

The Downtown Niagara

Issue #2
November 1, 2025

NEWS

FREE
Events Inside!

Santa Clause Parade to be Merry and Bright New City Rule Requires Float Illumination

This year's 44th annual Santa Clause Parade, scheduled for November 15th, 2025 at 4pm, will be brightening our hearts with a more Christmas cheer than usual.

A new rule by the City's recreation department, requires that all float entries be lit up.

Since the end of the government mandated gathering restrictions, the parade has been starting later than in previous years, extending into the evening hours. The later hours have resulted in some floats becoming difficult to see in the dark. The new lighting rule hopes to solve this issue.

Ingenuity and resilience seem to be themes for the annual event. Our local parade has gotten very creative over the years.

Niagara Falls pivoted during the government restrictions, to include a drive-through parade when mandates did not allow reg-

ular parades. This 'reverse parade' featured dancers, musicians, colourful characters and performances. Our parade was also the first parade to return to a regular format once the restrictions were lifted in Ontario.

The tradition of the Niagara Falls Santa Clause parade, one of Niagara Falls' largest, free annual events began in 1982. The parade originated as the start of the ceremony that kicks off the beginning of the annual Niagara Falls Winter Festival of Lights. The ceremony begins with the parade and ends at City Hall with a Christmas tree lighting. This marvellous showcase of our community attracts about 12,000 people of all ages, an average of 100 entries, and more than 2,000 participants.

This year, Queen Street will be closed to traffic at 8am. City staff have looked



into the requests by local business owners to keep the street open until 12 noon, but the past has shown how difficult it is to get all parked cars off of the street in time for the parade, and after thought and consideration, it has been decided to err on the side of caution

and close the street down first thing in the morning.

The parade section of Victoria Avenue will be closed down to traffic starting at 10am with a 'rolling close' ending with the closing of Jepson and Armoury street by 3:30pm.

The parade will be staged



MWM
Boutique & Cafe
4525 Queen St.



The Downtown Niagara

NEWS

Downtown Niagara News Issue #2 is the second issue in a series of 4 Newsletters which will be printed monthly as a pilot project. 500 copies of each edition will be printed.

Contributors

Skye Butters – Poet

Jeff Rey – Opinion

Nigel T. – Visual Artist

Christa Barette - Editor, Creator and Producer

Contribute. If you are interested in contributing an piece of work, please send it to us for review.

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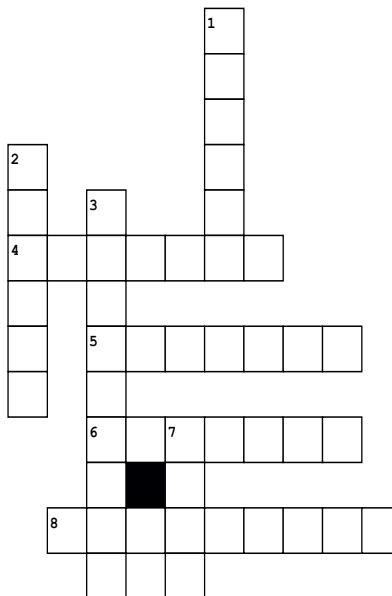
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Downtown Niagara Falls 2



Across

4. The steel ribbons that determined where Downtown was built.
5. This is available on Queen Street and outside of Shopper's Drug Mart, even when the post office is closed.
6. Downtown's longest running Jewelry Shop.
8. A street that was once a river.

Down

1. Theatre on Queen Street where the first screening of the movie 'Niagara' with Marilyn Monroe took place.
2. The first bridge to the U.S.A was Built where the river is most _____.
3. This street is named after the the “founder of Niagara Falls.” He laid out the streets, contracted the first Suspension Bridge in 1855, and extended the lines for the Great Western Railway to the Niagara River. He was the first, but his name starts with the last.
7. There is an iron one of these in St. Patrick's Church tower.



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EXCITING ESCAPE GAMES

Santa Clause Parade to be Merry and Bright...Continued from Front Page

at Armoury and Jepson Street and begin at 4 pm. It will roll down Victoria Avenue and make a right turn on Queen Street, ending at City Hall.

The annual tree lighting Ceremony which is sponsored by Alectra, will take place after the parade in Centennial Square.

Parade-goers can also expect to enjoy hot chocolate, pictures with Santa, thanks to Niagara Helicopters, food trucks and a Holiday Cookie Giveaway presented by Hodgson Custom Rolling Inc.

This Christmas celebration comes together with the support of many sponsors in the community.

Among last years sponsors were the Businesses of Queen Street, who gave \$15,000 towards the Santa Clause Parade and the permanent string lights. The University of Niagara Falls sponsored Santa's Sleigh, Beam Electric provided the lighting for almost half of the trees along the street and NPEI provided the temporary Christmas light displays.

Project SHARE headed up last year's parade and

collected 200 lbs of food and over \$900 in donations for residents in need.

In addition to the new lighting rule, several other improvements are slated for this year's annual event.

As a special treat, some of the musical performances from the parade will be making their way onto the stage at Centennial Square to provide Christmas music until 9pm.

Other improvements will include an increase in the number of crossing guards on sight, and the University of Niagara Falls

will be working with parade organizers to provide assistance and added security.

Additional decorations and new lighting will be installed in Centennial Square and Santa's photo area.

More helpers will also be on site to assist Santa this year, and to ensure safe and orderly photo-taking.

The parade starts at 4pm, so don't forget dress in lots of warm layers, bring extra blankets to snuggle up, and be sure to get there early to get a good spot!

By: Christa Barette

New Reading Cafe Opens On Queen Street

Library-Style Cafe Encourages Intellectual Pursuits

A dream has come true for many Downtown residents.

A new cafe opened up this September in the former location of the church group known as 'The Hub', across the street from City Hall.

The book-themed cafe, called the 'Caffery Library' is open 7 days a week, from 7am until 9pm on weekdays and from 9am until 10pm on Saturday and Sunday.

Many people think that the cafe was opened by the University, but that is not the case according to the new owners. When UNF heard about the cafe opening, they were quick to partner with the cafe's owners who now offer a student discount. But it was actually a couple of entrepreneurs with good business instincts who opened the cafe which is across from the new University.

When Dan Olimjonov

and his wife Shakhrizoda, who is a student at the University of Niagara Falls, moved to Canada from Uzbekistan, they met up with their friends Rob Matyakubo and his wife Dilduza who had moved to Niagara Falls from Uzbekistan several years earlier.

Rob, who has been a local realtor for the past two and a half years, developed an interest in the downtown area, as many of his clients are students attending the new University.

Rob and Dan, who is an IT and Marketing Specialist, began to imagine what business they could bring to life in the downtown area.

Shakhrizoda who has been a student at the University for almost a year, noticed that there was a lack of convenient coffee shop's in the immediate vicinity of the University where students could sit and study. They

concluded that not only students, but the community as well, might benefit from a reading cafe in the area.

"We renovated from scratch" says Dan, and it looks fantastic. The cafe is spacious and has pleasant reading music playing. There are tables of various sizes set up in different areas of the cafe which makes for an ideal place to read or study. Shelves are arranged with books ranging from fantasy novels to books on investment advice. A sign on each shelf reads 'more books coming soon!'.

"We are a reading cafe", says Dan. "We want to encourage people to come in, buy a coffee or something to eat and stay and read or study for as long as they like."

Almost all of the menu items served in the cafe are

made locally in house. They offer fresh wraps, caesar salads, sandwiches, cheesecake and baklava all which is made in store.

In addition to the specially sourced coffee that they serve, they also offer pizza made with their own secret recipe. A pop and a small pizza for \$7.99.

"We are aiming to keep the prices affordable, as many of our customers are students on a tight budget" explains Rob.

French fries, bagels and coffee are all offered at a reasonable price.

In addition to their upcoming grand opening at the end of September, the owners hope to partner with the Niagara Falls Chess club and book clubs to host chess tournaments and reading groups in the future.

By: DTNN

Where Does Downtown's Drinking Water Come From?

Enquiring Minds Want to Know

Downtown Niagara Falls drinking water's first system was built in 1899, near the Table Rock House. It operated until the late 1920's.

The City of Niagara Falls

River, flows in to the Niagara Falls Water Treatment Plant in Chippawa.

Once it is treated and made into drinking water, high-lift pumps send the

famous water tower at the top of Lundy's Lane.

Water towers are very important for our water system. Our water tower on Lundy's lane uses simple technology.

When you turn on a faucet, the water flows down from the tower due to gravity, creating consistent pressure that pushes the water to all the connected houses. Water levels in the tanks go up and down during the day.

Water towers maintain constant water pressure in homes, as well as provide a water reserve for fires and other emergencies.

The Lundy's Lane water tower feeds water to most of Niagara Falls. The tower once had the name Stamford painted on it, referring to the township of Stamford; which became a neighbourhood when it amalgamated into the main city.

The water tower now

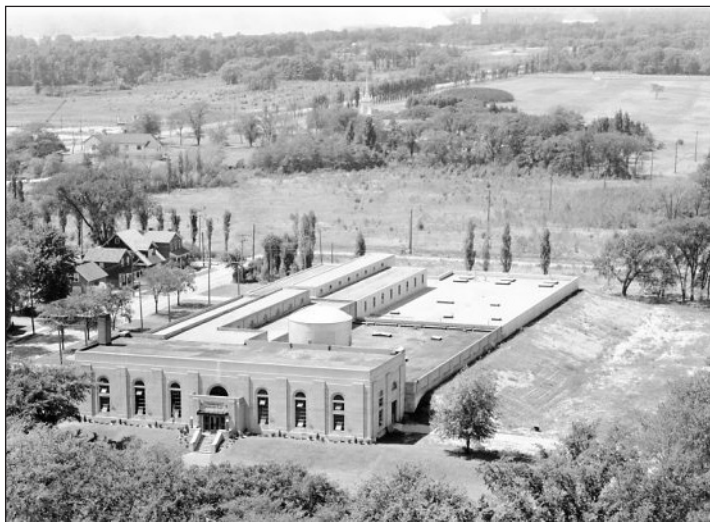
says 'Niagara Region' because the Niagara Region now maintains all of the water treatment plants, sewer lines and water reservoirs in the Niagara Region.

The City of Niagara Falls purchases treated drinking water from the Region. The city, however is responsible for maintaining their own water distribution systems.

The city of Niagara Falls has received perfect scores for its water distribution system and maintains a strong focus on quality, as demonstrated by a perfect 2024 inspection score from the province, which is regulated under the Safe Drinking Water Act.

The water is continuously tested to ensure it meets strict provincial and municipal standards, with reports confirming its safety and quality.

By: DTNN



The Water Filtration Plant in Chippawa where river water is taken in.

Waterworks choose to locate their new plant in Chippawa along the shores of the Welland River where it remains in service to this day.

Surface water from the Welland River, which is actually water from the Niagara

treated water through underground water mains, into storage facilities.

The three main storage facilities are at the treatment plant itself, the Kent street pump station near Montrose Rd, and the largest; is the

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Getting High on Business

Doing Hard Things is Fun at the Niagara Falls Innovation Hub

I get high on business. It is an addiction. It is challenging and more fun than video games because the wins and losses happen in real life, and; it is better than heroin, because it gives me a sustained sense of well-being without negative side-effects.

My membership at the Niagara Falls Innovation Hub has helped me with the tools, expertise and mentorship, which gives me the confidence to leap into entre-



preneurship. It can be scary, yes. But with every milestone I reach, I grow as a person as well as a professional.

AI can take some boring tasks off of our hands, but ultimately, humans are built to work. To feel truly fulfilled in life, one must accomplish something. The satisfaction of a job well done, only comes from doing something that is hard.

This is not just a theory, it is a biological fact.

“Doing hard things is the best way to get a hit of Dopamine” says Emma

Eldon, Marketing & Communications Manager of the Niagara Falls Innovation Hub in Downtown Niagara Falls. Dopamine is known as the ‘feel good’ hormone in the brain, when it is released we feel good.

Street drugs like Methamphetamine, cocaine and heroin raise dopamine levels in the body, but so do healthy activities. Which is why I love the challenge of small business.

Dopamine is released when you achieve a goal, but the strongest surge follows accomplishing a difficult goal. Entrepreneurship can be a reliable source of dopamine, and thus, satisfaction.

The type of dopamine ‘high’ that you get from doing hard things doesn’t spike and then disappear like it does with street drugs, the rise and fall is more gradual, and more sustained. The Niagara Falls Innovation Hub is one place where seekers of well-being can chase that healthy dopamine high. The Hub staff and mentors are

there to guide you in the achievement your business goals.

The neurotransmitter dopamine activates the reward pathway in the brain so, the more dopamine your brain releases, the more your body wants to repeat that behaviour. Because of this, we have to be mindful which activities we choose to get our dopamine fix from, as the activities that produce the high can become addictive.

We are wired for achievement, but it’s up to us to channel that drive in a sustainable and fulfilling way, rather than with destructive addictions like alcohol and hard drugs.

Making a check list and checking it off, is one of the most effective ways to keep dopamine levels sustained in the body thus, creating a sense of well-being. Starting and running your own business whether it is a small jewelry making business or a large production plant, requires similar behaviours.

When starting a small business, the first step is creating a business plan. The mentors at the Niagara Falls Innovation Hub are there to help in the development of these plans at the different stages of your business. “We are here to help with the development of your business plan, mar-

keting plan and strategic plan, and to help you get the money you need for your business through our Investment Readiness Program.” Says Lou Vescio, MEd, one of the experts-in-Residence at the Niagara Falls Innovation Hub

Entrepreneurs are pioneers. Exploring and Making new discoveries also elevates dopamine in the brain. Our ancestors got a dopamine surge every time they found a new food source because this meant survival. In the business world, this can look like stepping out of your comfort zone and making that sales call, or facing your fear of rejection, and creating your product idea.

Many individuals seek out challenging activities such as puzzles or crosswords because the effort itself is enjoyable. Starting up a business can be very rewarding for this reason; it requires a plan and a strategy, like a challenging game.

Taking the risk to bring your idea to life is also a great way to build self-esteem. We don’t really know what we are capable of until we test our limits. Testing the limits of your wings is a lot easier when you have an expert to look over your plans before you take that leap. At NIFH they are not going to build the plane for you, but they will give you the guid-

Continued on pg. 7

Artist's Corner

I quit smoking, but I miss it

If you're going to smoke

don't just stand at the end
of your driveway

If you're going to slowly and silently poison
your lungs with carcinogenic fumes
at least be poetic about it:

wistful
dramatic
passionate
contemplative
artful
mysterious

Please—
for the love of everything that's holy
(and the only thing that's holy is this sacred life
we're living)
smoke with some panache
be intentional about it

Send your addiction to the streets
memorize the mundane
details of your neighbourhood with each
inhale
let the storm of your thoughts
whirl about with each
exhale

Smoke on a park bench
at the same time every day
wistfully observe the coming and
going of each
passer-by
like actors gliding on and off stage

It might be best if you had a balcony
lean against its rails
survey the grounds
be idle and broody—
melodramatic even
indulge in your thoughts
focus only on yourself:

your woes
your fears
every joy
every transgression



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every win
every loss
solve the equation of you

But if you don't have a balcony
and I'm almost certain you don't
please—go anywhere else

Stand mysteriously at a street corner

Lay under a tree at the park

Lean on the churchyard gates

Loiter in a convenience store parking lot

Crouch suspiciously behind a dumpster

Even a front porch or back porch or lawn chair in a yard will do

But please—
perform your quiet, slow burn
ritual of death somewhere other than the end of your fucking driveway.

By: Skye Butters 2025



“The outpost was as remote as it could get, but even after all
that time, it was still there.”

By: Nigel T. 2025

The Court of Public Opinion

Observations: South of Park

When you close down just one block on Queen Street, you lose about 40 parking spaces.

That was horribly apparent with the final car show in September.

It began early, it was big, impressive and it lacked the supervision sorely needed for parking.

It closed down the streets earlier than 4pm, creating angry mob scenes.

Park Street was named apparently because you could park there while you

shopped, worked or visited the downtown.

This is where the real car show was.

Now 4500 Park St, was once an 80 to 100 car parking lot with an open, covered picnic area. It was also used for Farmer's Markets and family friendly events.

Then one day, private contractors began it's demolition. With the debris and dust, the area should have been enclosed by boarding not just for pedestrian safety

but to show the company name and it's future usage.

Next came the tearing up of 3/4 of the asphalt, followed by months of excavation and hauling. The soil was dark and it stunk, the pit being about 5 meters deep. It was quickly filled with gravel. This was ordered by the Labour and Environmental agencies who were never properly notified from the beginning.

The sight was full of toxic chemicals and contaminants.

Approved for

\$1,068,009.93, the budget was then doubled by Niagara Falls City Council to \$2,006,135,40 of tax payer's money.

You'll hear plenty of explanations, but it took concerned citizens to address this important health and safety issue.

While the parking lot is gone, this experience shows how community action can protect both our resources and our long-term well-being.

By: Jeff Rey

High on Business...Continued from page 5

ance to build it. "We give the help, support and guidance, but the rest is up to you. You have to spend the time and remain dedicated." Says Mr. Vescio.



Depression happens. Life changes, and we need to find a new source of inspiration. "Sometimes you hit a barrier in your job or your career and you stall, it's important to remember that there is always an alternative to create a new pathway." Says Lou. "The mentors and guides at the Hub are here to guide you on that pathway."

The Hub provides the opportunity for community members to start or grow their business through joining one of there ongoing

business programs.

Making your dreams come true in business is "simple, but it is not easy" says Vescio. "It requires sweat equity." That is just the thing that is required to turn a low dopamine person into a high dopamine person.

That is why I am grateful for the Niagara Falls Innovation Hub. Being around other people who are on the same business journey makes me feel much more grounded in my pursuits. As they say; it's lonely at the top. Many of the senior executives and successful business people at NFIH can say 'I've been there before' which is quite reassuring when you are trying something new.

Being successful in business means working hard every day to make your dream come true. Every time that

you achieve one small goal, you get a dopamine hit Every time that you wake up and check things off your list, force yourself to aim higher and meet the people that will help you to succeed, you level up and build self esteem.

"We invite people with a coachable mindset to join our free programs, whatever stage their business is in. We are here to help you to grow, start, scale or duplicate your business." Says Dan Bordenave, CEO of NFIH.

Check out the Innovation Hub's Website to lean more about their upcoming intakes for their business programs and workshops at niagarafallsinnovationhub.com. It takes determination, discipline, courage and diligence to succeed in business. What a healthy addiction!

By: Christa Barette

"The City of Niagara Falls invests in sporting facilities to foster the next generation of athletes who represent us on the global stage, and in libraries that nurture the next generation of scholars who do the same.

Just as those investments have proven successful, the city also invests in the Niagara Falls Innovation Hub to cultivate the next generation of entrepreneurs who will represent our community around the world.

Niagara Falls was built on entrepreneurship and is recognized globally as an iconic city because of the great local innovators who shaped it.

We want to keep that momentum going, which is why state-of-the-art facilities like the Innovation Hub are essential to our city's future."

— **Dan Bordenave, CEO,** Niagara Falls Innovation Hub

Events Downtown Niagara Falls

November 2025

Saturday 1 -

Havana After Dark- DJ Bernal + MC 10pm-2am - Havana 4555 Queen St
Live Entertainment 10pm- Plush Imperial 4515 Queen St.

Sunday 2 -

Music Trivia 7pm - Taps Brewhouse 4680 Queen St.

Monday 3 -

Bomb Comedy Tour 8:30pm Taps Brewhouse 4680 Queen St.

Tuesday 4 -

Taps, Apps and Laughs 8:30pm - Taps Brewhouse 4680 Queen St.

Wednesday 5 -

Niagara on the Q - Open Stage 8pm - Taps Brewhouse 4680 Queen St.

Open Board Game Night 5-10pm- Niagara Escapement 5001 Victoria Ave.

Thursday 6 -

Karaoke with Christie Hails 8pm - Plush Imperial 4515 Queen St.

Friday 7 -

Rock Garden Live at 10pm - Grand Central 4573 Queen St
Latino Karaoke 8PM - Plush Imperial 4515 Queen St.

Live Entertainment and DJ 10pm - Havana 4555 Queen St
Amanda Parker 6pm - Taps Brewhouse 4680 Queen St.

Saturday 8 -

Live Entertainment 10pm - Plush Imperial 4515 Queen St.
Matt Keigan 6pm - Taps Brewhouse 4680 Queen St.
Havana Nights Glow Party 2nd Edition 10pm-2am - Havana 4555 Queen St

Sunday 9 -

Music Trivia 7pm - Taps Brewhouse 4680 Queen St.

Monday 10 -

Bomb Comedy Tour 8:30pm Taps Brewhouse 4680 Queen St.

Tuesday 11 -

Taps, Apps and Laughs 8:30pm - Taps Brewhouse 4680 Queen St.

Wednesday 12 -

Open Board Game Night 5-10pm- Niagara Escapement 5001 Victoria Ave.

Thursday 13 -

Karaoke with Christie Hails 8pm - Plush Imperial 4515 Queen St.

Friday 14 -

Live Music at 10pm - Grand Central 4573 Queen St
Latino Karaoke 8pm - Plush Imperial 4515 Queen St.

Live Entertainment and DJ 10pm - Havana 4555 Queen St
Amanda Parker 6pm - Grand Central 4573 Queen St

Krampus Paint Night with Steve Wilson 7pm - Queen Street

Saturday 15 -

Live Entertainment and DJ 10pm - Havana 4555 Queen St
Live Entertainment 10pm - Plush Imperial 4515 Queen St.
Song Writers Showcase Volume 3 8pm - Taps Brewhouse 4680 Queen St.

Sunday 16 -

Music Trivia 7pm - Taps Brewhouse 4680 Queen St.

Monday 17 -

Bomb Comedy Tour 8:30pm - Taps Brewhouse 4680 Queen St.

Tuesday 18 -

Taps, Apps and Laughs 8:30pm - Taps Brewhouse 4680 Queen St.

Wednesday 19 -

Niagara on the Q - Open Stage 8:00pm - Taps Brewhouse 4680 Queen St.

Open Board Game Night 5-10pm- Niagara Escapement 5001 Victoria Ave.

Thursday 20 -

Karaoke with Christie Hails 8pm - Plush Imperial 4515 Queen St.

Friday 21 -

Live at 10pm - Grand Central 4573 Queen St
Latino Karaoke 8pm - Plush Imperial 4515 Queen St.

Live Entertainment and DJ 10pm - Havana 4555 Queen St
Chris Sailor 6pm - Taps Brewhouse 4680 Queen St.

Saturday 22 -

Live Entertainment and DJ 10pm - Havana 4555 Queen St
Live Entertainment 10pm - Plush Imperial 4515 Queen St.
Sean Bienhaus 6pm - Taps Brewhouse 4680 Queen St.

Sunday 23 -

Music Trivia 7pm - Taps Brewhouse 4680 Queen St.

Monday 24 -

Bomb Comedy Tour 8:30pm - Taps Brewhouse 4680 Queen St.

Tuesday 25 -

Taps, Apps and Laughs 8:30pm - Taps Brewhouse 4680 Queen St.

Wednesday 26 -

Open Board Game Night 5-10pm- Niagara Escapement 5001 Victoria Ave.

Thursday 27 -

Karaoke with Christie Hails 8pm - Plush Imperial 4515 Queen St.

Friday 28 -

Live Music at 10pm - Grand Central 4573 Queen St
Latino Karaoke 8pm - Plush Imperial 4515 Queen St.

Live Entertainment and DJ 10pm - Havana 4555 Queen St
Evan Rotella - Taps Brewhouse 4680 Queen St.

Saturday 29 -

Live Entertainment and DJ 10pm - Havana 4555 Queen St
Live Entertainment 10pm - Plush Imperial 4515 Queen St.

Sunday 30 -

Music Trivia 7pm - Taps Brewhouse 4680 Queen St.

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1-3 times per week, 2 hours per time. Contact dtniagramap@gmail.com for more info.

Handmade Crystal Wraps For Sale

I will wrap your crystals with Sterling Silver, Copper or Gold wire so that you can wear it as a necklace. Cost is approx \$20 and comes with a necklace cord. Makes a great gift. Contact - starsistar@gmail.com

Emergency Preparedness

The Funny this about emergencies is; they can happen suddenly.

Make sure that you have a flashlight with batteries, candles, food, water and cash on hand incase of a power outage!

For up to date Events listings check out our website at **DowntownNiagara.com**

Have an event to share? Send it our way for the next edition **dtniagramap@gmail.com**