on the Tuscarora Nation.

The precious and rare medal was awarded by President George Washington to Tuscarora Nicholas Cusick (aka, Kaghnatsto), a United States Revolutionary War hero, spy, personal assistant/bodyguard and interpreter for the Marquis de Lafayette, the French leader who helped the U.S. defeat Britain.

The graceful oval medal, inscribed with President Washington's name, an image of Native and American figures, and the seal of the United States, will be on display to the public from noon to 2 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 5, in the Tuscarora Nation House, 5226 Walmore Road, Lewiston.

The prestigious medal had been removed from the Tuscarora Nation, and when it surfaced at an auction house to be sold, it lacked any documents showing its original owner. Because of a

federal investigation into thefts from the Oklahoma Historical Society, out of an abundance of caution, the auction house offered to donate the medal to the Chickasaw Nation. The Nation accepted it, determined to identify its original recipient.

A thorough investigation headed by Lead Researcher

Mitch Caver and Archaeologist Brad Lieb determined that the medal was sold in the 1870s to

A 1793 George Washington Peace Medal  
Awarded to Nicholas Cusick (aka. Kaghnatsto), a Tuscarora Leader



Pictured: A 1793 George Washington Peace Medal awarded to Nicholas Cusick (aka Kaghnatsto), a Tuscarora leader.

a collector who was working on the Sac and Fox reservation in Oklahoma. The seller was documented to be U.S. Army Capt. Cornelius Cusick (War Eagle), a grandson of Nicholas Cusick.

Searches of documents going back to 1896 established that President Washington had awarded the medal to Nicholas Cusick, and other research traced its provenance after that.

Caver and Lieb's report on the medal stated, "Authentic Washington oval medals are incred-

ibly rare, and few to none are on exhibit anywhere."

In December 2021, members of the Chickasaw Nation contacted the Tuscarora Nation to let them know about the existence of the Cusick Peace Medal.

Members of the Chickasaw Nation and their historian will attend the event as the Tuscarora people thank them "for allowing us to bring the Peace Medal home after more than 150 years," said Chief Tom Jonathan. "Without their research we would not have had our medal returned."

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