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Memorial Medical Center celebrates discharge of long-term COVID-19 patient



Senior Respiratory Therapist Tracy Aniolowski and Chief Nursing Officer JoAnn Pellegrino present a floral bouquet to Tania Kalisiak as she is discharged from Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center in front of a cheering crowd of medical center staff members. (Submitted photo)

More than 100 excited members of the Niagara Falls Memorial Medical Center family turned out Wednesday to bid an emotional farewell to a courageous patient who overcame COVID-19 during a lengthy hospital stay that included several weeks on a respirator.

As her parents and grandparents looked on Tania Kalisiak, 20, received a standing ovation as she left the hospital. Nurses, doctors, respiratory therapists, discharge planners and others who cared for Kalisiak were on hand to salute her and wish her well.

After Kalisiak was taken off of a respirator and could again breathe without assistance, she rallied to conquer the deadly disease that is at the root of a worldwide pandemic. She will now continue her recovery at an area rehabilitation center.

NT: Pecoraro named Common Council president

BY MICHAEL DEPIETRO

During the North Tonawanda Common Council's annual reorganization meeting on Monday, the council voted unanimously to name Alderman-at-Large Robert Pecoraro as its new president.

Pecoraro, a retired Air Force colonel who has served on the council since 2015, was nominated for the position by outgoing Council President Erik Zadzilka.

"Bob has proven himself over the last several years as being focused on a lot of the change and solutions we need to put forward. I think he's an excellent choice this year for leadership," Zadzilka said.

Pecoraro thanked the council members for their support and praised Zadzilka for the work he had done during his time as president.

"I'd like to thank my colleagues on the Common Council, for their trust and confidence in me," Pecoraro said. "I want to build up the great strides that were taken by (Zadzilka). Your leadership this past four years has been tremendous."

Pecoraro went on to highlight some of the milestones and achievements the city made dur-



ing Zadzilka's tenure.

"Of note, in 2019 North Tonawanda was designated as the best place in New York state to live on an annual salary of \$50,000 by a financial investment firm that ranked U.S. cities to see (how far) an annual \$50,000 salary would go," Pecoraro said. "Another independent ranking dealt with security, and because of (Zadzilka's) leadership, North Tonawanda has been named as the 68th safest community out of

SEE THANKS, continued on Page 5

Cuomo pleased with efforts to reunite Bills fans with Buffalo's playoff team

Speaking to the press on Wednesday, Gov. Andrew Cuomo referenced efforts to test Buffalo Bills playoff game ticketholders for the coronavirus ahead of Saturday's game with the Indianapolis Colts.

"We started the drive-thru testing this morning: 4,000 people will be tested in 12 hours, five minutes per car. It just gives you an idea of what you can do to scale in terms of testing. And again this is a model for us to see how testing works to open venues, because we have to get the economy moving," he said.

On Dec. 23, Cuomo discussed plans to allow fans to attend the Buffalo Bills' first home playoff

game in more than two decades under strict COVID-19 protocols. One week later, he announced the final pilot plan for allowing fans to attend the game.


Under the pilot, which was developed cooperatively between the Bills, New York state and BioReference Laboratories, 6,700 fans will be allowed to attend the game after first obtaining a negative COVID-19 test result being allowed into the stadium.

A press release noted, "Contact tracing will also be conducted after the game. This is the first stadium reopening pilot plan in the

SEE 6,700, continued on Page 6

Image courtesy of the Office of Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo

Bills fans testing began this morning in Orchard Park, being conducted by BioReference.



4,000 people tested in 12 hours; 5 minutes per car

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